

Sharon Commission on Disabilities (CoD)
Monthly meeting: January 25, 2024
Location: Sharon Rec./Adult Ed.

Call to Order: 7:10 pm

Joint meeting with the Library Reuse Committee

Attendance: Sharon Commission on Disabilities Members: Paul Remy, Geila Aronson, Susan Freidman, Susan Myerson, Todd Arnold, Rusty Callaway, Lois Diamond via phone, and potential Commission on Disabilities candidate Kim Hokanson

Absent: Select Board Liaison to COD Hannah Switekowski, and James Newton

Attendance: Library Reuse Committee Members: Mridula Satyamurti, Judy Crosby, Gail Adler, Michael Fillion and Historical Commission Liaison to Library Reuse Committee Dave Martin.

Introductions were made.

Members of the Library Reuse Committee explained the purpose of this committee. There is a time-sensitive committee whose purpose is to make a report to the Select Committee on how the current Town Library should be reused. They are in the early stages of developing this report.

The Building is in a Historic District and all of the building's exterior walls need to be preserved as they currently are. The building is weak in regards to accessibility. This will be addressed in the final report. The structure will need to meet the current code in the new proposal. It must meet seismic activity codes, structural codes, and ADA needs. A handicapped entrance needs to be at street level with an elevator that allows for access without having to use stairs. All emergency exits must also meet accessibility needs.

Dedicated parking that includes van-accessible handicapped parking will need to be included in their report. There is a town report from 2020 that discusses potential uses and parking needs in the downtown area. One area the Library Reuse Committee would highlight in their report is to find a way to go beyond minimum parking requirements for however the building is ultimately used.

The Library Reuse Committee and COD members discussed how the building can be used and how it can be a draw to bring people downtown. Options include commercial use; restaurants, daycare, and or retail; residential use; apartments or condos, and or community use; art gallery/studios, common area wood workshop, a cultural center or community theatre.

The Library Reuse Committee members asked the Commission on Disabilities to make specific recommendations for the building in regards to making sure the building is accessible to all who want to visit and work in this building.

Adjournment of joint meeting: 7:55 pm

Call to Order: 8:10 pm for Sharon Commission on Disabilities meeting

Attendance: Sharon Commission on Disabilities Members: Paul Remy, Geila Aronson, Susan Freidman, Susan Myerson, Todd Arnold, Rusty Callaway, Lois Diamond via phone and potential Commission on Disabilities candidate Kim Hokanson.

Absent: Select Board Liaison to COD Hannah Switekowski, and James Newton

I. Discussion of new candidate for the Commission – Kim Hokanson

Kim Hokanson stated the reasons why she wanted to join the commission and shared with the members some of her professional and personal background. She supports the concept of “universal design”, is a member of the Sharon DEI Committee, and is a professor at the BU School of Social work

II. Adding a High School student to the Commission

Discussion centered on whether or not the Commission could include students who were not 18.

III. December Minutes – Approved.

IV. Treasurer’s Report –

General Fund:	\$500
Revolving (ticket):	\$18,520.67
Donation:	\$1327.97

V. Crosswalk inaccessibility concerns for residents with sight impairments

Rusty emailed to all commission members his report about the Brick sidewalk inaccessibility at Sharon Mart for people with sight impairments and wheelchair users. Paul recommended that Rusty send the report to Peter O’Cain. Members discussed the possibility of advocating for replacing all of the brick sidewalks in downtown Sharon. Another question was raised about whether or not these sidewalks are ADA compliant.

VI. Accessibility at Beth Israel Lahey Primary care in Sharon.

Rusty Callaway said that Sandy Biber is willing to assess the Beth Israel Primary Care’s front entrance platform to determine if it is ADA compliant. She will need a letter from

the Disability Commission stating exactly what the Commission wants her to assess. Paul said he would work with Sandy to make sure the letter is worded in a way that she can assess what the Commission wants her to.

Susan Friedman will follow up with James to also determine if he was able to contact the building managers at Beth Israel and the Post Office

VII. Post Office accessibility

James and Paul contacted Congressman Auchincloss' staff Dana Hanson regarding the inaccessibility issues at the post office. James is filling out the form that Dana Hanson sent Paul

VIII. A donation to purchase special education supplies for the middle school

Susan Friedman will contact Victoria Russo, one of the special education coordinators at the Middle School, regarding the funding request for the adaptive equipment.

IX. Housing Authority

Todd reported that the salt issues at Hixon Farm Road are all set.

X. New Business

Paul Remy reported at the COD advisory Council meeting he discussed with Sharon Police Chief issues about handicapped parking at private lots. Paul stated the Chief told him that employees and customers at such businesses can contact the police regarding illegal parking as long as these are areas the police routinely patrol and are not gated communities.

Paul Remy will invite the police chief to attend a February or March COD meeting to discuss this in depth. He said he was happy to attend

Rusty Callaway asked about the protocol when responding to emails from committee members. The protocol is to respond to all committee members.

Rusty Callaway will update the article about the library now that this Commission and the Library Reuse Committee have met.

Next meeting: February 22, 7 pm in the Adult Center Conference Room.

Adjournment – 9:05 pm