



OBSERVER REPORT

Marblehead Disabilities Commission - April 13, 2023

LWVM Observer: Nancy Powell

Members Present (all remote): Laurie Blaisdell, Dee Cuffe, Katie Farrell, Amy Hirschcron, Cheryl LaLonde, Ed Lang, Samantha Marino, Andrea Mountain
Guests Present: Pamela Daly

The Commission welcomed new member, Dee Cuffe.

FUTURE PROJECTS

1. Devereux Beach Access Improvements

The ramp leading to the restaurant is unsafe for wheelchair users and others because the wood slats have buckled and nails are protruding.

The blue sand mat is unusable because it needs to be level with the asphalt with no gaps in order for a wheelchair to traverse the sand and reach the water.

The bathroom in the parking lot is inaccessible, especially for a wheelchair user because the sand is too deep and wheels get stuck. The numerous potholes in the lot are filled with sand which causes uneven/dangerous passing especially when using a mobility device.

The above-mentioned items will be cross-referenced with the Harbor Transition Plan to look for areas of overlap. Ms. Blaisdell will also reach out to local Eagle Scouts to seek volunteers for these projects.

2. Rail Trail

New curb cuts at the Rail Trail/Pleasant Street crossing have greatly improved accessibility for wheelchair users. Ms. Blaisdell will follow-up with the town to see if they plan to further improve the trail by resurfacing it with stone dust.

3. Second Lift on Salem Harbor

A wheelchair lift was installed last year at the State Street dock to enable those with mobility impairments to board boats. Ms. Cuffe noted, however, that prior Commission member, Richard Ramos, had been unable to use the lift because it is positioned too low to the ground and could be repositioned to accommodate all wheelchair types. The idea of installing a second lift at either Stramski's or Village Street was brought forward. Ms. Hirschcron noted that both locations would require significant upgrades in

order to accommodate a lift. She suggested weighing certain factors, including how often a lift at either location might get used in order to determine if this would be a cost-effective endeavor.

4. Sports Fields

Mr. Lang expressed continued concern about the lack of accessibility to public sports fields in town despite the large allocations budgeted for these activities. Ms. Farrell will reach out to school contacts to inquire about senior students volunteering on these types of projects for academic credit.

5. Public Bathroom Accessibility

The bathroom at Harbormaster's building is inaccessible due to the outward swing of door. The bathroom at Chandler Hovey Park is not accessible and cleanliness/bathroom supplies are an issue. Ms. Blaisdell will go before the Parks and Rec Department to make them aware of the general lack of handicapped accessibility to bathrooms throughout town.

6. Village Plaza

There is ramp access to the second level at Village Plaza but the door leading to the ramp lacks signage so people are generally unaware it's there. Ms. Blaisdell will resend the letter she wrote to the Town last year asking for handicap signage.

7. Crocker Park

There is now a handicap parking space at Crocker Park. Ms. Hirschcron, Ms. Marino, and Ms. Blaisdell will follow up by posting on FB, notifying yacht clubs and advertising in local papers to make citizens aware of this and other accessibility upgrades in town.

MAGIC HAT THRIFT SHOP ACCESSIBILITY

Ms. Mary Ann Dunn and Ms. Farrell had previously notified Ms. Blaisdell of an accessibility issue at the Magic Hat located at the Veterans Middle School. The shop has an entrance with a ramp but has neither a curb cut nor a handicapped parking space. A proposal was offered to move handicap access to another entry point that already exists in the building for use by people with mobility impairments. The Commission maintains that the shop should make the main entrance usable for all individuals for the sake of equity, and they have approached the school's facilities director who is interested in making this happen. This project is estimated to cost between \$3k-\$5k and would be paid for by the Magic Hat.

Update: Ms. Dunn has sent two emails to the Veteran's Middle School principal and the Facilities Director, Todd Bloodgood, regarding permission to provide increased accessibility to the thrift shop via a curb cut, but she has yet to receive a response. If permission is not granted, a sign will be placed outside of the shop with its phone number so a person requiring use of a different access point may call for the door to be opened. Ms. Farrell will speak with Mr. Bloodgood about the matter.

Next meeting: May 12, 2023 at 4:15pm
Abbott Public Library, 3 Brook Road and via ZOOM