

Amherst Committee on Disabilities Meeting Minutes
August 11, 2025 6:40 PM - 7:58 PM

Meeting called to order at 6:40 PM by Chair Erica R.

I. Introduction: Chair's Remarks

The Chair addressed recent challenges faced by the Committee, including the postponement of a scheduled guest appearance from the police department. She reaffirmed the Committee's mission to represent residents with disabilities, identify accessibility barriers, and ensure such concerns are addressed by the town. She noted ongoing issues with delayed follow-up, limited departmental communication, and inconsistent member participation. The Chair encouraged all members to renew their commitment to the Committee's work and to explore practical ways to strengthen engagement, enhance collaboration, and operate as a unified body moving forward.

II. Roll Call: Present:

- Erica R. (Chair)
- Jeffery Zeplowitz (Vice Chair)
- Barbara Robertson (Secretary)
- Marty Taggart (Councilmember Secretary)
- Bob McCarthy – ADA Coordinator
- Angela Marinucci – Councilwoman, Liaison
- Chong Cheng – Member
- Tom Roetzer – Member
- Andrea Morgante – Resident
- Bill Prenevau – Building Department
- Endell Osuna – Member

Absent Members:

- Jamie Sheldon
- Dave Whalen
- Frances Knab
- Jamie Mobberly
- Lindsay Cassick
- Luci Miranda

III. Old Business:

A. Senior Health Fair Update

- Chong and Erica reported a successful event with high turnout

- Distributed information on Committee activities, parking permits, and service dogs
 - Visited by Senator Sean Ryan and Assemblymember Karen McMahon
- B. Bike Path Emergency Phones
 - Update postponed due to Chief Chamberlin's absence
- C. IT Department Website Updates
 - New dedicated form for contacting the Committee added to town website
 - Form tested and confirmed accessible for screen readers
- D. September In-Person Meeting Review
 - Discussion on whether to hold September meeting in-person or via Zoom
 - Committee members expressed mixed preferences
 - Decision: Erica to send follow-up email polling members on format preference

IV. New Business:

- A. Service Dog Incident (presented by Erica R.)
 - Detailed incident of off-leash dog interfering with Erica's guide dog
 - Concerns raised about police response and enforcement of service animal interference laws
 - Bob McCarthy reported ongoing review of the incident
- B. Pothole Complaint Near Accessible Parking (presented by Erica R.)
 - Resident complaint about potholes blocking access to accessible spaces
 - Issue resolved, but highlighted communication gaps
- C. Senior Center Accessible Door Button (presented by Erica R.)
 - Concern raised about button height (approximately 40 inches)
 - Bob McCarthy to follow up with Mark Burke for potential adjustment
- D. Procedure for Handling Resident Requests (discussion led by Erica R.)
 - Debate on handling urgent issues between meetings vs. waiting for full Committee
 - Chong suggested developing a flowchart for triaging requests
 - No consensus reached; further discussion needed

V. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 7:58 PM by Chair Erica R.

VI. No motions were passed due to lack of quorum.

VII. Next meeting date: September 8, 2025 (format to be determined)