

**TOWN OF AMHERST
COMMITTEE on DISABILITIES MINUTES
March 13, 2023**

Present Officers:

Erica Rodman – Chair
David Wantuck – Vice Chair
Rachel Martin – Secretary

Present Members:

Deborah (Debbie) Bucki – Town Liaison/Councilwoman
Susan (Sue) Zummo – Member
Luci Miranda – Member
David (Dave) Whalen – Member
Barbara Robertson – Member
Chong Cheng – Member
Tom Roetzer – Member

Interpreter:

Barbara Meyer

ADA Coordinators:

Robert McCarthy – ADA Coordinator/Director of Human Resources

Visitors:

Amanda Casali – Amherst Resident
Pat O’Conner – Amherst Resident
Emma and Joe Gagliano – Amherst Resident – 117 Hendricks Boulevard
Jessica Black – Amherst Resident
Samantha Smith – Amherst Resident
Bob Drdul – Amherst Resident – 92 Chateau Terrace
Sheri Cejka – Amherst Resident - 30 Chateau Terrace

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 pm.

I. Minutes

- a. February 2023 minutes approved as read
 - i. Dave Whalen – first
 - ii. Sue Zummo – second
 - iii. All in favor

II. Review of Annual Report

- a. Summary of what we accomplished in calendar year 2022. Sent via email to group from Erica.
- b. Changes from Debbie
 - i. Date for Police Chief Chamberlain to attend a committee meeting

1. April 2023.
- ii. Jim Zymanek will attend a committee meeting in June 2023
 1. Director of Emergency Services
- iii. Communication presented to the Board regarding social media account
 1. February 13th Town Board Meeting
 2. Approved
- c. Request for any further changes or recommendations
 - i. Debbie: Add communication number 2023-18
- d. Will be sent to Debbie Bucki to present as a Communication to Town Board on 3/20/23
- e. Motion to approve sending the Annual Report
 - i. Erica Rodman – first
 - ii. Dave Whalen – Second
 - iii. All in favor

Note that we began the meeting at this point with the first order of New Business seen below on the Amherst Squire Project, and then returned to Old Business

III. Old Business

- a. Social Media policy
 - i. Presented by Debbie at Town Board meeting in February, and it was accepted. Erica is working with IT to create the Facebook page. That will hopefully be done in the next week or two.
- b. Inclusive Playground
 - i. There are no updates. Debbie said they are still working out the final purchase of the land. They have some plans but want to finalize the land first. There is a desire for an ice ribbon to be included in the plans.
 - ii. Debbie is advocating that this committee be involved in the planning when it gets to that step.
- c. Fire Fighter and other Training (Dave Whalen)
 - i. 911 Training- 3/15 and 3/16/23 – people registered from across the state.
 - ii. Emergency Management Program – Jim Zymanek is signed up. 20 registrants for the 2-day and 11 for the ½ day afternoon (afternoon of day 2).
 1. 4/19 and 4/20 – Dave will send link for how to register.
 2. Encourages that all committee members sign up for both days if possible but at least half day. This is a national program.
 - iii. Firefighter/EMS training – moved due to low attendance – Amherst session now on 5/30 and 5/31. 2 of 10 fire departments have someone registered and he hopes for more.
- d. Emergency Phones on Bike Paths
 - i. Has been on hold to determine next steps. Erica recommends David Wantuck and she meet with Supervisor Kulpa related to budget concerns and what

they are looking for in a proposal. Debbie said she would be happy to attend as well.

- ii. Erica asked Debbie for her professional suggestion to a path forward for this. Debbie said she will broach it again with Supervisor Kulpa and see what he says about a potential meeting as described. The police chief is coming to the next meeting and suggested talking to him about this to try to garner some advocacy. She said Erica could also email the Supervisor Kulpa to reiterate the work proposed and suggestion to keep talking about it more. David Wantuck suggested a meeting to have enough time to get everything together for a possible June meeting with Town to reapproach.
- e. Table for Willow Ridge-Parkview – National Night out Event
 - i. David Wantuck – previous event happened in June, but it has not been announced yet.
 - ii. National Night Out is usually in August

IV. New Business

- a. Amherst Square Project – 6:50-7:27pm
 - i. Started the meeting with new business, with visitors with concerns from residents of Town of Amherst (listed above) related to the ADA accessibility of the Amherst Squire Project – Main Street, Town of Amherst.
 - ii. Erica asked for a limit of 3 minutes per visitor to speak and to keep topics geared to accessibility.
 - iii. Motion to start meeting with this topic to allow the visitors to speak for 3 minutes each:
 - 1. Erica – first
 - 2. Luci – second
 - 3. All in favor
 - iv. Amanda Casali, visiting resident
 - 1. Prepared PowerPoint Presentation
 - a. Attached
 - 2. Sidewalk concerns
 - 3. Driveway concerns
 - 4. Bio-retention pond
 - a. Child with autism in the home
 - b. Drawn to bodies of water
 - 5. Fire-safety concerns
 - 6. Amanda ran out of time allotted (3 minutes)
 - a. Debbie asked Bob McCarthy to weigh in on the presentation and potential rules regarding this. He stated that the 3 minutes could be waived per our decision and suggested they have the amount of time they need. Debbie also asked if we should record this meeting, and Bob said taking minutes should be enough at this time.
 - b. David Wantuck asked if Amanda Casali could send her slideshow to the Chairs. She agreed.

- c. Erica Rodman proposed a motion to finish her presentation
 - i. Barbara Robertson – second
 - ii. All in favor
 - 7. Amanda re-shared her screen and continued
 - 8. She noted that she is also representing her neighborhood. She talked about the bio-retention pond again and shared that she is concern for her son who has autism that close to a body of water that would be dangerous for him and other children, specifically children attending Bornhava which is close by.
 - 9. She shared concerns about Fire Safety
 - a. Wants a recommendation to Amherst for access for emergency vehicles in the event of a fire
 - 10. Parking concerns
 - a. Asking for appropriate amount of parking spots
 - 11. Garbage removal concerns
 - 12. Barbara Robertson – Feelts this is a very good example of what she feels should be happening for every new proposed building/structure in Amherst. She said she appreciates the lived experience that Amanda has – Barbara said this should be in all proposed plans when there is building done.
- v. Emma Gagliano – Visiting Resident
 - 1. Wanted to reiterate and support the points that Amanda had shared.
- vi. Sam Smith – Visiting Resident
 - 1. Reiterated what Amanda shared
 - 2. Shared that they have told this to different departments in the town and have not gotten an answer from anyone. She said that when new rezoning went through in 2021, they were told that their concerns would be addressed, but they haven't gotten answers. She is concerned that things will be built, and they will not be addressed. She is hoping this committee can help with addressing these concerns.
 - 3. She said the concerns about the parking are shocking, that there are walls blocking the sidewalk on either side.
 - 4. Erica Rodman said that this committee is here to advocate for accessibility in Amherst and would do so.
- vii. Pat O'Connor – Visiting Resident
 - 1. Reiterated what Amanda had shared. Said she did not feel the developer has put thought into people with different needs and abilities. Wants these issues addressed before the project is approved.
- viii. Jessica Black – Visiting Resident
 - 1. Shared that her nephew with disabilities visits the neighborhood and has the same concerns as Amanda. Agrees with Barbara Robertson on the thought that all building should have these considerations.

- ix. Bob Drdul – Visiting Resident
 - 1. Wanted to make sure that we knew the concerns about the exit onto Fruehauf
- x. Luci added that she has experience with garbage totes in another town where she works, and she experiences that accessible parking spots are taken up by people putting garbage totes in them.
- xi. Sheri Cejka – Visiting Resident
 - 1. Concerns with proposed structure having walkway on Fruehauf – entrance is blocked off.
- xii. Pat O'Connor
 - 1. Availability of accessible parking. She said the developer said the spots in front of the building will be for deliveries and is inadequate accessible parking.
- xiii. Erica Rodman thanked the visitors for coming, let them know that they are welcome to join the committee for other meetings. She said if they have other items to share, they can contact us using contact info on the Town website. She asked that the PowerPoint be emailed to her.
- xiv. David Wantuck – wanted to restate that we see and hear their concerns and will be discussing it and try to do whatever we can to assist. He said the ball will not be dropped.
- xv. Debbie Bucki – The planning board is deliberating on this issue this Thursday (March 16, 2023) and should have the Power Point for this. She asked that Erica talk to Dan Howard and have the PowerPoint shared with the Planning board in advance of their meeting on Thursday. Erica will send Dan Howard an email about the concerns and will cc Debbie.
- xvi. Erica pointed out that this is a proposed plan that hasn't been approved yet, so our role can be to bring up these points and help to guide the builder to help town of Amherst residents. She pointed out that we need to remember our role as a committee regarding true accessibility issues vs. things people don't like as neighbors.
- xvii. Dave Whalen – he has concerns that there are meetings and it is in front of the Planning Board, wants to make sure disability topics and accessibility is on the agenda to advocate. Also pointed out that the ADA Coordinator plays a large role in matters such as these.
- xviii. Susan – Mentioned a wish for fencing around the pond to protect people from the body of water.
- xix. Luci – concerns on meals on wheels delivery – she has experience with Meals on Wheels and said she can ask about the logistics from the people she knows. She has concerns about the number of parking spots in general and also questions about how volunteers would drop off meals.
 - 1. Erica shares the concerns about parking.
- xx. Erica will draft an email to go to Dan Howard and ask him to forward it to the members of the Planning Department and Planning Board.
 - 1. Erica Rodman – 1st

2. Rachel Martin – 2nd
3. All in favor
4. Erica will draft the email and send tomorrow (3/14/23)

b. Meeting Guest Invitations

- i. Erica: David Whalen introduced Erica and Chief of the Amherst Police Department (Chief Chamberlin) – it was a positive introduction and he will join us next month for the April meeting of this committee. She did share with him wanting to discuss Deaf Awareness Interpreter Training and Bike Path Phones. Are there other questions we want to add (asked by Erica)
 1. Luci – phones for some of the playgrounds/parks (Billy Wilson) – possibility of those being added
 2. David Wantuck – mention Disability awareness training to him as well and ongoing training for the police department.
 3. Dave Whalen – reiterate our role as a committee to educate the department on interacting with people with disabilities with police departments. Wants the police to use us as a resource.
- ii. Erica – made motion to share 5 topic areas to discuss as agenda items next month with police chief:
 1. Amherst bike path
 2. Emergency phones on playgrounds
 3. Use of VRI with police department interactions
 4. Disability awareness training
 5. Using this committee as a resource
 - a. Erica Rodman – 1st
 - b. Susan Zummo – 2nd
 - c. All in favor
 - d. Erica will email Chief Chamberlin with agenda items.
 - e. David Wantuck asked if this would take the majority of the meeting in April, and Erica said yes as it is expected to take the bulk of that meeting.

c. Willow Ridge Parkview

- i. Erica asked if there were any concerns or questions
- ii. David Wantuck will share the action plan and Erica will send it out to everyone via chat: www.connectingwrpv.com/draft-action-plan

d. Erica shared a personal insurance issue – was told to call HIICAP to get a health insurance counselor to call the doctors' office on her behalf regarding bills she was being given by a doctors' office.

- i. Wanted to share that there are grant funded services to help people with specific types of insurance to work with doctors' offices and their rights. She wanted to share that in case it can help others.
- ii. Luci said our Facebook page could be a good resource for education like this.

V. Next Meeting

- a. April 3, 2023
 - i. Chief Chamberlin will be in attendance

VI. Closing

- a. Meeting adjourned at 8:03 pm
 - i. Motion to adjourn
 - 1. Erica Rodman – first
 - 2. Luci – second
 - 3. All in favor