



OBSERVER REPORT

MARBLEHEAD DISABILITY COMMISSION: 12/10/20 via Zoom

LWVM Observer: Nancy Powell

Board Members Present: Laurie Blaisdell (chair), Katie Farrell, Preston Ford, Amy Hirschcron, Ed Lang, Cheryl LaLonde, Sue Harris, Samantha Marino, Andrea Mountain, Guests: Tom Shotmeyer

Commission members discussed need to support passage of (H.4425) The ACCESSIBLE Massachusetts Act which will come before the Legislature in January and has the potential to be effective in creating accessible housing and workplaces.

- H.4425 would enhance the authority of the Massachusetts Architectural Board whose regulations are part of the State's building code and enforced by local building inspectors.
- H.4425 mandates among other things that any pre-1991 buildings (such as schools) being converted into housing units be required to make 95 percent of them adaptable in the event of disability thus expanding housing options for all. Laurie will reach out to H.4425 Sponsors as well as Jeff Duggan (Mass Office on Disability) and Representative Lori Erlich and invite them to meet with the Commission.

There is a **Warrant Article on Sidewalk Snow Removal** being developed by town resident, Jim Zisson, and Commission members would like to have input on it. The stated purpose of the Article is to "create a common sense and reasonable sidewalk snow removal by-law that provides safe passage for pedestrians both young and old without being overly burdensome to the Town's property owners." The by-law proposes that property owners be

required to remove snow from sidewalks (with certain waivers available) within 24 hours after a snowstorm. Laurie indicated she'd like to see the Town plow sidewalks in certain areas (i.e., Bell School) rather than to rely on property owners to remove snow themselves as there's the need to consider people who use wheelchairs or walkers and not just those on foot. The idea that the law might be difficult to enforce was also a concern.

Ed Lang reports Ft. Sewall restoration has turned out better than had been expected and new pavement, gate, railings and accessible restrooms will be completed in January.