

MARBLEHEAD LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Observer Corp Report Form

League Observer: Nancy Powell
Commission: Marblehead Disability Commission 12/5/19
Members in Attendance: Laurie Blaisdell (Chair), Andrea Mountain, Katie Farrell,
Preston Ford, Cheryl LaLonde, Sam Marino

Meeting was posted at least 48 hours in advance

Meeting was held in handicapped accessible location.

The public was allowed to participate.

The minutes of last meeting were not posted.

Issues on the agenda that were relevant to League Positions: LWV is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity and inclusion in principle and in practice. The Marblehead Disability Commission works to insure that people with disabilities are given equal access to community resources such as sidewalks, crosswalks, parking and entrances to public buildings.

Laurie Blaisdell would like to explore having a Resident Outreach Coordinator position created for Marblehead similar to one that Salem has instituted. This would ease and hasten the process of getting needed repairs at public housing developments. She mentioned the excellent "Salem for All Ages" website that could serve as a model for Marblehead.

The Commission is considering proposing a Town Warrant Article aimed at correcting inaccessible sidewalks throughout town. Among the problems are lack of curb cuts, tree roots lifting sidewalks, potholes, crosswalks with malfunctioning or inaccessible stop light buttons. The problem is widespread and the fix will be expensive (\$5-\$15k for a curb cut). Town Planner has applied for a grant to study ADA compliance in Marblehead. It was suggested that prospective new GIS tree maps could include sidewalks to help get arms around the scope of the problem. Some funding will come from Complete Streets Grant but not until 2022 as repairs to Rail Trail has been given first priority.

Laurie hopes to recruit volunteers to attend new school meeting next week to address concerns about accessibility including: that front door drop off area will accommodate wheelchair users being dropped off, that wheelchair users will be able to enter the school with their peers and not have a separate entrance at the back of the building near the dumpsters, that the door buzzer will be placed at an accessible height, that there will be a dedicated accessible bathroom in the building and enough wheelchair accessible parking spaces close to the entrance.

Goals for the coming year include: invite a disabilities attorney to present on ADA compliance, invite Rep Lori Ehrlich, and continue to build a hungry and powerful disability community in Marblehead.