

Regional Meeting of Commissions on Disability
May 15, 2013

Attending: Myra Berloff, Director of Massachusetts Office on Disability;
Jeff Dougan, Assistant Director of Community Services; Susan Ellis, Medway;
Kevin Rudden, Mendon; Bruce Alexander and Carole Baker, North Attleboro;
Donna Dicorpo and Nacilee Lemaire, Taunton; Jon Cogan, Walpole;
Chip Cronin, Michael Carroll and Paulette, Wrentham.

From Foxboro: Susan Collins, Cindy Curran, Margaret Chaisson, Tony Williams,
Charles Hobbs, Cathy Hickey and Bill Casbarra, ADA Coordinator.

Introductions were made and each participant listed the most pressing issue for their town. All participants named transportation as critical. Other top issues were cooperation of town administration, emergency services awareness and local accessibility problems.

There will be **Community Access Monitoring** in Framingham on 9/17-18. It will feature an overview of the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) and Federal and State building codes.

Myra Berloff led an informative session on many topics:

***Client Services Unit** can provide an attorney if you have a discrimination issue or problems with private or public accessibility.

*Success in some statewide issues such as:

-In the past **Massachusetts ID** wasn't accepted in all places. Some venues wanted a driver's license or alcohol license ID. Now MA ID is now valid everywhere.

- **Fare increase on the RIDE** is going to more than double from \$2 to \$4-5.

- Special tables for **voting** must be provided for citizens who are disabled.

Also there needs to be an accessible voting machine or booth. Contact Jeff Dougan if you need assistance in this matter.

- **Sidewalks** are a priority. The **MA Highway Department** will be conducting a survey on over 10,000 curb cuts on sidewalks and pedestrian lights this summer. Myra is an advisor in this project. Look on the **Department of Transportation website** for more information re. 22G.

-**House #1183** Architectural Access Board won't ask more than Federal Law. On street parking is not regulated, but hopefully towns will go with the "spirit of the law" and follow the 5% of 15 spaces that are mandated in parking lots.

- **Transportation** is an important issue for many towns. Under ADA, municipalities are not obligated to provide para-transit unless there is already public transportation. However, many cities and towns get state funding for their Council on Aging vans – if this is the case, then COA must also provide transport to people with disabilities of all ages. 6-7 vans are granted each year by the state. The program does not fund paying drivers. Towns must fund drivers.

- There will be a **Statewide Transportation Meeting** per Executive Order #530 of Gov. Patrick. Go to MA.gov for details.

- **Jeff Dougan** was initially excited that in his town of Scituate they would be able to take money for MBTA and give it to GATRA. However, things seem to be stalled.

- **Paul Spooner of the Independent Living Center in Framingham** has had success. He has pulled money from the MBTA and can use that money for para-transit.

-**Bruce Alexander** is on the advisory board for Attleboro/Taunton GATRA. He related that fairly detailed records are kept on numbers of riders, numbers of rejected requests etc.

- **Sandra Albright** of the Council on Aging was also mentioned as very knowledgeable.

The subject of **Automatic Door Openers** was brought up. They are not required. The amount of pressure needed to open the door is the only thing that is mandated. Only if the door pressure is not compliant is a automatic door opener required.

The subject of **Emergency Services** was discussed. The state offers 911 Disability Indicator forms that can be submitted to local authorities. Many towns promote this voluntary notification tool so that people with complex situations can pre-notify the first responding agencies in their town of potential issues in an emergency. When residents register with this form, any 911 calls from their landline will trigger a message to the dispatcher with information contained in the form, such as

that a resident is blind, uses oxygen or has mobility difficulties. Many towns also offer an automated reverse call system called Code Red that notifies enrollees of local situations such as power outages, weather emergencies and emergency bulletins. One of the meeting attendees suggested that towns could include the form when mailing out tax bills.

There are also FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) and MEMA (Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency) branches that offer disaster preparedness tips and assistance after an event.

Parking Fines - Some Disability Commissions receive the money collected in their town for accessible parking violations. They use the funds for a variety of purposes – from funding scholarships to helping people renovate their homes for better accessibility. Jeff Dougan has a presentation that he is happy to make to any Commission seeking more information.

Statewide Meeting of Commissions on Disabilities to be held on June 7 in Marlboro. Check MOD website for details.

Meeting was adjourned.

Business Meeting for Foxborough Commission on Disability

Minutes of April 17, 2013 were presented by Sue. Bill moved to accept the Minutes, second by Margaret. Motion passed.

Discussion of Agenda for the next meeting included:

1. Transportation issues - updates
2. Invite Jeff Dougan to our September meeting to talk about our commission using money from Handicapped Parking fines
3. Possibly Tony can speak about his cable show progress
4. Sharon Wason will be invited to go into detail about “Walkability Audit”/ Accessibility Audit”

Next meeting will be on June 19, Wednesday at 3 PM at Town Hall.