

**TOWN OF AMHERST
COMMITTEE on DISABILITIES MINUTES
April 3, 2023**

Present Officers:

- Erica Rodman – Chair
- David Wantuck – Vice Chair
- Rachel Martin – Secretary
- Deborah (Debbie) Bucki – Town Liaison/Councilwoman

Present Members:

- Susan (Sue) Zummo – Member
- David (Dave) Whalen – Member
- Tom Roetzer – Member
- Chong Cheng – Member

Interpreters:

- Karen Gambino
- Lisa (last name not shared)

ADA Coordinators:

- Robert McCarthy – ADA Coordinator/Director of Human Resources

Excused:

- Luci Miranda – Member
- Barbara Robertson – Member

Guests:

- Scott Chamberlin, Chief of Police, Amherst Police Department
- Joy Testa Cinquino and David Cinquino - 74 Fruehauf (Squire Project)
- Samantha Smith - 60 Fruehauf (Squire Project)
- Amanda Casali - 23 Fruehauf (Squire Project)
- Eric Anson - 57 Fruehauf (Squire Project)
- Sherry Cejka - 30 Chateau Terrace (Squire Project)
- Bob and Lisa Drdul - 92 Chateau Terrace (Squire Project)
- Jim Kalinowski - 46 Chateau Terrace (Squire Project)

Not Present:

- Mark Berke – ADA Coordinator/Commissioner of Building
- Doug Gesel – ADA Coordinator/Supv. Code Enforcement Officer

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 pm.

I. Minutes

1. March 2023 minutes approved as read
 1. Erica Rodman – first
 2. Tom Roetzer – second
 3. David Wantuck asked for revision page 3
 1. Wants to clarify if it was the Parkview Event or Willow Ridge National Night Out. Erica shared her recollection was also Willow Ridge - notes will be amended to read Willow Ridge National Night Out.
 1. Erica Rodman - first
 2. David Wantuck - second
 3. All in favor.

II. Guest Speaker

1. Chief Chamberlin - Amherst Police Department

1. Welcomed by Erica
2. Emergency phones on Amherst bike path
 1. Erica and David Wantuck presented to the Town Board in the summer requesting money be budgeted to update the phone system
 - Tabled by Board at that time
 - Asked if Chief Chamberlin had any knowledge or advice
 - He stated that the officers on patrol for the bike path are expected to pick up the phones and make sure they work whenever they pass one.
 - He said they have been trying to get a bond to get them replaced (around \$700,000), and the decision has been made to push it back. It's now pushed back to 2024. They do get false alarms (most of the calls are malfunctions). Only 7 (out of 72 total) people used them to call for help in 2022. Only 8 times in 2021 (out of 83 total). The other calls were malfunctions or officers testing them.
 - They do not get used much or they are false alarms or kids playing with them. Anytime they are triggered, they must go and check them. They can get infested with insects and then are down for service. With most having cell phones, he's not sure if it's worth the cost based on the amount they are used.
 2. David Wantuck asked how long it takes for the officer to get to a phone location, and are there costs for false alarms. David also pointed out that while most (not all) have cell phones, not all have data to be able to make calls when out of WiFi range.

- Chief: the cost is that an officer is not able to be somewhere else where needed when responding to false alarms.
- 3. Erica - one of the suggestions is that the new phone system would have cameras. Asked if this is something the police department feels would be helpful.
 - The chief said anytime they can get data and information it is helpful.
 - He said having phones on the bike path is a benefit. He is not against it and thinks it is useful and cameras would make it more useful.
- 4. Rachel asked if the officers would respond regardless of if they had someone able to verbally communicate (i.e. if there was silence) and he confirmed that they would respond regardless.
- 3. Playground phones
 - 1. Erica shared that some committee members wondered if emergency phones on playgrounds would be beneficial.
 - The chief said it certainly helps since eyes and ears on a public property is a good thing and ability for people to get help if they don't have a phone. Said for both this and bike path, it is up to the town to decide.
- 4. VRI for Deaf/hard of hearing residents during traffic stops/interactions
 - 1. David Wantuck shared that Deaf Access Services worked with Amherst Police on training regarding the Deaf/hard of hearing community including approach and body language and communication. Wants to take the opportunity to do a retraining on VRI and how to utilize it.
 - Chief Chamberlin shared that lieutenant cars have the VRI capability. He said they can readdress it to make sure they are up to speed.
 - Unfortunately, all who were involved previously in this training are retired. He will reach out and get more details and work to get people up to speed on this. David offered his assistance and will email him the Deaf Access Services contact information.
 - Dave Whalen asked if he was aware of the visor cards and said that he has them in stock and can drop them off for them. Chief Chamberlin will let him know if they need more.
 - 1. Visor cards are for both individuals who are deaf/hard of hearing and officers - for pull-overs. Everything on there is related to a traffic violation. There are images for

common traffic stop events. All NY State Police Officers use these and they were created in conjunction with Deaf Access Services.

2. David Wantuck explained that they give these cards to people who are deaf/hard of hearing as well in hopes at least one of the parties will have this to make communication better.
3. Dave Whalen also shared there are other communication boards for various needs and circumstances as well.

5. Disability Awareness training

1. Dave Whalen facilitates this training. The training has the goal of officers and responders being able to successfully communicate with residents who have disabilities. There was previously a 'train the trainer' - there were 8 trainers. Chief said there are 12 people who are trained trainers and said they are in good shape for this. This means there are 12 officers who are able to train other staff.
 - Chief said they added Google Classroom as a tool to be able to send out training to everyone in department, and they will likely use this format to do a refresher. He said they will do a refresher yearly for this topic. This makes it easier for them to get to important topics like this.
 - Dave Whalen offered any help if they need it. He said there is a full online training for officers as well and offered to do sections of that. The full course is currently available and they are working with NY to do it for no cost for all officers in NY State. Also working on training on Autism that he is helping with development on. Chief said half hour training and a quiz works well for the officers. He said they sent 13 officers and 20 dispatchers to the last training.

6. Committee as a resource

1. Erica shared that she'd like this committee to be used as a resource. Asked if there are any areas that the Chief considers "need areas" that would be a benefit to them now. He said training is the biggest thing - access to training. And now they know they have access to this committee. Only hardship is finding time to do the training but the Google Classroom has made that easier for them.

II. Old Business

2. Squire Project update - Erica Rodman

1. Several residents came for an update on the Squire Project
2. Debbie assisted with email correspondence with the Director of Planning for the Town. Erica reached out to him for an update. Erica shared the following update:
 1. After we last met, Erica emailed Dan Howard (Director of Planning) with Debbie's assistance. She forwarded him the presentation that resident Amanda Casali had sent as well (at March committee meeting).
 2. Erica expressed the concerns about accessibility and items in the presentation. She shared that she hoped he would share with the Planning Board. He emailed back and provided information.
 - The planning board had adjourned their plan for the site plan and they would be meeting 4/20/23 to discuss the project. He said the presentation was forwarded to the Petitioner and the Planning Board, so all concerns were shared. He said new materials were submitted on the project. The Town of Amherst has a project planning page that lists these. He asked that the committee send any additional comments we have. Erica will resubmit the presentation again ahead of the 4/20 meeting.
 - She received an email from Daniel Ulatowski. He said the PowerPoint was shared with Benderson Development and that Benderson responded to the concerns.
 1. Sidewalk - the rendition showed the sidewalk being cut off and a wall. Their response was that the rendition was not an accurate rendition of what the actual sidewalk would be and that they would all be ADA compliant and continuous.
 2. Driveway - Benderson said they are not able to move the entrance because of clearance requirements
 3. Bio-retention pond - Benderson said there would be no standing water and it would be an underground system.
 4. Fire Concerns - said all comments from Fire Marshall were addressed and Fire Marshall already signed off on the plans. Fire Department also met with them.
 5. Parking - Benderson said it meets zone requirements

6. Garbage Concerns - Benderson anticipates 10 totes for the project and said the totes will not obstruct any sidewalks.
- Erica and Debbie responded back, thanking them for their responses and information. Erica offered for the committee to be a resource for the project and said we would like to be included. Daniel Ulatowski responded that they would continue to meet all ADA requirements.
 - Erica opened the floor for voting committee members first to ask for questions and concerns. She also shared that there are concerns with the reality vs. what they put on paper.
 1. Dr. Cheng asked how deep the bio-retention pond would be. Sam shared that the pond would hold 6,000 gallons of water.
 2. Jim shared that he saw 1.5 feet deep and 58 feet wide and 6,000 gallons. He said he does not believe there will not be standing water.
 1. Want to ask for clarity on the depth of the pond and how the pond will work.
 3. Dave Whalen agreed that on paper is different than something in person, we should consider asking them to do a pre-accessibility review through an outside party who can provide input. Shared that there is a local architect who is an expert on ADA accessibility. Said there should be a more intense review of the accessibility of the project and surrounding area.
 4. David Wantuck is concerned where there would be fencing for the bioretention pond only on portions rather than all the way around. There are concerns that children or others would just walk to the unfenced portion. He is also concerned with the sidewalk
 1. Provide an actual blueprint of the sidewalk showing how it truly will be since they said that was wrong. Provide more info on the retention pond and fencing.
 - Erica opened the floor from visiting members of public.

1. Motion - 1st Erica
 2. 2nd Rachel
 3. All in favor
- Sam Smith asked about the parcel of land which is supposed to be 90% impermeable and go into the pond. Asked about the overflow water when there is ice and snow. Said she would like to know the drainage rate because she feels it will be standing water at some point. Also said the fences based on the plans looks like you can access the pond from driveways.
 - Sam said she and some other residents said they tried to address their concerns with Benderson. They are concerned with sloping and visibility for the driveway - believes it will either go into the sidewalk or walls and that it will affect visibility.
 - Ten garbage totes for 44 apartments seems too small and 2 restaurants - though the developer told them they don't expect restaurants to be there.
 - Is concerned for Bornhava students for pickup and drop off during and after construction - Benderson says they have a plan but they don't think the execution makes sense.
 - Amanda Casali added that bio-retention pond - is concerned that new residents in the apartments would be a danger to those who have children (some of whom may have disabilities). She prefers they do an underground bioretention tank rather than the current plan - thinks that would be a safer option for the neighborhood and residents of the building. Says there would always be an entrance if bio-retention pond is not fenced all the way around.
 - She stated the developer plans for 10 garbage totes for residential but hasn't answered about retail garbage needs.
 - Concerns for driveway with visibility - concerned with safety of the community and children. She liked Dave Whalen's idea to have more accessibility evaluation done. She would like Amherst to have this for all zoning - to make sure people with disabilities have accessibility.
 - Sam Smith asked about recycling as well since it is not clear if the garbage is garbage only or also includes recycling (through chat to Erica)

- Bob McCarthy - Has concerns but thinks some are not in his purview to address because some are building/zone code issues. He said if there are things not being addressed properly and they want to bring them to his attention to approach the issues from a different perspective, but he did say they do not seem to be things that fall into his purview. Erica suggested including him in correspondence with the Planning Board so he can stay up to date on these conversations as the ADA coordinator for the town. He agreed and wants to be included.
 - Jim Kalinowski - had called Town Refuse Department - said there is nowhere in the town that a project of this size has totes. Said the town should talk to them beforehand to figure out the issues with garbage rather than waiting until after the fact. Wants the Town to talk to the Refuse Department to address the concerns and truly address the needs. He also said the snow melt is a big concern for standing water.
 - Bob Drdul - The space on the plans looks like 2 parking space which is enough for 10 totes if they are crammed in the space. He said recycling has to be accounted for as well. He said 10 totes for garbage and 10 for recycling, they will not fit and he doesn't think they are enough for all the residents and retail.
 - Lisa Drdul - Has a letter from Benderson with the 6 concerns raised by Committee on Disabilities and said the neighbors are sharing misinformation with their neighbors. Said she has submitted questions and that Benderson has failed to answer them.
 - David Cinquino shared that the planned accessible parking spots do not seem to be accessible and that there could be concerns with making sure the spaces and route to building remain accessible (areas that would need to be shoveled, specifically).
3. Erica made a motion to seek more clarification from Planning Board and Benderson regarding totes, bioretention pond, and accessible parking spaces - asking for latitude to be able to respond based on tonight's notes.
- 1. Second - Rachel Martin
 - 2. All in favor
3. Firefighter/EMS training update - Dave Whalen
- 1. April 19 and 20 - Encouraged attendance by this committee half day portion on 4/20.

4. Events for 2023/tables/health fair - David Wantuck

1. David Wantuck and Barbara Robertson are heading this - no updates at this time.

5. Social media page update - Erica Rodman

1. The page is up and running.
2. There is a brand new policy in place for social media pages run by committees. We as a committee were able to get this off the ground.
3. Alt Text is being used for images.
4. Debbie wanted to express gratitude to Supervisor's office and IT office for getting this up and running.
5. David Wantuck shared that four people on the Facebook page commented that the link for the meeting did not work for tonight's meeting. Also having trouble accessing minutes on the Town website. Debbie asked that David Wantuck screenshot and send her the actual issues for resolution.

II. New Business

No new business

II. Next Meeting

May 1st, 2023 at 6:30 pm.

VI. Closing

1. Meeting adjourned at 8:17 pm
 1. Motion to adjourn
 1. Erica Rodman— first
 2. Tom Roetzer – second
 3. All in favor