

**TOWN OF AMHERST
COMMITTEE on DISABILITIES MINUTES
October 7, 2024**

Member Name	Present/ Excused	Member Name	Present/ Excused
Erica Rodman, Chair	Present	Barbara Robertson, Member	Present
David Wantuck, Vice Chair	Present	Susan Zummo, Member	Present
Rachel Martin, Secretary	Present	Dave Whalen, Member	Excused
Luci Miranda, Member	Present	Tom Roetzer, Member	Present
Chong Cheng, Member	Excused	Jamie Mobberly, Member	Present

Other Participant Name	Present/ Excused	Address if applicable
Town of Amherst Liaison – Angela Marinucci	Present	N/A
ADA Coordinator – Bob McCarthy	Present	N/A
Building Department – Bill Prenevau	Present	N/A
Interpreter – Staci	Present	N/A
Interpreter – Barbara	Present	N/A
Secretary to the Council Members – Martha Taggart	Present	N/A

Guests:

Samuel Alba, Town Attorney
Chief Chamberlin, Amherst Police Department

Zoom Guests:

1. “Nick”
2. “N/A”
3. “Susan G.”
4. “Wolf, Haber, and Stanton”

The meeting was called to order at 6:35pm.

I. Minutes

- a. September minutes reviewed.
- b. September minutes approved as read
 - i. Erica Rodman – first
 - ii. David Wantuck – second
 - iii. All in favor

II. Accessibility Reminder – reviewed at the beginning of the meeting

- a. Please use the hand button on Zoom
- b. Please share your name before speaking each time.
- c. When passing a motion, please state your name before saying first or second.
- d. If you are sharing your screen, please read what is on your screen for those who are not able to visually experience what is on the screen.

III. Guest Speaker

Chief Chamberlin, Amherst Police Department

- i. Disability Awareness Training – Received by police department.
 - 1. Alternate years in person/online. This year is online via Google Classroom.
 - 2. David asked about VRI training. He said they would like the opportunity to update the training and asked if this would be possible in the near future. Chief Chamberlin said they can get connected.
 - 3. Erica asked to talk about Service Animals and the training the officers receive related to the laws surrounding service animals and rights. He said the officers are required to know all the laws, but noted that there are a lot of them. He offered that retraining on the VRI as well as service animal laws may be good training to do together.
 - 4. Luci asked about the phones on the bike path. Chief said he has not seen this on the list for the budget, but he will check. She noted that some cell service is sometimes not good. He is not sure if they are still working at this time. He said officers used to test the phones during their patrol, but he does not know if they still do. He will check if they are now or not. Angela will see if there's any additional information about this with the town and report back at next meeting.
 - 5. Barb asked about any protocol for officers for mental or intellectual disabilities. Chief said there are teams who get additional training to properly assist people with needs in these areas. There is a CIT (Crisis Intervention Team) Program.

IV. Old Business

- a. VRI for Town Facilities Update – David Wantuck
 - i. David has shared the information needed with the Town for this, and they are waiting for confirmation on next steps to move forward.
- b. Changes to the Town Website
 - i. Erica sent out the link to the Committee webpage and asked members to bring feedback to tonight's meeting.
 - 1. Previous suggestions
 - a. Link to accessible parking permits, signage for neighborhoods with kids with disabilities
 - 2. David – Can we change the icon for the accessibility features to be the general accessibility icon rather than the current eye icon. A few Committee members mentioned that not everyone would know

these icons and asked if there is a way to make the accessibility features more universally clear so people know what it is. And also the size of the icon was noted as being “small.”

- a. Erica also suggested a resource page to explain what these accessibility features are and how to use them
- 3. Discussion about our page vs. the town page as a whole and its overall accessibility. Erica reminded the group that the IT department suggested we focus first on our own page, but the feedback on the whole town site was noted.
- 4. Rachel – Suggestion to add the Facebook page feed directly to the page as a plug-in if possible as it would be adding up to date content to the page without duplicating and may drive people to our Facebook page.
- 5. Tom suggested that we have a link to the emergency management site to help people register themselves with Emergency Management. He also suggested we remove all old posts that are outdated and only keep current things. Luci suggested removing the posts but keeping the pictures for historical purposes that could go in one place such as “previous events” in an album-like view.
- 6. Asked about old articles and posts there, and what we should do with them. Luci suggested there could be “boxes” or categories that would organize the items that are available.
 - a. Motion to delete the four article items shown during the meeting.
 - i. Erica – first
 - ii. Luci – second
 - iii. All in favor
- 7. Erica will take the notes and talk with Dave Willer and will report back next month at our meeting.
- 8. *Note added later in the meeting, Rachel made suggestion to include resources on our page to reporting issues with highway department or other appropriate department – either linked within the appropriate place in the Town website or instructions for who to call.
- c. Disability Awareness Training for Town – Bob McCarthy
 - 1. Bob will connect with Dave Whalen and will give an update at the next meeting.

V. New Business

- a. **Agenda for Steven Floss’ visit from the Highway Department – Nov 4th meeting**
 - i. Erica asked Bob to give ideas of what types of questions we should be focusing on asking Steven.
 - 1. Bob suggested accessibility projects, sidewalks, signals, winter weather concerns, etc.

- ii. Erica noted how responsive the Town has been with identified issues and encouraged the whole Committee to be on the lookout for issues and reporting them so they can be addressed. Erica reported timely resolution to several issues.
 - iii. Luci asked about how issues can be reported. Angela noted there is a “pothole email” residents can use as an example. Rachel suggested that this may be something linked on our webpage as a resource.
- b. David asked to make a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 pm in recognition of the time and to table further agenda items until next month.

VI. Next Meeting

- a. November 4, 2024 @ 6:30 pm on Zoom
- b. No meeting in December

VII. Closing

- a. Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm
 - i. Motion to adjourn
 - 1. David Wantuck – first
 - 2. Erica Rodman – second
 - 3. All in favor