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**City of Melrose Commission on Disability (MCOD)
Meeting Minutes**

Meeting Date: April 10, 2024

Commissioners Present:

Garin Boyd
Alaine Breen
Gary Hale
David Hoff
Erin Heyneman
Margaret Sheets

Commissioners Absent:

None

1. Call to Order

Commission Chair Hoff called to order the regular meeting of the Commission on Disability at 7:05 PM.

2. Approval of minutes from last meeting

A motion to approve the minutes from the March 13, 2024 meeting was made by Commissioner Heyneman and second by Commissioner Sheets. Passed unanimously.

3. Public Participation

No public participation at this time.

4. Friends of the Middlesex Fells

- Community engagement coordinator of the Friends of the Fells Maddie Morgan joined meeting to let the Commission know of an accessibility hike taking place on Friday, July 26th. Event will be led by two Malden organizations.
- M. Sheets offered assistance with resources (including publicity, volunteers). Coincidence with Disability Month may allow a Melrose COD partnership opportunity with Melrose (although the event would be in Greenwood Park Stoneham).
- Discussion focused on potential assessment of public space (Fells) possibly by Institute for Human Centered Design.
- Breen asked if this event was part of Outdoor Expo, which had in the past done adaptive and accessible hikes.

- E. Heyneman mentioned Story Walk which was an event focused in Greenwood Park.

5. State COD Association Meeting

Three Commissioners, E. Heyneman, G. Hale and G. Boyd attended the April Massachusetts COD meeting (held April 3rd 2024 @ 12-1:30pm). Commissioners recounted meeting highlights, including information regarding “Understanding our Differences”, a Newton based public education curriculum that had been held in recent years, was discontinuing.

6. SEPAC (Special Education Parents Advisory Council)

Last month’s SEPAC meeting was held on March 26th 2024. There was no SEPAC representative present to report on this meeting. D. Hoff suggested outreach to SEPAC, and will follow up.

7. May MCOD Meeting

Chair D. Hoff will not be able to attend and lead May 2024 MCOD meeting (May 8th 2024). Vice Chair M. Sheets will take responsibility for chairing the meeting.

8. Draft Work Plan

As has been the custom post Commission elections, MCOD reviewed the Melrose Commission on Disability Work Plan. During this time the document was opened and reviewed by the Commission. The following is a summary of the discussion:

Communication Strategy

- Discussed possible community survey and community engagement. Discussed increased publicity materials, ways to get the organizations in Melrose to reach out to us.
- Events that help increase our visibility: Victorian Fair, Senior Fair, Melrose Health Fair.
- Social Media: Need to increase social media presence. Instagram stories and Facebook MCOD page. Leveraging our MCOD interns to help with increasing our social media presence.
- Melrose City Web Page is an active action item assigned to D. Hoff and G. Boyd.

Public Schools/SEPAC

- Accessibility at the schools as a focus as a result of findings of Transition Plan.
- E. Heyneman indicated that SEPAC had reached out to MCOD in order to notify us that MPS was funding a sensory friendly room.
- G. Hale indicated that work could be done in IEP/504 rights. G. Hale indicated an interest in working with the public schools on after graduation transition and employment. A. Breen indicated that in her experience with MPS had varied results of the course of time she had been actively involved in working with SEPAC (both in education, and post graduation transition). G. Hale indicated that state provides funding for transition services.
- E. Heyneman outlined roles critical to education (principals, SPED coordinators), Classroom teachers being best resources.
- G. Hale and D. Hoff reintroduced idea of community disability survey.

Community-Business Survey

- M. Sheets indicated business roles on accessibility survey may help clarify ways they are accessible.
- G. Hale indicated that maybe taking time on both residential and business surveys may be a good idea.

Motion to approve updated Work Plan was made by M. Sheets, seconded by G. Boyd. Passed unanimously.

Disability Pride Month

- M. Sheets presented document listing Disability Pride events that had come out of meeting with E. Heyneman and A. Breen.
- G. Boyd indicated that Meghan McDonagh had come up with a number of ideas that might be suitable for a larger calendar of events.
- M. Sheets thought having a mural in Melrose for July would be great. A. Breen indicated that Kris Rodolico has very firm budgeting/cost of the mural display.
- M. Sheets suggested that interns work on flyers for Disability Pride event.
- Disability Pride Idea with most traction is Library Storytime/Ice Cream Social at Milano Center. Date for this is set tentatively for 7/27/2024.

Other Business

- D. Hoff noted that Partners for Youth with Disabilities has asked the MCOD to help recruit for the [Youth Leadership Forum](#) to be held June 23-28th.
- D. Hoff noted the US Department of Justice has [updated guidelines for web content and apps provided by state and local government](#). He indicated might be a good time to look at Melrose city site.
- MOD Grant informational meeting is 4/17/2024 1-2 pm.
- M. Sheets announced she has been selected as accessibility coordinator at Polymnia Choral Society.
- G. Boyd shared experience at Creative Alliance hosted a Creative Summit. E. Heyneman and G. Boyd attended the event and made connections in Melrose and other communities.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm. Motion made by M. Sheets. Seconded by G. Boyd. Passed unanimously.

Meeting minutes submitted by Erin Heyneman, Commission Secretary.