



# TOWN OF WAKEFIELD

## COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES

### NOTICE OF MEETING

October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022 | 7:00 p.m.

Via Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87296316220?pwd=a0hLZFBHSTlYQFV0UEtmN1JnbFNWQT09>

*Consistent with the Governor's orders extending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law every effort will be made to allow the public to view and/or listen to the meeting in real time. If you do not have a camera or microphone on your computer you may use the following dial in number: 1-301-715-8592 Meeting ID 872 9631 6220 Passcode 755850. Please only use dial in or computer and not both as feedback will distort the meeting. This meeting will be audio and video recorded. In compliance with the Americans with Disability Act, this location is accessible to people with disabilities, Wakefield provides reasonable accommodations and/or language assistance free of charge upon request. If you are a person with a disability and require information or materials in an alternate format, or if you require any other accommodation, please contact the Town's Disability Coordinator, William Renault-Town Engineer at 781-246-6308 as far in advance of the event as possible. Every effort will be made to grant your request. Advance notification will enable the Town to make reasonable arrangements to remove an accessibility barrier for you.*

### Present:

Commission members: Marie Rej, Lorna Davidson-Connelly, Paula Thompson, Kristen Bardol, Judy Tanner, Janice Mirabassi, Lois Benjamin; Absent: Levonne Coughlin, Katharine Staiti

Michael McLane, Liaison from Town Council

### Meeting Agenda

**Call to Order:** Meeting called to order by Marie Rej at 7:04 pm

#### Pledge of Allegiance

**Reading of Mission Statement** – "Our mission is to address the needs and concerns of our disabled residents and provide their full participation in the activities and services of Wakefield."

**Public Participation:** No requests.

**Approval of Minutes from September 12, 2022** - delayed

**Financial Report as of September 2022:** Lois Benjamin reported that there was no change in the account since the previous meeting.

### Summary of meeting discussion: Old/New business

- **Election of New Officers**
  - Nominations for Commission officers:
    - Marie Rej and Lorna Davidson Connelly, co-chairs
    - Lois Benjamin, Treasurer
    - Janice Mirabassi, Secretary



- Motion to accept the above slate of officers for 2022-2023; seconded; no discussion; all in favor
- **Town Day** on the Common Oct 8, 2022 – Discussion of additional details and confirmation of changes to Commission members who will staff the table
- **Wakefield 101** – at Americal Civic Center - Oct 20, 2022 - 6-7:30pm. Discussion of additional details on materials for the table and confirmation of Commission members who will staff the table. Commission will share 1/3 of a table (with Senior Center and Veteran's Services)
- **Review of Chapter 40B Affordable Housing**
  - How does the Commission want to influence changes in housing availability? Paula T. asked if we should hone in on a specific goal, such as increasing the supply of housing and/or changing the Town bylaws.
  - We should also consider that housing for people with disabilities is not limited to people with mobility issues but includes a broad array and levels of disabilities that result in differing housing needs.
  - The last 40B unit in Wakefield sold for \$257,000. The occupant could have a maximum annual salary of \$58k and would pay a mortgage of \$1900/month.
  - Suggested that this is well beyond the affordability/eligibility of many people with disabilities and supports the fact that we cannot just focus on 40B housing.
  - Easter Seals in western MA has a 'techno smart house' that assists the residents by reminding them of specific tasks and other upcoming daily activities.
  - Lutheran Human Services has a residence in North Andover with a suite that is similar to the type of housing that the Commission has discussed in the past.
  - Should we focus on rental units? Figure out ways to get owners to accept housing vouchers? Partner with the Wakefield Housing Authority on this issue? Meet with the Zoning Board to help them understand what the needs are?
  - Judy T. suggested that we need to narrow the goal. Also explor: What is currently available for Wakefield housing that meets various disability needs?
  - Janice M. suggested that it might be helpful to connect with the Institute for Human Centered Design (IHCD, in Boston) to help us learn more about addressing the varied housing needs. Janice will reach out to Valerie Fletcher at IHCD to ask about this.
  - Marie reported that MassDevelopment and CIL Realty of MA have established 30 houses for people with intellectual/developmental disabilities or acquired brain injury. These residences will house about 140 people. They are financed with tax-exempt bonds.
  - People are chosen to live in residences run by such programs through a priority list based on ICAP score and parent/caregiver score. This process is systematic and gives much more choice to families.
- **Kathy Boyle – Autism Housing Pathways**
  - This agency has a grant from the Cummings Foundation to provide 1-to-1 housing consultations. Commission suggested that it would be helpful for Kathy to speak to our group at an upcoming meeting.

- **By-Law Feedback by Oct 17:**
  - Marie will re-forward the link to the current by-laws; comments are needed by October 17<sup>th</sup>. Provide feedback directly to Marie and she will summarize our collective thoughts.
- **Disability Pride Flag:**
  - On 9/29, the Library Trustees denied the request to fly this flag on the Library's flagpole. Katherine McDonald stated that those flagpoles are limited to national, state or town flags. She also mentioned that the library will feature an indoor display on the topic of disability during the month of October.
  - Lois noted that the Library does have a section with large-print books and audio books. We should look into the issue of additional needs for print materials and audio materials for people who have low or no vision – perhaps through a grant or via capital planning.
- **Wakefield's ARPA funding:**
  - Could this funding be used for additional wheelchair-accessible playground needs?
  - Michael McLane stated that the town has about requests for funds that add up to about 5x more than the available funds. There is a \$150k request for playground swings, and a \$74,000 request for a wheelchair swing (generally called a platform swing). The Commission asked if these two types of swings have the same priority, or if one request will have precedence.
  - The Commission suggested that such a swing should be centrally located – perhaps at Spaulding.
  - These playground requests are also known to Bill Renault.
- **Follow up to *Intelligent Lives* event:**
  - How do we want to engage with town businesses in moving this issue forward?
  - Marie approached Triangle to see if they could make a recommendation about how to handle the “pitch” to the Rotary and the Chamber of Commerce about supports and procedures on employing people with disabilities.
  - We would also want the Rotary/Chamber to know that the Commission is looking for employers who have available jobs.
- **Mass Rehab:**
  - Commission reached out to Mass Rehab to ask for a presentation on understanding their services.
  - Suggested that we publicize the session for community members to attend.
  - The date for this will likely be after the New Year – perhaps in January or February.
  - Marie will follow up with Linda from Mass Rehab.
- **Youth Council liaison:**
  - Lorna sent an email to Katherine Dingha and hopes to hear back soon.

**Next Meeting:** November 7, 2022

**Motion to Adjourn:** 8:36 pm; seconded; all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted by Marie Rej and Lorna J. Davidson-Connelly, Co-Chairs

