

Commission on Disabilities (CoD) Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 11, 2022
Remote Meeting via Zoom

In attendance: Diane DeNapoli, Chair; Stephanie Gertz, Vice-Chair; Megan Baker, Secretary; SCPO Keith Jermyn, Member, Maria OLaughlin; Member; Sharon Allen, Member-at-Large

Absent: Mike Clancy, Member

Guests in Attendance: None

1. **Call to Order**

At 7:00 p.m., Chair DeNapoli called the meeting to order.

Chair DeNapoli read the following **Open Meeting Law** statement that has been slightly modified:

“This meeting is being held remotely as an alternative means of public access pursuant to an Order issued by the Governor of Massachusetts dated March 12, 2020 Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law. You are hereby advised that this meeting and all communications during this meeting may be recorded by the Town of Hingham in accordance with Open Meeting Law. If any participant wishes to record this meeting, please notify the Chair at the start of the meeting in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A, § 20(f) so that the Chair may inform all other participants of said recording.”

The Town of Hingham is recording the meeting.

2. **Opening Comments by Chair**

Chair DeNapoli noted a statement made by Bethany Hamilton, the 13-year old girl attacked by a shark who lost an arm in the attack yet went on to be a very great surfer who goes in the water as much as possible. "I don't need easy; I just need possible." Ms. DeNapoli is embracing this thought in January beginning our second year of the Covid-19 pandemic. We don't need easy; I just need possible.

3. **Review and Accept Meeting Notes from December meeting**

Chair DeNapoli suggested to strike the statement about a CORI check.

Ms. Allen motioned to delete the CORI statement from the notes section and motioned to pass the minutes of December 7, 2021. Ms. Baker seconded.

Vote: Ms. Gertz: aye; Ms. Baker: aye; Ms. Allen: aye; Mr. Jermyn: aye. All in favor.

Roll Call Vote: 4-0-0

Ms. OLaughlin joined the meeting.

4. **Review workflow document / Update since our last meeting**

A. **911 Form Rebranding** - as reported by Ms. Baker and Chair DeNapoli

- 1) Members met with Jonathan Gordon and Alan Smith of South Shore Regional Emergency Communications Center (SSRECC).

Commission on Disabilities (CoD) Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 11, 2022

- 2) 911 process now
 - o Special Needs Registry
 - State Medical Form (brief), goes into 911 database
 - √ Tiered folder system (binder)
 - Special Needs Section (couple of forms exist)
 - o Nowhere to list (PTSD, service animal, cognitive, autistic, memory loss, oxygen use, etc.)

Ms. Baker described 2 forms created with cooperation of Chair DeNapoli and Hingham Police that reside on Commission on Disabilities (CoD) website as well as Hingham Town web site.

Issues with the form:

- o Populated form does not go directly into 911 system
 - o Populated form goes into a binder residing in the Dispatch Center
- 3) Chair DeNapoli is tasked to locate all existing forms and place them under one umbrella.
 - 4) Need a universal form that benefits a broad community of persons
 - 5) Once completed, Mr. Gordon and Mr. Smith of SSRECC will champion the form with the State.
 - 6) Ms. Baker opened the meeting to brainstorm rebranding the form name.
 - o Ms. OLaughlin suggested:
 - "Exceptional" person is used in post-22 age group
 - Term "disabled" carries stigma for persons who may not identify as disabled
 - Suggestion: "Form for Exceptional Persons Requiring Emergency Assistance"
 - 7) Ms. Baker asked CoD members to focus on a Rebranding name
 - 8) There will be a second January meeting with CoD liaisons and SSRECC.

B. **ALEC Training** (Autism & Law Enforcement Education Coalition)

Chair DeNapoli said the January/February meetings with Police are "floating" due to the current Covid-19 pandemic and reduced law enforcement staff.

C. **Hate Speech Policy in Hingham**

Chair DeNapoli gave an update:

- o She spoke with Nes Correnti of Hingham School Committee.
- o The parents of the victim are involved in this discussion.
- o The School Committee hopes to address a policy this year.
- o The policy was discussed at the (DEI) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion meeting at a high level with school administrators.
- o Commission on Disabilities (CoD) will keep an eye on the matter.

At 7:18 pm, an intruder interrupted the Zoom meeting using racial expletives. Chair DeNapoli apologized to those watching that this is not reflective of the Commission on Disabilities.

Pause the meeting

Vice-Chair Gertz motioned to pause the meeting at 7:18 pm. Unfortunately, due to the intrusion we were unable to determine if anyone seconded the motion.

Vote: Ms. Gertz: aye; Ms. Baker: aye; Ms. Allen: aye; Mr. Jermyn: aye; Ms. OLaughlin, aye. All in favor.

Roll Call Vote: 5-0-0

Reopen the meeting

At 7:19 pm, a new Zoom session was opened, and the meeting resumed.

Chair DeNapoli sincerely apologized for the language used in the meeting. She said unfortunately, someone joined the meeting with malice in their heart particularly when we were talking about hate speech in the schools. It is a good reminder why we need a policy like this.

She continues to encourage the school and all those in the Town to keep remembering that when people gather in good faith, unfortunately, sometimes people try to do things that are not in the best spirit.

D. ADU (Accessory Dwelling Unit) Study

Chair DeNapoli will keep CoD members apprised when the meeting will be held this month.

5. Vote to Approve Rules and Regulations

Ms. OLaughlin motioned to accept the Rules and Regulations. Mr. Jermyn seconded.

Vote: Ms. Gertz: aye; Ms. Baker: aye; Ms. Allen: aye; Mr. Jermyn: aye; Ms. OLaughlin, aye. All in favor.

Roll Call Vote: 5-0-0

Chair DeNapoli clarified the Commission can receive both monetary and real estate donations. The CoD received a \$200 donation from Sankey Law. This was the Commission's first donation. We will need cash to support good works. Per Open Meeting Law, the monthly cash balance will need to be recorded with the Town. We will need a Treasurer.

6. Discuss Terms Leadership Board for 2022

Chair DeNapoli offered to stay for an 18-month rather than 12-month term. Ms. Allen expressed gratitude for the continuity. She thanked members for volunteering for the Commission.

At the December meeting, nominated members included:

Ms. Baker to continue as Secretary

Dr. Gertz has been nominated as Chair.

Ms. DeNapoli has been nominated as Vice-Chair.

In gratitude, Ms. Allen encouraged nominated members to continue to seek those positions. Members did not vote on elections at this meeting.

Chair DeNapoli encouraged members to invite persons interested in joining the Commission, or just come and listen to a meeting or two. It's a good idea to encourage new people with new ideas.

7. Any information not known prior to 24 hours before the meeting.

Mr. Jermyn asked about the grant from Second Parish for CoD. Chair DeNapoli said a grant was awarded for \$275 for a transfer wheelchair for the Senior Center. The grant award from Second Parish for the wheelchair should be in the Hingham Journal this week.

Chair DeNapoli said Dr. Gertz will be looking for funds and fundraising activities for the Commission.

Chair DeNapoli mentioned another Second Parish grant award recipient was a youth who will build a Buddy Bench. She explained it is a bench where someone could sit if they are feeling left out. Others could take notice of the lonely person and give attention thus building a bridge to connect. Ms. OLaughlin said she would like to support funding a Buddy Bench.

Chair DeNapoli thought one project might be extending the picnic tables to accommodate a person in a wheelchair.

Mr. OLaughlin received communication from an attorney/advocate who testified on two important public safety initiatives. One bill would mandate autism training for veteran police officers and correctional officers expanding the recent law which mandated training for new police recruits. Another Blue Envelope bill will make it possible to request a specially designed Blue Envelope from the RMV Registry of Motor Vehicles that a driver who has autism can place on their car sun visor to notify an officer that he or she has autism and provide guidance on effective communication techniques.

Chair DeNapoli said in January, there was supposed to be training for Police of a half-day on dementia funded by EPOCH Memory with the second half-day on ALEC, but with the Covid-19 flare-up, officers cannot be pulled off the street for training. There is in-person training as well as *not* in-person training.

Ms. OLaughlin learned through (AFAM) Executive Committee, Advocates for Autism of Massachusetts, that some great initiatives are coming out of the pandemic such as the Operation House Call bill that will try to bring the whole model of medicine to "hospital at home". This program would use young doctors trained to deliver specific services to people with autism and/or cognitive disabilities. There will also be education for Police officers to communicate with people with autism who drive.

The next CoD meeting will be held Tuesday, February 8, 2022 at 7:00 pm.

8. Adjourn

Ms. Allen motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m. Ms. OLaughlin seconded the motion.

Vote: Ms. Gertz: aye; Ms. Baker: aye; Ms. Allen, aye; Mr. Jermyn, aye; Ms. OLaughlin, aye.

Commission on Disabilities (CoD) Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 11, 2022

All in favor. **Vote: Roll Call Vote. 5-0-0**

Meeting Materials used: Workflow document, Rules and Regulations, Meeting Minutes of 12/7/21

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Michaud
Independent Contractor