

MARBLEHEAD LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Observer Corp Report Form

League Observer                    Nancy Powell  
    Disability Commission 11/14/19

Members in Attendance          Laurie Blasdell, Sue Harris, Ed Lang, Katie Farrell, Preston Ford,  
    Andrea Mountain

Meeting was posted at least 48 hours before meeting.

Meeting was held in handicapped accessible location.

The public was allowed to participate in the meeting.

The minutes from the previous meeting were not posted but were approved and some prior minutes were posted on Town of Marblehead website.

Issues on the agenda that were relevant to League positions and programs included: working to enhance inclusivity for elderly and disabled people in Marblehead.

SUMMARY OF AGENDA ITEMS DISCUSSED:

Marblehead's new Tree Warden, John Fobert (an invited guest) addressed several issues of concern to Commission members. There is a need to make repairs where tree roots have lifted existing sidewalks at locations throughout town making them impassible for wheelchair users and others with mobility impairments. There are no easy solutions. Future steps will be taken to protect sidewalks including planting trees that are low growing as well as changing philosophy regarding where and how to plant new trees. He indicated he is facing many challenges in carrying out the \$50k Town Warrant Article for tree planting downtown. He must keep sidewalks ADA compliant and avoid interfering with storm drains and public utilities. He anticipates being able to plant only 12 trees in total in order to keep within budget.

Laurie Blaisdell noted that outdoor lighting is inadequate at some Housing Authority properties, creating a hazard for residents. Commission has made new Executive Director aware of this and Laurie is confident she takes access issues seriously and is supportive of building "age-friendly" communities.

The Commission has been working on ways to implement better harbor access to those with mobility impairments. Preston Ford is working with Harbor Master to make public boat ramps ADA compliant. He has written a letter to the editor of the Marblehead Reporter regarding this. There is a plan to make Fort Sewall more disability friendly. The walkway around the park will be modified so that wheelchair users can have full access.