

**Commission for Accessibility  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, December 13, 2021 5:00PM**

Via Zoom

In Attendance: Tony Phillips, Maureen Culhane, Dave Choplinski, Cristine Santori, Kate White, Don Ciota

**Call to Order:** 5:00 PM

**Public Comment.** A discussion occurred about the contributions of Bob Dole who passed away on December 3 and his significant role in the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The memoriam that follows was presented at this time.

**Update on Town Wide Assessment.**

A zoom meeting will occur this Thursday, December 16 to discuss the surveys received from the Institute for Human Centered Design (IHCD), which will be attended by the First Selectman, the Superintendent of Schools, Tony Phillips, and Kate White representing the Commission and others. Of special note is the playgrounds and ADA compliance of the surface areas. Although the ADA does not mention the type of material used for the surface, engineered wood products are not a good choice, despite their comparatively low upfront costs, due to the requirement for constant maintenance. The Act states the surface areas must be stable, firm and slip resistant. Artificial turf is an excellent choice, more expensive to install, but requiring much less maintenance. Playground fixtures and installation plans should be vetted for compliance before being ordered.

**Follow up on Fair Housing Complaint**

Carol Juter has written to report further delays in receiving approval for the access project and has asked for further advice. A response is being prepared.

**Adjourn: 6:22 PM**

**NOTE:**

**2022 Meeting Dates:**

All dates are on a **Monday at 5:00PM** and will be held via Zoom until after the pandemic town deems it safe to meet in person.

Jan 10		May 9		Sep. 12
Feb 7	Jun. 13			Oct. 17
Mar 7	Jul no meeting	Nov 7		
Apr 11		Aug no meeting	Dec. 12	

Best Wishes to all for the Holiday Season and a Healthy and safe New Year!

Meeting minutes prepared by Don Ciota

## In Memoriam, Bob Dole

Sunday, December 3, 2021 marked the passing of Bob Dole, a champion behind the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act. In the lead-up to its passage, there were many concerns about the potential costs of implementing such a law and the liabilities businesses faced if found in violation of the Act. Business lobbyists were aware of the strength such legislation, the aim of which was to create civil rights protections and access to employment, transportation and public spaces for those with disabilities. Mr. Dole played a key role in convincing lawmakers to pass the landmark disabilities law, something he considered one of his greatest legislative accomplishments.

Mr. Dole was severely injured during World War II, resulting in the loss of use of his right hand and limited use of his left hand. In meetings leading up to the vote on the bill, he expressed concerns about its costs and what could be done to mitigate them, expressing concerns it would create unreasonable burdens for businesses and lead to costly litigation.

After hearing from many people with disabilities, Mr. Dole, then the Senate minority leader, decided to support the ADA. He helped frame the bill to businesses by suggesting it would help establish a new customer base. His involvement in the process leading to the bill's passage was the requirement that accommodations needed to be "reasonable," ensuring that complying with the ADA would not bankrupt a company. The bill passed the Senate in September, 1989 and became law in July, 1990.

Tony Coelho, the former Democratic House whip from California who was the primary author of the ADA said of Mr. Dole, "He recognized the discrimination against people with disabilities. The stigma in regards to having a disability was something that he experienced and I experienced and all of us with a disability experience."

On the day the legislation was signed into law, President George H.W. Bush specifically thanked Mr. Dole for his work on the bill, asking him to stand up while hundreds of people with disabilities applauded.

This Act is a legacy to us that strives to make our society a more equitable place.

Meeting Minutes prepared by Don Ciota