



## OBSERVER REPORT

**MARBLEHEAD DISABILITIES COMMISSION - March 10, 2022**  
**LWVM Observer – Nancy Powell**

**Members Present:** Laurie Blaisdell, Amy Hirschkron, Katie Farrell, Andrea Mountain, Cheryl LaLonde, Samantha Marino, Sue Harris

**Members Absent:** Ed Lang

**Guests Present:** Joanne Miller, Ann Foley, Laney Dowling, Rich Ramos, Pamela Daly

**Joanne Miller Presentation.** Joanne Miller, member of the Board of Health and Chair of the Marblehead Mental Health Task Force, gave an overview of priorities and projects both groups have been focusing on over the last year, and expressed a willingness to work with the Commission on projects of mutual interest. The Mental Health Task Force was formed in the Spring of 2021 and includes representatives from the Board of Health, the Board of Selectmen, the Council on Aging and the Marblehead Counseling Center, Police Chief Dennis King, a local psychiatrist, and the individuals in charge of mental health services at Boston U. and Salem State. Projects have included creating an online list of local resources for those with mental health concerns ([marbleheadcares.org](http://marbleheadcares.org)) and hosting panel discussions on mental health issues. The group also is looking for ways to partner with other organizations in Town, including the Disabilities Commission. The Commission and Joanne agreed to continue to communicate on ways we might be helpful to the Task Force or otherwise work together.

**Family Fund.** Amy Foley and Laney Dowling provided an update on the Family Fund's project to renovate Hobbs Field playground for use by children under 5 or 6. The group has raised \$240,000 to date, of which \$62,000 is a grant to purchase specialized accessible playground equipment. A total of \$300,000 is needed to complete the project. They plan to break ground in June.

**139 Pleasant Street Update.** Amy reported on the February 28 hearing before the Architectural Access Board on the Warrens' request for a waiver of ADA requirements for this location. Their arguments were not accepted by the AAB, which has ordered them to submit a feasibility plan to add an accessible lift or ramp at either the front or back of the building. The plan will be reviewed at another hearing not yet scheduled.

**Harbor Lift Update.** After discussion with Mark Souza about the draft proposal for installation of a lift at Tucker's Wharf, Amy and Sue, with Laurie's concurrence and input from Rich Ramos, concluded that the only feasible location for the lift is State Street Landing (which the Commission had approved as an alternative at its last meeting). Amy and Sue submitted a revised proposal to Mark to give to Harbors and Waters Board members, whose March 7 meeting subsequently was postponed until March 14. Amy will present the proposal at the meeting. Once the proposal is approved, the Commission will proceed with fundraising for the lift.

**Town Map of Accessible Locations.** Laurie and Sue distributed a list of Marblehead locations to consider adding to the Commission's brochure/map with a designation of those that need to be researched and a spreadsheet for members to fill in with information they learn about each site. The Commission discussed ideas for making this information available to the public, including on social media, and will continue to work to compile the necessary information.

**Town Meeting Accessibility.** Laurie reported on her conversation with Kyle Wylie about the inclusion of a notice on the Town website about people's right to request special accommodations for Town Meeting. That conversation is ongoing. Meanwhile, the Commission agreed to add that information to its Facebook page and to a new Instagram account that Samantha agreed to set up.