

Minutes of Commission for the Disabled

Monday, May 22, 5:00 p.m., small conference room.

Attendance: D. Ciota (chair), T. Phillips (Social Services), C. Calabro, C. Santori, E. Pearson, W. Kenyon (secretary)

Visitors: Peter Hoyt, Sheila Hoyt, Tracy O'Connor, Tanya Hinojosa

1. Reading of the minutes: the minutes were accepted as read.

2. Public comments.

Tracy O'Connor presented written comments from her and Tessa O'Connor. They are duplicated as "Attachment" at bottom. A brief summary is:

The mobility-disabled should enjoy the same access as the mobility-abled; Main Street from Governor to Prospect particularly needs attention, including sidewalks and curb-cuts. Likewise, there should be equal access to Playhouse and Prospector theaters; and Transportation should also be addressed.

3. Proposed Little League ball-field on Route 7. D. Ciota (chairman) wrote a letter dated April 28 to Adam Schnell, Assistant Planner for the Planning and Zoning Commission. The letter pointed out the need for the ball-field to be ADA (Americans With Disabilities)-compliant, and included a number of detailed notes. A subsequent article in the Ridgefield Press was reassuring.

Chairman Ciota proposed that Ridgefield needs to establish a common policy for ADA compliance in town projects; the ball-field called for the above letter, but in the near future any changes to the Schlumberger property and the Venus building need to be likewise ADA compliant. After considerable discussion, it was decided that this Commission would write a letter to First Selectman R. Marconi to be presented to the Board of Selectmen. The latter have the position to establish a town policy for ADA compliance, and to communicate it to town departments — police, fire, Parks and Rec, etc.

Motion: For Chairman Ciota to write the above letter, moved by C. Santori, seconded by W. Kenyon. Motion carried.

Tracy O'Connor included questions about the proposed Request For Proposal (RFP) to have an outside agency evaluate Ridgefield for ADA compliance, and to propose a program of upgrades. The budget item of \$75,000 has been approved, and this Commission has been moving forward to prepare the RFP.

Adjourn: 6:30

Next meeting: Monday, June 19. No meeting July or August.

W. Kenyon, secretary

Attachment: The following is written material presented to the Commission by Tracey O'Connor:

May I request that my comments/questions be minuted please?

1. Please confirm that the \$75K allocated to ADA will be spent on a qualified ADA consultant to perform a thorough townwide assessment and list in priority of non compliance.

2. Have you chosen the outside, qualified ADA consultant company/person? If so, may we have the name please? If not, why not?

3. Please make the sidewalks/crossings ADA compliant, as a matter of urgency as this is a lawsuit in the making. Particularly the sidewalks out front of the town hall. The main Street area from Governor Street thru to Prospect Street, should be remediated and made ADA compliant. Do you not agree that our wheelchair bound/walker users, be afforded the same basic rights that we, able bodied are lucky to have? They, like us, should be able to SHOP, EAT, AND SAFELY BE ABLE TO VISIT MAIN STREET AND THE LIBRARY? DOES ANYONE ON THE COMMITTEE DISAGREE?

4. AGAIN, shouldn't the disabled be afforded the same basic right, of seeing a PLAY/MOVIE/CONCERT AT THE PLAYHOUSE, AND A MOVIE AT THE PROSPECTOR, OR A MEAL OUT IF THEY CANNOT DRIVE? WHY ISN'T THERE TRANSPORT FOR THEM TO ACHIEVE THIS, EVEN IF ONLY ONE EVENING A WEEK! DO YOU ALL DISAGREE OR AGREE?

SURELY, THE BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS OF OUR DISABLED POPULATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TOP PRIORITY. IF YOU CHOOSE TO PUT THE REC CENTER WORK, OR ANY OTHER, ABOVE MAKING OUR TOWN ADA COMPLIANT, FIXING OUR SIDEWALKS ETC, WOULD BE PARAMOUNT TO DISRESPECTING OUR DISABLED COMMUNITY. THIS IS JUST NOT ACCEPTABLE, AND ACTUALLY DISRESPECTFUL, SHOWING HOW YOU TRULY FEEL.

PLEASE DO THE RIGHT THING BY THEM. THANK YOU.

Tracey and Tessa O'Connor