



TOWN OF FOXBOROUGH

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Foxborough, Massachusetts 02035

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Foxborough Disability Commission Minutes of January 18, 2012

Members Present:

Sue Collins

Richard Biggiari

Cindy Curran

Margaret Chaisson

Charlie Hobbs

Tony Williams

Guests:

Sharon Wason, Foxborough Town Planner

Allison Shepherd, MIT Student (*Intern to Sharon Wason*)

Minutes

Motion to accept Minutes of 11-28-11 made by Margaret.

Second by Tony. Motion passed.

Housing

Town Planner Sharon Wason informed the board about a forthcoming Housing Production Plan for Foxborough that she is working on with intern Allison Shepherd.

This Plan will serve as a negotiating tool for the Town should there be conflicts in future development. The Plan will be developed with input from many sources, including public meetings, local housing agencies, the local school department and information from the 2010 census. The Plan will include recommendations on housing of all kinds – for elderly, disabled, low, median and upper income brackets and will incorporate proposals for increasing use of the Town center, particularly for pedestrians.

The Board is very interested in following this Plan's development and adding input when appropriate.

Census Stats

Median age of Foxborough residents has increased from 39 years to 41 years since the 2000 census.

Fewer children than expected and more elderly citizens

Percentage of residents listing themselves as Caucasian has dropped from 98% to 94% since 2000.

Transportation

This board has been seeking to clarify and possibly increase availability of transportation to residents with disabilities (para-transportation). Ms. Wason provided valuable information about how to proceed with this task.

First Ms. Wason gave a very helpful and instructive overview of the Regional Massachusetts Planning Agencies. There are 12 Agencies, each encompassing numerous cities and towns. Via these Agencies, each regional community can pool its resources to meet challenges involving solid waste, water and wastewater systems, housing, crime, transportation, workforce training, services for elderly, economic development and other issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries.

The Agency covering our town is the **Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)**. For political reasons dating back to a former governor, the duties of this agency were divided and a separate agency was created strictly to handle transportation issues within this region. This agency is called the **Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)**.

One of the functions of the CTPS is to conduct transportation feasibility studies, which is critical to determine appropriate level of service should we pursue an increase in para-transportation for Foxborough residents. They are federally funded to conduct one free study annually, but also are able to conduct studies for a fee (the cost is about \$50,000).

The board discussed the possibility of perhaps being selected at some future date for the no-cost study, but decided to pursue a more immediate course of action and request a fee-for-service study be commenced as soon as possible.

Ms. Wason has already made some inquiries on our behalf, and has negotiated a 50% discount for us with the CTPS, who have agreed to perform our study for \$25,000 should we obtain the funds to proceed.

The board can submit a Capital Budget Request for the funds needed for this study be placed on the warrant for the Town Meeting. Submissions must be received by February 17 2012. The proposal will go to the Advisory Board to see if it has merit. The funding source would be from the newly instituted Meals Tax.

Motion made by Sue that the Foxborough Disability Commission submit a Capital Budget Request in the amount of \$25,000 for a transit feasibility study. Second by Margaret. Motion passed.

The board sincerely appreciates the involvement and guidance provided by Sharon Wason, and invited Ms. Wason to attend future meetings when she is available.

By-Laws

Sue Collins reported that she wrote a letter to Selectmen stating that this board supports the idea of committee members participating in meetings via remote means (phone and Skype). Margaret will touch base with Selectman Larry Harrington, who is a strong advocate for remote participation, and gather more information on the subject. We may need to revise or by-laws to reflect this kind of policy.

Calendar of upcoming meetings: March 21, May 16, July 18, and September 19.

Name Change

The subject of People First language was raised, which emphasizes the person first, listing disabilities as secondary characteristics, thus recognizing individuals as people separate from disabling conditions. The use of People First language is endorsed by all Federal and State agencies. Discussion ensued and it was resolved that since the current name of this group did not reflect People First language, and that as many residents stumble over the name of this group, the name should be changed. The group agreed on **“The Foxborough Disability Commission.”**

Motion made by Tony to change our name to Foxborough Disability Commission. Second by Richard. Motion passed. Sue will make necessary arrangements.

Concerns

Members raised concerns about some local venues:

- The location of Handicapped parking spots at Patriot Place.
- The door weight at a local restaurant (should not require more than 15# of pressure to open)
- Instances of doors at the top of accessible ramps being locked
- General inaccessibility at many locations

Sue suggested a meeting should be arranged with Dan Murphy of Patriot Place to discuss. The board will continue to review such concerns and will come up with a plan of action.

Web Site

Tony Williams suggested posting blurbs on the web site about venues in town that are Accessibility-Friendly. It was decided that he should write up a few samples and the board will continue the discussion at the next meeting. This type of information could be invaluable to some, but we need to investigate propriety of such listings.

Adjourn

Motion to Adjourn made by Cindy. Second by Sue. Motion passed.

Next Meeting: March 21 2012 at 3 PM at Town Hall.