

**Commission for Accessibility
Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 13, 2023**

Hybrid Meeting Via Zoom and In-Person

In Attendance: Christine Santori, Dave Choplinski, Maureen Culhane, Tony Phillips, Don Ciota

Attendees: John Agni

Call to Order: 5:00 PM

Public Comment

ADA Compliance Parking Brief

The Commission was informed of a presumed complaint made to the Department of Justice regarding handicapped parking spaces on a defined section of Main Street. As has been discussed here in the past, it is the DOJ that enforces compliance of the Americans with Disabilities Act. There will be a visit to the town by an Assistant United States Attorney and a person, who will survey these spaces, and presumably follow-up with an assessment of compliance.

Dave asked whether the State will be involved since Main Street is a state road, which they recently redesigned. The Commission has no knowledge of how responsibility may be allocated in such a circumstance.

Christine mentioned a narrow strip of a walkway existent in front of the toy store on Main Street. This strip is not wide enough for a person using a

mobility device. It was suggested Christine take a photograph of this feature for review and use to obtain an explanation as to why this was done and whether it is in violation of ADA accessibility requirements. A discussion followed regarding the various town parking lots and their relationship with the town. Questions were raised as to whose responsibility it is to maintain, plow, stripe, and enforce compliance with the ADA.

ADA Town Requirements Overview

The Commission Chair and Tony are scheduled to appear before the Board of Selectman this Wednesday evening, March 15 to present the **Transition Plan**. As an advisory commission to that body, several recommendations will be made.

The study should be publicized and made available to all by adding it to the town website. Since the report contains over 650 pages, it would not be feasible to distribute hard copies, but provision for individuals who would prefer to use a printed version has been made and can be viewed at the Town Clerk's office or the Ridgefield Public Library.

In line with the DOJ suggestion of the use of a *team-approach* in applying this law, the Commission recommends both the Town and Schools appoint a person to oversee the collection of data to be submitted for each building, program, or other school or town entity. Those two individuals would report twice a year to the Town ADA Coordinator, Tony Philips, with updates to the T.P. The ADA Coordinator will compile a master list detailing the planning or completion status of each line item.

The first step, estimated dates of completion, should be completed in 60 days. The Commission suggests using a simple system of either "within 18 months," or "within 36 months." Already completed items will be so noted.

The next step will be for the responsible parties to determine which projects may be completed by routine staff maintenance, and those which may require outside contracting. In this latter circumstance, provisions should be made to place such projects on a timetable for placement on the town or school budgetary process.

The Commission emphasizes this to be an ongoing project and should be given top-level attention of each team. It recommends basic ADA training for all personnel; whose responsibilities entail contact with or planning for the public.

The Commission would like to thank the Board of Selectman and Superintendent's office for their long-term support and enthusiasm for this mandate.

Adjourn. 5:50 PM

2023 Meeting Dates: (Mondays at 5:00PM)

Apr 10	May 15	Jun 12
Jul --	Aug--	Sep 11
Oct 16	Nov 13	Dec 11

Until further notice these meetings will continue via Zoom.

Next Meeting: April 10, 2023

Minutes prepared by Don Ciota, Chairman