Commission for Citizens with Disabilities

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WESTFIELD CITY CLERK

MEETING MINUTES

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Karin Decker
Madeline Nicoletti, Chair
Andrea Pianka, Vice Chair
Norman Smith III
Joanne Tirrell
Jennifer Lee
Demetrios Kanavaros

The regular meeting of the Commission for Citizens with Disabilities of Tuesday, May 17, 2016, was held in City Hall, Room 201, Westfield, MA. Chair Nicoletti called the meeting to order at 6:46 pm.

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioner Decker
Commissioner Kanavaros
Commissioner Lee
Commissioner Nicoletti
Commissioner Pianka
Commissioner Smith
Commissioner Tirrell

APPROVE MINUTES:
Commissioner Decker motioned to approve the Minutes of March 15, 2016 and April 19, 2016, seconded by Commissioner Smith: all in favor 7/0

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

a. Mandi Riel Rodriguez, mother of 2 active, handicapped children, and Joyce Yoffa, Occupational Therapist at Bay State, Springfield, presented their concerns regarding Westfield lacking playgrounds to accommodate young children with handicap issues.

Ms. Rodriguez stated her concerns regarding Stanley Park, Sadie Knox and Chapman playgrounds. Some of the issues were the use of woodchips making walking difficult, the end of slides being too high off the ground, not enough and/or narrow ramps and no awnings for protection from the hot sun on ramps and slides.

She also gave two examples of handicapped playgrounds out of town where she is able to bring her children to play; one being Mittineague Park in West Springfield and the other the School Street Playground in Agawam. She also was concerned that she has to travel out of town for her children to be able to use playgrounds.

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A discussion followed regarding speaking to Dave Billips regarding the possibility of upgrading one of the parks in Westfield to be ADA compliant.

b. Sue Phillips, City Solicitor, postponed her discussion on Open Meeting Laws to the June, 2016 meeting. It will also include Roles and Responsibilities of Commissioners.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS:

a. FYI: Commissioner Nicoletti stated that the balance in our Parking Ticket Account is correct at $40,921 and that our Special Revenue Account numbers are: Fine & Forfeits: 24554400 477000 and General Expense: 24554400 578000, as stated in an email from Kim Jarret, Permitting/Parking Clerk.

b. The listing of members contact information was updated and will be rewritten for the June meeting and will be only for the use of our commissioners. It will not be made public.

c. A discussion followed regarding business cards and name plaques. Commissioner Decker stated that she has business cards from the last printing and would bring them to the June meeting. Commissioner Nicoletti stated that the Westfield Technical Academy is able to make name plagues for a lesser amount. Commisisoner Smith made a motion to table this until actual prices were available, seconded by Commissioner Decker, all in favor 7/0.

d. The subject of Playgrounds for Children with Handicaps was fully discussed during Public Participation.

NEW BUSINESS;

a. The Commission received a complaint regarding the location of the Gas Light District Marker on the corner of Elm & Arnold Streets and a discussion followed. It appears that the width between it and the Gas & Electric Building is too narrow for a person in a wheelchair to go through. They would have to go out into the street to go around it to continue down Arnold Street. Commissioner Nicoletti stated that according to Mark Cressotti its placement was made according to ADA requirements, but that he would look into the matter himself. Commissioner Decker stated that she would try to take a look at it with him.

b. A complaint was also received regarding the removal of 2 handicapped parking spaces in the Off Street parking lot directly behind Leo's Deli. Commissioner Nicoletti spoke with Kim Jarret regarding the issue, and Kim stated that she would look into the matter and let us know what she finds.

OLD BUSINESS:

a. Update: Westfield Woman's Club: There was nothing new to report since the May meeting with Andy Bristol present.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Smith motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Decker, all in favor 7/0. Chair Nicoletti adjourned the meeting at 7:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne B. Tirrell

Joanne B. Tirrell, Secretary