

**TOWN OF AMHERST
COMMITTEE on DISABILITIES MINUTES
January 9, 2023**

Present:

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

Members: Barbara Robertson; Dave Whalen ("Dave"); Rachel Martin; Luci Miranda; Tom Roetzer

Interpreters: Miriam, Karen (Deaf Access Services)

ADA Coordinators: Bob McCarthy

Excused: Susan Zummo

The meeting was called to order at 18:33.

I. Minutes

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

II. Introduction

- a. Dr. Chong Cheng
 - i. Amherst resident
 - ii. 9 yr old daughter with Autism
 - iii. Interested in serving the community on the Committee

III. Guest Speaker

- a. Anne Dafchik – Town Architect
 - i. Updates on Town upgrades
 - 1. Amherst Senior Center
 - a. Upgrades in progress being done through the Town to add more accessible restroom facilities
 - b. Former clinic – removed a door/added a wall
 - c. Improvement meant to serve visitors and community members
 - d. Dave: Is the Senior Center a shelter?
 - i. Bob: No, Amherst does not have a designated shelter.
 - e. Luci: What is the rule to be able to reach soap dispenser?
 - i. Anne: 2009 A117.1 with measurements that include guidance on obstructed reach. If you find there are building users that need accommodations, please let us know.
 - ii. Dave: Anything on a counter is 27" reach (ie., condiments)
 - 2. Town Hall Council Chambers

- a. Installed a temporary ramp so wheelchair users can access the platform
 - b. Working on installing a permanent ramp along with railings
 - c. Barbara: Very gratified to see the ramp.
 - d. Debbie: Timetable to permanent ramp?
 - i. Anne: Several months, and updates will be provided.
 - e. David: What will the temporary ramp be used for? Can we use it for other Town events?
 - i. Anne: Will ask if that can be possible, but it's length may be a barrier. Nothing taller than 15" would be recommended.
- 3. Eggertsville Community Center
 - a. 4110 Bailey Ave
 - i. New tenant
 - ii. Old style water fountain removed that could have been an access barrier due to protrusion
 - iii. New water bottle filler being put in and re-located
- 4. Accessible Playground
 - a. No updates – deal has not occurred yet
 - b. Recap on notes
 - i. Accessibility/Inclusivity
 - 1. The Committee should have the ability to comment on the plans
 - 2. Trails with accessibility
 - 3. Markers for accessibility (to differentiate trails, etc)
 - 4. Barrier to keep children/playground users away from the road
 - ii. Parking
 - c. Debbie: Once the money is available, Town Board recommended two members be representative to the Task Force
 - i. Designated Luci and Rachel
 - d. Dave: Including Deaf/hard of hearing and blind/low vision in any signage
 - e. Luci: Emergency phone on the playground? My service does not work at the Billy Wilson playground.
 - i. Anne: Notated

IV. Old Business

- 1. Social Media Policy
 - a. Erica: An updated policy was circulated within the Committee for review
 - b. Debbie: Next step is to forward to David Willer (IT) and the Town Attorney
 - c. Erica: Motion to forward the policy as written to IT/Town Attorney

- i. Luci – second
 - ii. All in favor
- 2. Firefighter Training Update [Dave Whalen]
 - a. Train the Trainer for Firefighter/EMS
 - b. Dates: Amherst Training Facility
 - i. Feb. 15th and 16th
 - 1. Pendleton training will be at the end of February
 - ii. EMS in March
 - c. Erica and I will be meeting with the Fire Chiefs in a couple of weeks
 - d. Can be difficult to set up trainings during a week day
 - i. EMS training
 - 1. Not just for emergency management
 - 2. Anyone who has a role in advocacy/outreach
 - 3. Core Advisory Group
 - a. We can serve some of that to extent
 - b. Erie County has one in place already
 - e. Bob: I have participated in some of the trainings. Can I participate as well?
 - i. Dave: Absolutely. The training is 2 days long, but if you cannot make it to both days the afternoon on day 2 is most important.
 - f. Luci: I did the half-day training a few years ago. When should I repeat it?
 - i. Dave: That was our first one. Definitely come again. The afternoon half-day is recommended for community workers/staff/etc.
 - g. Luci: Potentially offer a similar program specifically for APS, group home workers, etc. Discussion on needs during the blizzard and how to procure them in a disaster.
 - h. Rachel: Offer to help with set up, etc. Can we get the training dates sent out in advance?
 - i. Dave: Yes, will send out fliers. Encourage outreach.
 - i. Erica: Clarification on the trainings vs disaster preparedness agenda
 - j. David: Do you want people to show up for the Feb. trainings?
 - i. Dave: I do have people join me, but it is specifically for firefighters/EMS
 - ii. David: SuperBowl is the Sunday before and may create a barrier to participation. Don't want to lose the opportunity to educate as many as possible.
 - iii. Dave: Will take into consideration
- 3. Winter Sidewalks [Erica & David]
 - a. Erica: Marion off Longmeadow
 - i. Received an email from Doug clarifying that it was added as an agenda item
 - b. David: Plow would come and over-pile the sidewalk. We need to take into consideration who is living there? Can we encourage plows to no over-pile the snow, or to do the sidewalks as well.

- c. Luci: Up to the resident to relay information to the plow driver. Would this fall under resident education? No one seems to know where to put things: garbage totes, leaves, snow.
- d. Rachel: We can use social media for this purpose too.
- e. Luci: Not blocking sidewalks.
 - i. Bob: Town has been forced to highlift snow in a lot of situations. They have been forgiving of residents – accessibility might not be the main concern, but the issue of impossibility to remove such a large amount of snow. Ordinances remain in effect wherever possible.
- f. Rachel: A lot of people struggling with this may need assistance themselves. We want to connect them with resources.
 - i. Bob: Absolutely. We have gotten reports of contractors who have been paid and then tried to high-jack or double/triple the cost after the contract. This is illegal and people need to know this.
 - ii. Erica: Personal experience with this.
 - iii. David: Who is the contact person for this?
 - 1. Luci: Attorney General. Stressed the importance of sharing resources and developing resources.
- g. Dave: Support network in your neighborhood is very important
 - i. “Mapping your neighborhood”
 - 1. Getting a feel for your neighbors and what they might need
 - ii. Discussion with Todd Vaarwerk
 - 1. People in Amherst are being charged for retrieving their cars because the Town used a private towing company and the fees are exorbitant
 - iii. Bob: Not familiar with the process, but very happy to step in and assist with getting more information. Maybe Debbie knows more?
 - 1. Debbie: Heard about it on the news and saw an article on the Buffalo News website. No specific information, but will mention it to the Supervisor. Jim Zymanek is the Director of Emergency Services and Safety, so we should look to get more information about this.
 - 2. Dave: Big concern for support workers/first responders to worry about a \$600 bill
 - iv. Luci: Was taking phone calls and heard that many people were getting stuck were trying to get home because places were closing early and they were told to leave. Would have been better for people to “shelter in place” and not try to make it home. Many people should not have been trying to get home – but were told to leave.
 - 1. Dave: Shelter in Place is the appropriate term. FEMA discussion and they acknowledged they do not do enough to assist with snow emergencies
 - 2. Debbie: More proactivity moving forward

3. Barbara: Push categories like they have for tornadoes/hurricanes so we have a benchmark for “seriousness” level

- a. David: Ample, advanced warning, but it was ignored

V. New Business

- a. Please forward potential agenda items via email to Erica and/or Debbie
 - i. Disaster Preparedness
 - ii. Bike Path phones
 - iii. Amherst Central Park project
- b. Elections
 - i. Luci: Erica, David, and Rachel
 - ii. Barbara: Agreed
 - iii. Erica: Would love to continue on as Chair and David Co-Chair
 1. Nominate Rachel as Secretary
 2. Rachel: Accept the nomination
 - a. All in favor
 3. Nominate David as Co-Chair
 - a. David: Accept the nomination
 - i. All in favor
 4. David: Nominate Erica to continue as Chair
 - a. Erica: Accept the nomination
 - i. All in favor
 - iv. Erica Rodman – Chair
 - v. David Wantuck – Co-Chair
 - vi. Rachel Martin – Secretary
- c. Meeting Dates:
 - i. Feb. 6th
 - ii. March 13th
 - iii. April 3rd
 - iv. May 1st
 - v. June 12th
 - vi. August 14th
 - vii. September 11th

VI. Next Meeting

- a. Monday, February 6th

VII. Closing

- a. Meeting adjourned at 20:10
 - i. Motion to adjourn
 1. Erica – first
 2. Barbara – second
 3. All in favor