

**TOWN OF AMHERST
COMMITTEE on DISABILITIES MINUTES
September 12, 2022**

Present:

Erica Rodman (Chairperson); David Wantuck ("David", Vice Chairperson); Deborah Bucki (Councilmember)

Members: Susan Zummo; Tom Roetzer; Luci Miranda; Barbara Robertson; Dave Whalen; Kathryn Barillari; Rachel Martin

Interpreter: Barbara (Deaf Access Services)

Excused: Quinn Bushen; Patrice Freeman;

The meeting was called to order at 18:37.

I. Minutes

- a. August minutes approved as read
 - i. Tom – first
 - ii. Rachel – second
 - iii. All in favor

II. Old Business

- a. Bike Path Phones: Debbie
 - i. No updates related to budget or plans to move forward with the upgrades; Hoping for news in late September
- b. Multimedia Accessibility Project: Erica
 - i. Working on distribution and preparing PR statement for submission to media outlets
 - ii. Luci: a local agency needs help updating website to accessibility standards – where can they get help?
 - 1. Dave: suggestions for companies that offer services; DOJ Website Accessibility checklist
- c. Sensory Processing Project
 - i. Sue: distributed personal narrative to Committee to read prior to meeting; Wrote about experience with her son who loves sensory seeking related to soap/washing things
 - ii. Dave: the term "special needs child" is becoming outdated; Important to use language relevant and in line with current advocacy; Clarification on the purpose of the narrative
 - iii. Sue: expressed desire to share experience and some information relevant to sensory processing
 - iv. Barbara: is this beyond the scope of the Committee's work?
 - v. Sue: trying to share information as an alternative to an event
 - vi. Luci: Senior Center table information; Perhaps this narrative might be a good read for the event

1. Barbara: in agreement
2. Sue: agrees it's a simple way to share information
3. Dave: also in agreement that information sharing is relevant
- vii. Erica: motion to include Sue's narrative on her perspective as a mother raising a son with a disability at the Committee's table events
 1. Second – Luci
 2. All in favor
- d. Inclusive Playground: Erica
 - i. Debbie had a meeting with Anne Dafchick (Town Architect)
 - ii. Debbie: met with Anne and Dan Rizzo
 1. Discussed proposed inclusive playground
 - a. Location: N. Forest/Sheridan
 2. Funding is in process and the park will likely be completed in stages
 3. Town still needs to work out an agreement with the owners of the Westwood property
 4. No specific features were discussed
 5. Safety features were stressed, especially since it's near a busy area; Requested the Committee be involved in planning
 6. Anne has suggested attending a meeting in the future
 - iii. Tom: are renderings available?
 1. Debbie: saw preliminary, confidential renderings; Nothing to share at this time
 - iv. Dave: lots of information out there on inclusive playgrounds; Ask what they are using for guidance
 1. Debbie: prepare an email to forward on to Anne
 2. Luci: question about bidding
 - a. Debbie: bidding is not a topic of conversation at this stage; First looking at elements
 - v. Erica: will follow up with Anne re: her schedule to attend a future meeting
- e. Social Media: Erica
 - i. Recap of email with David Willer from the IT Department
 - ii. Considerations regarding social media; Is this something the Committee wants to do?
 - iii. Rachel: shared experience related to social media from a work perspective; Making sure you are prepared to deal with backlash appropriately
 - iv. David: deals with social media for Deaf Access Services; There are many settings that allow monitoring; Lots of fine tuning involved, but it is doable
 - v. Luci: Facebook page to disseminate factual information would be helpful to the community; Senior Center has one – makes it easier for community to access information
 - vi. Tom: would like to see more visibility and likes the idea
 - vii. Sue: not able to check in on Facebook regularly, but likes the idea of limiting comments
 - viii. Dave: outline ideas for utilization for the Facebook page for the next meeting

- ix. Rachel: agree with having a plan
- x. Luci: good opportunity to interact with the public
- xi. Debbie: prepare a statement/proposal of goals, what will be disseminated, education, accessibility, etc to submit
- f. Neighborhood Accessibility: Erica
 - i. Oxford Village apartment issues in Amherst
 - 1. Sidewalks blocked by construction vehicles and not properly coned off
 - 2. Lighting fixtures in shared hallways hanging by the electrical wires for extended periods of time
 - 3. Erica reached out to Mark Berke (Commissioner of Building) who handled both issues quickly
 - ii. Sue: New Rd sidewalks are in the process of being added
 - iii. Barbara: some streets seem darker (lighting) than others; Particularly around UB North; Noticing people walking along long stretches that don't have lighting (Maple, Millersport)
 - 1. Debbie: lighting revamping is in progress; Refer to engineering department; If bulbs are out, they can be repaired; Write down concerns and locations and the email will be forwarded

III. New Business

- a. Firefighter Training
 - i. Dave: FRDAT will be receiving \$50K from Assemblymember McMahon to improve firefighter/emergency management training that will be held in Amherst
 - ii. Committee should attend; Efforts to push for fire departments to attend
 - iii. Still waiting to hear from the government body regarding the funding
 - iv. Money needs to be spent before March 2023; Takes about 2 months to schedule
 - v. Very significant; We have 10 fire departments; Already discussed with County emergency manager
- b. Committee Membership for 2023
 - i. David: many members have terms finishing this year
 - ii. Luci: what is the rule regarding how long we can serve?
 - 1. Debbie: if the majority of Town Board members will renew someone whose term has ended, the person can stay
 - iii. Debbie: resolution approved re: purpose of Committee and membership; Will review the resolution in time for next meeting
- c. Research Study
 - i. Luci: a research study is going on at the University at Buffalo and they are recruiting local individuals with and without disabilities to participate
 - ii. Erica: will forward the opportunities via email
- d. Employment Opportunities/Symposium

- i. Dave: will forward an email related to Governor Hochul's First Annual Disability Rights and Employment Awareness Month (DREAM) Symposium

IV. Next Meeting

- a. Tuesday, October 18th

V. Closing

- a. Meeting adjourned at 19:54
 - i. Motion to adjourn
 - 1. Erica – first
 - 2. David – second
 - 3. All in favor