

## Andover Commission on Disability—January 27, 2021 Commission Meeting

After the agenda was duly posted and distributed the meeting was conducted virtually through Microsoft Teams at 6:42 p.m.

**Present:** Chair Julie Pike, Jemma Lambert, Justin Coppola, Kathleen Dolan, Judy Wakefield, Eileen Reilly, Steve Surette, David Kahan, Selectwoman Annie Gilbert, and Janet Nicosia, Director of Facilities and Town ADA Coordinator

Roll call: Julie Pike, yes; Justin Coppola, yes; Kathleen Dolan, yes; Judy Wakefield, yes; Jemma Lambert, yes; Steve Surette, yes; David Kahan, yes; Eileen Reilly, yes

**Minutes:** Steve made a motion to approve the December 2, 2020 minutes and Eileen seconded. Unanimously passed.

### **Old Business – Updates:**

Julie announced that Virginia has resigned from the commission, but commission members are welcome to contact her if needed. Judy Wakefield wishes to re-join the commission and her paperwork is being processed.

Selectwoman Annie noted that Virginia did wonderful work on the commission and on her ACOD newsletter which is now posted on -line. The newsletter was also emailed out to the Andover newflash service and Jemma will send it to the 6,000 or so people listed with Elder Services. Janet suggested that additional hard copies could be distributed through-out town in places like the library, old town hall, Town Manager's Office, Customer Service Center and eventually the new Senior Center.

**Spot Checks:** Steve did not have anything to report on spot checks but said to contact him regarding any snow removal issues if needed.

**Group Reports:** Justin had an ADA report. He said that the group is researching differences between the ADA and AAB laws. ***Action Item: Justin will be attending an ADA meeting for the new West Elementary School in February and will discuss the ADA or AAB differences at this meeting. He noted that the same architect who worked on Bancroft will be working on the West El School.***

**Update downtown listing of businesses—**Jemma and Trish are working on an audit of accessible downtown businesses. Jemma has been in contact with students at Merrimack College interested in partnering with ACOD. The first step would be to develop a guide and apps which identify accessible restaurants, shops, and other businesses in town.

The students are willing to provide ongoing audits so that information will be updated as needed. Jemma noted that this effort could be a model for the rest of the State. ***Action Item: Justin, Kathleen, Eileen and Julie agreed to meet with the students. The meeting is scheduled for February 11, at 9 am. Jemma will send a zoom link.***

Jemma reported that in the year 2000 the Town established an “Elderly Taxation Fund “whose purpose was to assist elderly citizens in need of tax or housing assistance.” The fund has \$25K and has never been disbursed. Selectwoman Gilbert asked whether the fund is on-going and if so, part of the charge would be to publicize that people can continue voluntary contributions.

Jemma suggested that two members of the Council on Aging (COA) be part of this tax fund committee to determine need as well as a way to notify people interested in making voluntary contributions to the fund. Jemma then asked for two members of ACOD to join the COA members on this committee. Steve volunteered to help.

### **New Business:**

Julie had asked that everyone come to the meeting with ideas for a project that will need money and for one that will not need money.

Eileen started with a list that **would not** involve money:

- Develop a list or rubric of locations in Andover which have listening devices and a rating system for “friendly hearing condition” places.
- Enlist the aid of audiologists to look at the whole spectrum of hearing disabilities with suggestions for accommodations.
- Have a panel to discuss innovations (For example, the Robb Center will not be using a “loop system” as Eileen thought, but rather a web -based system will be used and people can use their own devices with downloadable app.)

Eileen suggested **spending money** where needed, on rooms to make them accessible for people with hearing disabilities such as closed-captioning and the like.

Molly had sent an email and her ideas were discussed. A general discussion on the status of trails ensued. David noted that the hills in Andover make accessibility difficult. An ADA accessible Haggett’s Pond rail trail was brought up as a project that was being worked and we should work with the Conservation Commission to incorporate Molly’s ideas into that project.

Also, the ADA accessible fishing dock to the Shawsheen river is still a work in progress. Janet noted that Conservation Director Bob Douglas received funding for this project. She also reported that a planned boardwalk behind the West El and behind the Robb Center to Chestnut Court are being handled by the DPW.

Justin reported on two additional items: free upcoming training for ADA courses (detailed in his email) and a strategy for the Communications, Marketing, and ADA working groups. There needs to be a plan with respect to what each group will be working on this year and Content needs will be added to the ACOD web page to prevent it from getting stale.

Justin discussed his idea for the Communications Working Group to consider. Develop an “Andover Commission on Disability Corner at the Robb Center” which will play

“Accessible Andover” (see web site for more information) videos developed with Andover TV and other sources too market Accessibility Services/Projects available to Andover residents. Justin noted that connecting with the North Andover ACOD might be useful as they have technology and already have content ideas.

Jemma noted that her department received a \$50K grant for physical training equipment in the Robb Center.

In response to queries about closed captioning, Janet reported that she will contact Andover TV and find out about how and when closed captioning is used. Eileen asked if there was a way to find about a blueprint or rubric when planners are in the process of making a place hearing accessible/friendly. ***Janet will contact Andover TV, Justin and Eileen will work on a preliminary plan for “Andover Commission on Disability Corner at the Robb Center” and send it to Jemma for discussion.***

**Announcements:** Julie reported on what she has learned about signing up on the State’s Mass.Gov web site /maps for the Corona Virus vaccine. It may be mid-February before 75-year-olds will be able to reserve a place in line. More info at andoverma.gov or Andover’s phone # 978-623-8602. The Senior Center newsletter will publish a list of clinics. ***Julie will send an email notice about an April meeting with MOD. All members should check whether they are in compliance with conflict of interest law.***

**Adjournment:** David made a motion to adjourn at 7:39 p.m. and Steve seconded. Unanimously approved.

**Next meeting:** *February 24, 2021 to be held virtually.*

Respectfully Submitted,  
Susan McKelliget

Andover Commission on Disability Wednesday, January 27, 2021 @ 6:30 PM Virtual Meeting Broadcast by line at [www.andovertv.org](http://www.andovertv.org)

Every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post on the Town’s website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of the proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting.

Pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, and the Governor’s March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Andover Commission on Disability will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. For this meeting, members of the public who wish to watch the meeting may do so in the following manner: Andover TV COMCAST CHANNEL 22 AND VERIZON CHANNEL 45 or stream online at [www.andovertv.org](http://www.andovertv.org).