

**TOWN OF AMHERST
COMMITTEE on DISABILITIES MINUTES
October 17, 2023**

Present Officers:

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

Present Members:

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

Interpreter:

Karen
Miriam Lerner

ADA Coordinators:

Robert McCarthy – ADA Coordinator/Director of Human Resources

Visitors:

Melissa Golpl – 2229 North French Road; Apt 2; Getzville, NY 14068

Excused Members and Regular Visitors:

David (Dave) Whalen – Member

Prior to the meeting beginning, there was brief discussion about whether the meetings would be recorded. Debbie recommended that we ask at the beginning of each meeting if we are okay with recording. The group agreed to this approach.

The meeting was called to order at 6:37 pm.

I. Minutes

a. September minutes

- i. Debbie – Item G on last page –change word “legislature” to “legislation.”
Erica will make this correction and resubmit.
- ii. September minutes approved with change of word “legislature” to “legislation”
 1. Erica Rodman – first

2. Luci Miranda – second
3. All in favor

II. Old Business

a. Social Media Page

- i. Erica thanked everyone for liking and sharing the posts on Facebook.
- ii. Erica has been scheduling posts to go out on Mondays and Thursdays, using ideas related to Disability Awareness.
- iii. Melissa Golpl (visitor) shared that the social media page prompted her to join the meeting tonight. She hopes to do some personal and systems advocacy and get reconnected with this group which she said she participated in in the past.

b. Amherst Central Park

- i. Anne Dafchik (Town Architect) – will join us in November for our meeting.
 1. She asked that Erica share some preliminary questions with this group tonight. Email correspondence is copy/pasted below for clarity:
 - a. **Suggest collaborating with SABAH (Skating Association for the Blind and Handicapped) to get their input on accessibility concerns. Member Rachel Martin has a contact at SABAH she can reach out to.**
 - i. *SABAH is an excellent group and we'd be happy to work with them to see what expertise they can share. Would Rachel be able to setup a meeting with SABAH? For me, I'd appreciate if it could be during traditional business hours 9-5, but I can be flexible if absolutely necessary. Typically Monday/Wednesday/Friday afternoons work well for me, or Tuesday mornings.*
 - b. **What kind of trees is the Town planning for the perimeter? A member expressed concern that trees with falling leaves may cause clean-up and safety concerns for skaters.**
 - i. *The plan is to use conifer (non-deciduous) trees to shade the ice in winter. This will reduce solar heat gain on the ice surface which helps keep the ice cooler in winter. There is a precedent for many "natural" ice trails in the US and Canada – and when the leaves fall on the ice, they just get captured within the ice the next time the Zamboni goes around. Please see photos below which show leaves captured within the ice and deciduous trees directly adjacent to ice ribbons.*

2.



- a. Are there plans for a protective barrier around the perimeter of the rink? If yes, will that barrier have a wall and/or handle for skaters to hold on to?
 - i. *Yes, the protective barrier will double as railing along the outer perimeter of the ice surface. The inner perimeter of the ice surface will have opportunities for seating.*

- ii. *A link to a YouTube video below shows Maple Grove ice loop in Minneapolis which serves as an exemplary model. I hope the audio in the video sufficiently describes the images on screen – if not, I am happy to clarify further for folks who may want a better description.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=fsUNbinbmxg>

- b. Suggest accessible items for skaters such as walkers/orange cones/reflective labeled vests (ie., blind skater) made available for skaters.
 - i. *This is a great idea, and we would like to review this again when we get further along into the operations side of this.*
- c. Will the rink be "skate only" or will there be the option to use other equipment on the rink such as a sled that can be pulled (to increase opportunity for all to experience).
 - i. *Again – another good idea. Is this something SABAH can advise on? Perhaps we need a better understanding on which types of adaptive equipment would be appropriate to make available from the skate rental area so we can offer an inclusive set of options.*
- d. Will there be rest places/benches around the perimeter and multiple exits/entrances?
 - i. *Yes, with regards to benches, please see the response and video from Question 3 above. With regards to the multiple exits/entrances, we really need to limit it to a maximum of two points of entry/exit. Our facilities team will need to make sure the ice is clear and that people will not re-enter the ice when the Ice Resurfacer (AKA Zamboni) is out cleaning the ice. Where we do have those entry points onto the ice, we will include railings or hand-holds that help people transition onto the ice.*
- e. Are there plans for an emergency phone/first aid center/indoor area with a family restroom?
 - i. *The restroom facility building does include two family restrooms, along with family changing rooms – 1 of which will include a 72-inch x 30-inch bench which will allow for diaper needs for older children and adults who need that option.*
 - ii. *The skate rental building includes a Main Lobby that has indoor seating, drinking fountains, etc. I'd like to discuss more how we can include an emergency*

phone. We do not have space for a dedicated first aid room, but I'm sure we find a solution where people can meet with a paramedic once called, or can self-help with a first aid kit? We are still reviewing the levels of staffing that will be required to make this area of the park functional.

- f. The Committee would like to have more information about the fire ring and its purpose in this context. This concept was new to the members. A member asked what kind of protective safety barrier would be around the ring.
 - i. *As shown in the example video, a low wall with a glass barrier creates an aesthetic that allows people to view the fire without being close enough that it creates a danger. All fire rings in public spaces require safety shut-off buttons that would allow any park user to immediately shut off the gas supply should there be a problem. In the image below, the safety shut-off is the yellow and black "stand" at the left of the seating ring.*



3.

- c. Emergency Preparedness Tabling Event – took place at the Senior Center
 - i. This was a last-minute event that we were able to table. Luci and Rachel attended, and Barb handed off the materials for the table.
 - ii. Related to this is planning materials for next year:
 - 1. There is a tablecloth, it is just not with the banner. To discuss under New Business.
- d. September visit from the Town Attorney – Clarification on Committee role
 - i. Opened the floor to feedback/questions on the visit
 - ii. Debbie stated she mentioned at previous meetings that the town attorney needed to provide information
 - iii. David suggested we would have appreciated more notice before his attendance. He noted the advance announcement that Anne Dafchik will be at the next meeting.

- iv. Barb spoke up that she agreed that she felt caught off guard by the visit in September and would have liked to have been better prepared for the guest and topic.
- v. Debbie noted that there is a recording of that meeting if anyone wants to review it.
 - 1. David pointed out that the recording is not accessible due to lack of interpreter. He suggested we consider always recording and including an interpreter for future meetings so that it's accessible to not just him but all people who need this accommodation.
 - 2. Luci asked about closed captioning.
 - 3. David said that there is a way to do this, but an interpreter would be better. Voice recognition may not always be accurate or recognized by the AI that is used for closed captioning – interpreter is a better option, and closed captioning is a back-up.
 - 4. Debbie confirmed that there's no issue with the budget to provide the interpreters that are needed for all meetings.
 - 5. David requested an interpreter for the recorded video or a transcript so he can watch it.
 - 6. Debbie will ask the town.
- vi. Debbie asked if there are additional questions that the group still has about the topics discussed for the town attorney:
 - 1. Luci said she was not clear ahead of time on the purpose of the town attorney visit so she was confused. She thought he was coming to help the people with concerns.
 - 2. Luci wants to make sure she has the right takeaway from the town attorney.
 - a. Her interpretation is that we may consult with the Town regarding buildings/properties that are Town owned/operated, but not private properties.
 - b. Sue agreed with this interpretation.
 - 3. Debbie mentioned Erica had sent an email to the Town citing concerns.
 - a. Erica acknowledged the email and spoke about her experience as Chair
 - b. Stated she noted tension several months ago and reached out to the Town asking if there were concerns or anything she needed to do differently as Chair moving forward
 - c. Since she received no response, she assumed all was fine to move forward
 - d. Stated that her recent email was sent to Debbie, the attorney, and the ADA Coordinators to let the Town know she would need to be on the receiving end of more transparent communication to continue serving as Chair
 - e. She noted changes to Zoom hosting privileges

- f. Noted that Bob responded to her email after about a week and offered a private Zoom meeting to address concerns
 - g. While appreciated, Erica stated a separate meeting felt redundant
- 4. Rachel said she wanted to be clear on what the Committee can do to pass along concerns to the right people.
- 5. Rachel and Erica felt that the Committee was being told that we could listen but that it was not our role to pass things along to the town.
- 6. Bob said the Committee should be a resource to people who need us.
- 7. Luci wanted to know if it is our role to advocate for going above and beyond minimum ADA requirements.

III. New Business

- a. Acknowledgement – Debbie took the initiative to reach out to Supervisor Kulpa to request that the Committee on Disabilities be added by amendment to the Main Street Corridor Plan Project Charter
- b. Propose that we save new business item regarding handouts and tabling materials for the November meeting.
 - i. Motion to table this item until November
 - 1. Erica Rodman – first
 - 2. Luci Miranda – second
 - 3. All in favor
- c. Debbie reminded us that some have terms expiring this year
 - i. Luci Miranda
 - ii. Barb Robertson
 - iii. Tom Roetzer
 - iv. Dave Whalen
- d. Should email Debbie of their intention to continue or to end service.

IV. Next Meeting

- a. November 6th, 2023 – 6:30 pm

V. Closing

- a. Meeting adjourned at 8:09pm
 - i. Motion to adjourn
 - 1. Tom Roetzer – first
 - 2. Erica Rodman – second
 - 3. All in favor