



OBSERVER REPORT

MARBLEHEAD DISABILITIES COMMISSION 6/8/23 Hybrid Meeting
LWVM Observer: Nancy Powell

Members in Attendance: Laurie Blaisdell, Dee Cuffe, Brigitte Duffy, Amy Hirschcron (remote), Samantha Marino (remote), Andrea Mountain (remote)

Members Absent: Cheryl LaLonde, Ed Lang

Guests Present: Pamela Daly (remote) Kyle Wiley (remote)

Meeting Summary

1. Member Updates

The Commission welcomed Brigitte Duffy as its newest member. Over the next month, Ms. Hirschcron and Ms. Blaisdell will each be sworn in for an additional 3-year term. Member, Katie Farrell, announced her resignation at last month's meeting.

2. Devereux Beach Improvements

The ramp at the restaurant is in a state of disrepair. Ms. Blaisdell reported that (per Kyle Wiley) responsibility for repairing the ramp falls to the restaurant owner. Ms. Blaisdell will follow-up on Ms. Wiley's forthcoming communication with the owner regarding this issue.

The pavilion at Devereux additionally presents an accessibility issue as the step/lip is too high. Ms. Blaisdell spoke with Peter James of Parks and Rec who explained that a ramp will be built to improve access to this area.

3. Public Bathrooms

Ms. Hirschcron has been working with Harbormaster, Mark Souza, to address the longstanding issue concerning wheelchair access to the bathroom/shower facilities at the Harbormaster's Office Building. The wheelchair ramp leads to a back door that lacks an electronic opener making it impossible for a wheelchair user to access the building. Ms. Hirschcron was informed that a consultant from the Collins Center for Public Management included this site in its town-wide facilities audit conducted in December and made recommendations for remediating the issue. A potential grant to cover the recommended updates was discussed.

It was noted by Ms. Blaisdell that the public restrooms at the State Street Clark Landing have not been opened for the season due to either vandalism and/or a burst pipe with no sign of repairs in the works. As the lack of accessible restroom facilities negatively impacts the general public, but especially those with mobility challenges, Ms. Blaisdell will speak with the Harbormaster about placing a handicap accessible porta potty near the docks while repairs are being made.

5. Accessibility To Town Meeting

Ms. Blaisdell noted that The Massachusetts Office on Disability recently issued a memorandum entitled "Reasonable Accommodations at Town Meetings." Towns have a legal obligation under the Americans With Disabilities Act to make their Town Meetings accessible to people with disabilities and to respond to requests for reasonable accommodations. Commission members will review the document thoroughly to ensure that Marblehead is in compliance. Ms. Mountain will link the memorandum to the Commission website. Ms. Hirschcron recommended publicizing these accommodations prior to next year's town meeting.

6. HP Signage for Abbott Hall

Ms. Hirschcron found that the only handicap accessibility sign denoting an accessible entrance to Abbott Hall is located at the top of the stairs at the rear of the building, requiring individuals to climb the stairs in order to read it. No handicap symbol is displayed either. Ms. Wiley was informed and has since ordered three new signs which will be suitably placed.

7. Accessible Van

Former member, Rich Ramos' newly purchased accessible van is available should someone be interested in purchasing the vehicle. The Commission will spread the word, with inquiries being directed to either Rich Ramos' sister or Ms. Blaisdell.

8. Rail Trail Upgrades

Ms. Blaisdell did a site visit to the newly renovated rail trail and reported the trail now has stone dust over pavement, making it more accessible to those with mobility limitations.

9. Treasury Account

Ms. Blaisdell will obtain an update as to the current balance in the Commission's account (as acquired from handicap parking violations). Update will be forthcoming.

Next Hybrid Meeting: July 13th, 2023 at 4:15pm