



OBSERVER REPORT

MARBLEHEAD DISABILITIES COMMISSION - October 13, 2022
LWVM Observer: Nancy Powell

Members Present: Laurie Blaisdell (Chair), Amy Hirschcron, Ed Lang, Samantha Marino, Richard Ramos, Katie Farrell

1. Appoint New Secretary/Board Positions

Laurie noted that Sue Harris recently resigned from the Commission leaving an opening for someone to serve as Secretary. Samantha Marino volunteered and was appointed. Laurie, who has been the Disabilities Commission Chair for a number of years, said she would step aside should anyone else have an interest in serving in that role. Members agreed she has done an exemplary job and should continue. Laurie said there is an open seat on the Commission that must be filled by a person who is either an elected or appointed official of the Town. Ed has someone to recommend and will explore further to assess eligibility of this person.

2. Chamber of Commerce Service Awards

Laurie and Sue attended the Marblehead Chamber of Commerce 70th Annual Meeting and accepted the Harbor Award which was bestowed on the Disabilities Commission and the Harbors and Waters Board in recognition of their joint efforts to make the harbor accessible to all.

3. Letter to the Town About Non-Conforming Intersections

Laurie has heard concerns from locals about intersections in Marblehead that are out of compliance with ADA guidelines, including one where a sewer grate interferes with a curb cut, another (corner of Beach and Atlantic) where the orientation of the pedestrian buttons creates a crossing hazard. Laurie has been attending meetings of Town Departments to reinforce the importance of adhering to ADA guidelines for all construction projects in order to avoid having to go back to make costly modifications. Laurie noted that she had received a letter from an elderly Powder House Court resident about barriers at the Post Office, including a heavy outward swinging front door that she cannot open. Laurie will inform the P.O.

4. Report on Moderator's Remote Study Committee

Laurie was appointed last month to sit on the Town Working Group on Remote Access to Public Meetings. She noted that having the ability to attend a public meeting online would give many people with disabilities greater access to the democratic process. She was surprised to discover remote participants couldn't hear the in-person participants because of infrastructure deficiencies that will need to be improved to truly expedite informed democratic participation.

5. Harbor Planning Board

Laurie attended the October meeting and reported that ADA has become a real priority for members of this group. She believes that expanding access to beaches is a primary focus. Amy had asked that remote access to these meetings be provided and that was granted. Laurie indicates resistance is dropping and expressed the view that the Disability Commission is beginning to be viewed among all Town boards as resource and partner.

6. Future Projects

Continue involvement in Harbor Transition Plan.

Ed would like to see improved access to the baseball field at MHS. He has reached out to Park and Rec and the High School athletic director about the need to address the inability to park anywhere near the field and the lack of any seating for the public.

Amy suggested the next Commission meeting be devoted to brainstorming ideas for a variety of initiatives.

Next Meeting: 11/10/22 @4:15 (hybrid)