

Amherst Committee on Disabilities Meeting Minutes

May 5, 2025 6:37 PM - 8:12 PM

- I. Introduction: Chair Erica Rodman called the meeting to order at 6:37 PM.
- II. Roll Call: Present:

- Erica Rodman (Chair)
- Jeffery Zeplowitz (Vice Chair)
- Barbara Robertson (Secretary)
- Luci Miranda
- Chong Cheng
- Jamie Sheldon
- Fran Knab
- Tom Roetzer

Excused:

- Dave Whalen
- Jamie Mobberly
- Lindsey Cassick
- Endell Osuna

Town Representatives:

- Laurie Stillwell (Community Development Director)
- Robert McCarthy (ADA Coordinator)
- Angela Marinucci (Liaison)
- Bill Prenevau (Building Department)

Guests:

- Andrea Morgante
- Spike Mertes

- III. Approval of April Minutes - Motion to approve April minutes as read.
Motion: Erica Rodman; Second: Chong Cheng - Passed unanimously
- IV. Old Business
 - 1. Bike Path Emergency Phones
 - Erica Rodman proposed reaching out to Chief Chamberlain to invite him to the June meeting or start a dialogue about the bike path phone plan.
 - Motion: Erica Rodman; Second: Tom Roetzer; Passed unanimously
 - 2. Town Disability Awareness Training
 - Robert McCarthy reported no significant updates but expects to have more information at the next meeting.

3. Guest Speakers for 2025

- Committee discussed inviting Chief Chamberlain, Brandon Peters (Emergency Management), Anne Dafchik (Town Architect), and Mary-Diana Pouli (Youth and Rec Department).
- Motion to extend invitations to these speakers: Erica Rodman
Second: Jeffery Zeplowitz; Passed unanimously

4. Website Update

- Committee agreed to keep website review as a monthly agenda item.
- Chong Cheng suggested creating a direct email for the committee to improve accessibility for residents.
- Motion to request IT set up a direct email address for the committee: Chong Cheng; Second: Luci Miranda; Passed unanimously

5. Town Hall Audio System

- Extensive discussion on ongoing concerns about the audio system.
- Angela Marinucci reported recent \$1,500 investment in audio equipment.
- Motion to terminate ongoing discussion about Town Hall audio equipment unless new ADA concerns arise: Erica Rodman; Second: Jeffery Zeplowitz; Passed unanimously

V. New Business:

- Service Animal Registration - Erica Rodman discussed issues with the clerk's office regarding appropriate questions for service animal verification.

VI. Guest Speaker: Presentation by Laurie Stillwell:

- Laurie Stillwell provided an update on the town's \$2 million ADU grant program. She noted that construction costs have risen significantly, making the \$125,000 grants insufficient for many applicants. The town is exploring options to provide gap financing and is seeking changes to the program from the state.
- Laurie Stillwell described a new workforce housing program developed with the IDA to provide more affordable rental units for those slightly above 80% of the area median income.
- Laurie Stillwell provided an update on the Blocher Homes affordable housing project, which will have 93 units of family and supportive housing, including 11 HOME-assisted units.

VII. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Erica Rodman; Second: Jeff Zeplowitz; Passed unanimously
Meeting adjourned at 8:12 PM.

VIII. Passed Motions:

1. Approval of April minutes
2. Reach out to Chief Chamberlain regarding bike path emergency phones
3. Extend invitations to guest speakers
4. Request creation of committee email address
5. Terminate ongoing discussion of Town Hall audio system
6. Adjournment

IX. **Next Meeting Date: June 9, 2025 @ 6:30 pm.**