

COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES
Whipple Senior Center
182 Green Street, Weymouth, MA 02191
June 13, 2018

Minutes

PRESENT:

Hank Goldman, Chairman
Lisa Jennings, Vice Chairman
Richard Johnson
Andrea Feeney
Ron Evans

NOT PRESENT:

Gerry Begonis
Linda Sera
John MacLeod
Michelle Casey

RECEIVED
TOWN OF WEYMOUTH
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
2018 SEP 13 AM 11:59

Chairman Goldman called the meeting of the Commission on Disabilities to order at 7:00PM.

LETTER TO WHS with NO RESPONSE

Chairman Goldman stated he sent a letter to Principal Strauss on May 11, 2018 and has still not received a response. The letter reads as follows:

To: Principal Alan Strauss
Sent: May 11, 2018
Sub: Accessibility Concerns at WHS

Good Afternoon Mr. Strauss:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Weymouth Commission on Disabilities regarding some accessibility concerns that have been brought to our attention and discussed at recent meetings. Our hope is to be able to work together to resolve all concerns moving forward and not to get hung up on the past history or reasons behind these three concerns.

The first concern was brought to our attention in January. We were informed that the HP parking at the Core Connector and also by the Gold Café had not been plowed after the large snowfall in early January. I decided to check this out for myself before saying anything and drove to the high school to look (and to have lunch at the restaurant). I did personally observe that the spaces in both these locations were not cleared and had been used to pile large amounts of snow. Also, outside the Gold Café the sidewalk that someone would use to access the handicapped cut in the curb was also buried under large amounts of snow.

When I entered the building to sign in to go to the restaurant I saw one of the members of your Administrative Team and spoke with them. They wrote down my concern on a piece of paper

and thanked me. Warm weather resolved this issue in just a few weeks. I am happy that I can report to you that after each of the numerous storms that occurred later, including the two large March storms, not only was this taken care of properly, but it seemed that extra care was taken to assure the sidewalk near the Gold Café was full width and all the way down to the pavement.

I cannot remember who I spoke with from your team, but maybe that is a good thing and represents how significant the changes at WHS have been this year. A member of your team learned of an issue, took ownership, and communicated and resolved it immediately with any fanfare. This appears to be resolved, but in future years please be aware of this potential issue, particularly during the cleanup after the first storm of each winter season.

The second concern is an issue that has existed since the day the new WHS building opened. It is the handicapped accessibility to the building at the Core Connector, which is the only accessible entrance for the majority of the public events as it is the handicapped access to the gym, the auditorium, and the Humanities Center. PLEASE NOTE: We are ONLY addressing the accessibility to the building outside of school hours when the PUBLIC needs to access the building. This would also not include school activities and student organizations meeting after school in the building. We have to have faith that all adults I charge would be aware of and assure that any student needing the accessible entrance would have that access without the need to unlock the building when the general public does not need access.

Basically the Handicapped Accessible door is often not activated and is also frequently locked. I have personally found this to be the case the majority of the time I arrive for any event other than School Committee meetings (because the staff is well aware I will be at SC meetings). On the evening of the Holiday Concert and again on the night of the Weymouth Unplugged NONE of the doors at this entrance were unlocked – forcing me to walk around the building and climb the steps (one step at a time as I need to do). You were with me one night when the door was locked a few weeks ago and it was locked again this past Tuesday for the Town Wide Parent Council meeting. For more than 10 years now I have been quietly and discreetly speaking with Maintenance staff and they have almost always thanked me and immediately taken care of it when prompted, but I am not at the building to prompt them the majority of the time. If they can always take care of this for School Committee, why is it not also being taken care for all events? Also, this year has been different and I have had some push back at times and challenged regarding whether the door needs to be unlocked or regarding when it needs to be unlocked. We don't want anyone on staff to get in trouble, we just want to have this issue addressed and permanently resolved once and for all. This door needs to be unlocked well in advance of any public meeting, sporting event, or public performance or assembly in the auditorium to enable anyone with a need to access the building/elevator to attend these events.

The third and final concern has been communicated by members of the public as well as by families with students in the building. This is the signage that appeared this year on all elevator doors. We do not know what created the situation that it became necessary to post this signage this year for the first time. The wording, "Do not ride the elevator unless you have a pass from the health office", has created confusion for those in the general public entering the building and has created concerns among some parents that it singles out, identifies, and stigmatizes individuals with disabilities – whether permanent or short term. Use of the elevator is also an

accommodation that is sometimes written into an IEP and this new "pass" creates a situation where a student's IEP is no longer sufficient to permit access to the elevator. This is a concern to those involved with special needs issues. If you believe there is a need to post some signage, members of the committee can suggest different wording that would not offend or possibly violate the Americans with Disabilities Act.

I hope we can all work to permanently address and resolve these issues.

Thank you for your time.

*Henry D. "Hank" Goldman
Chair, Weymouth Commission on Disabilities*

Chairman Goldman stated he did receive a memo today from Sue McDonough that he will read into the record stating still no response from the school.

*Memo to: Hank Goldman
From: Sue McDonough
Date: June 13, 2018
Subject: RE: Accessibility Concerns at WHS*

Hello Hank,

Again I wanted to give you an update before your meeting tonight. I have reached out to the individuals to address the issue raised in your email regarding Accessibility Concerns at WHS. Unfortunately, I do not have an immediate answer. Some of the individuals I have reached out to are off site today. I will email you once I have an answer. Please let me know if you have any additional concerns, or if there is an immediate accommodation needed. Thank you for your patience and understanding while I gather the information.

MINUTES

Mr. Johnson made a MOTION to APPROVE the minutes of April 11, 2018. Ms. Jennings SECONDED the MOTION. It was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

ADA COORDINATORS REPORT

Chairman Goldman stated the summary of the ADA Report is summed up into 5 points:

- King Oak Hill Park
- Wessagusset
- Winter Farmer's Market
- Complete Streets
- Elder Services

ADA FEATURES at each PARK

Chairman Goldman stated he will send an invitation again to Steve Reilly and Brian Kowalski of Weymouth Recreation Department and ask them to come to a future meeting to explain exactly what types of ADA equipment is at each park in town. It would be nice to get this equipment and it correlating park listed on the town's website so citizens would know Weymouth has this equipment.

SEPAC

Chairman Goldman stated the most recent meeting was a presentation on the programs featured at Johnson Early Childhood Center. There has been some turnover on the board. Next meeting is a picnic on August 25, 2018.

SCHOOLBUILDING COMMITTEE MEETING (Chapman)

Ms. Jennings stated there was a public forum this week.

Ms. Jennings stated the committee is leaning towards preserving and renovating the café, gymnasium and the theatre.

6-19-18	selects schematic design
6-21-18	school committee meeting to approve preferred schematic design
7-27-18	submit preferred schematic report to MSBA

SOUTH SHORE HOSPITAL (issue with locked entrance/exit after 8:00PM)

Chairman Goldman stated he has not gotten back to them yet.

ABIGAIL ADAMS MIDDLE SCHOOL

Chairman Goldman stated they have someone guarding the handicapped door now for community events.

GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN

Chairman Goldman stated 42% of children in Plymouth are being raised by grandparents.

HANDICAP SIGNS

Chairman Goldman discussed procedures for booking events in the town. Part of permitting a room or piece of land should include having to explain how many handicapped parking spaces this event will need and renting that many signs. Town of Weymouth no owns handicapped signs, plenty for all events in town.

DANHABBIB'S INTELLIGENT LIVES on DVD

Ms. Jennings stated she went to a viewing of Dan Habbib's *Intelligent Lives* at UMass Boston. This is the man that also did *Including Samuel*. This movie was a thorough history of disability. Ms. Jennings recommends that the School Committee purchase this video because it's better than *Including Samuel*. Ms. Jennings won a copy of the video and will be holding a special screening of the movie.

ANDREA'S LAST MEETING

Ms. Feeney stated she has resigned from the commission and tonight is her last meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Johnson made a MOTION to ADJOURN at 8:15PM. Mr. Evans SECONDED the MOTION. It was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Christine Malloy
Recording Secretary

Approved by:



Hank Goldman, Chairman

Dated:

9/12/18