



OBSERVER CORPS REPORT

MARBLEHEAD DISABILITIES COMMISSION

December 15, 2022

LWVM Observer: Nancy Powell

Members Present: Laurie Blaisdell, Katie Farrell, Amy Hirschcron (remote), Ed Lang (remote), Samantha Marino (remote), Andrea Mountain (remote)

Members Absent: Cheryl LaLonde

Guests Present: Pamela Daly (Remote)

1. Representatives from the Collins Center, a state entity located at UMASS/Boston, presented an overview of a grant-funded ADA Transition Plan they are partnering with Town of Marblehead to develop. The Collins Center will collaborate with a Boston-based architectural firm to look at problematic access issues in town and prioritize areas of need to determine what can be addressed with the limited resources available. Key components of this project will include:

Public Input: A survey tool will be launched the first week of January to get public comment on ease of access to public buildings, outdoor facilities, pedestrian pathways/sidewalks, programs, communications, and public meetings. The survey will be disseminated through direct contact with various stakeholders and as many community members as possible throughout town. There will be a public comment period twice during the process-- once the plan is drafted and again on the final document.

Self-Evaluation of Programs and Services: Departments in town received a questionnaire in November to inventory their programs, services, policies, and practices. Areas to be reviewed include: review of Title II administrative requirements including public notice, ADA Coordinator, grievance procedures, and self-evaluation.

Website Audit: The project will include an audit of the town website, its related pages, social media and public communications.

Facilities Audit: The town provided a list of approximately 30 town facilities that will be audited. Commission members noted the list appeared to exclude the Brown School.

Draft, Final Document Process and Next Steps: All audits will be combined into a "Findings Report" and will identify problem areas. The Collins Center will then work with the town, engage in the capital planning process to address the needed remedies going forward.

2. Fair Housing: The Commission will take up the issue of Accessory Dwelling Units in its next meeting and will suggest to appropriate stakeholders that accessory dwelling units when built are ADA compliant. If an ADU cannot be made compliant, as is the case with many buildings in Old Town, it should not be excluded from participating in the ADU amendment.

3. Memorial for Rich Ramos: Commission members were saddened to learn of the recent death of fellow member, Rich Ramos. Ideas were brought forward regarding how to honor him for his love of sailing and his strong drive to make our waterfront accessible. Ideas, including planting a tree or having projects related to the waterfront be named after him, will be researched and discussed at a later date.

Next Meeting: January 12, 2023