

Bridgewater Disability Commission Agenda -Wednesday May 26th - 3 pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/91947981765> Meeting ID: 919 4798 1765

Members:

Dave Frim- Chair

Lorraine Carrozza- Vice Chair

Henry Goldsmith-Secretary

Karen Aicher

Anna Nakouzzi

Guests:

Gloria Lemieux

Zach Chipman

Planned Speaker/ Guest

Michael Dutton- Town Manager

Welcome Everyone!! I have asked Town Manager Michael Dutton to join us today for several reasons! The meeting today will give Mike the opportunity to meet the several new members of the Commission! The background and experiences our new members bring to the Disability Commission, plus the fact that Massachusetts is re-opening after the long battle with Covid, affords us the opportunity to start afresh. We, as a Commission, would like to work more in conjunction with Mike and the Town of Bridgewater as we go forward to accomplish significant achievements.

Because of the time constraints that I am sure the Mr. Dutton has, I would like to begin our meeting talking with Mike, and then go into our regular Agenda. Call to Order at 3 pm:

Topics of Discussion:

1. Handicap Parking at Marathon Park. Currently, the handicap parking spots abut the softball field to the far left of the Marathon Park parking lot. This issue has been a source of discussion for approximately 3 years. Charlie Simonds actually apologized for the length of time this has been under consideration. While it has been clarified that the town has approved the budget to repave the parking lot and move the signs, it is possible that it will not happen this summer.

A new member of the Disability Commission stated it concisely: While handicap parking is available in the same parking lot, it is a considerable distance from the entrance to Marathon Park. While this is perhaps the letter of the law, in practice it could be viewed as hostile to the residents of Bridgewater who require the handicap parking spots due to physical or medical limitations.

As we enter the busy summer playground months, wouldn't it be an achievement for Bridgewater to have handicap signs in place, even if temporarily until entire project is complete? Please include the Disability Commission in these plans as we go forward.

If Marathon Park parking area is being repaved, it would make sense to change the sidewalk access to the gate to immediately in front of gate.

When portable restrooms are returned to Marathon Park, consider a larger unit that is available for residents with disabilities.

2. Enhanced Crosswalks for the downtown area of Bridgewater Center. Several new businesses in downtown Bridgewater {Juice Bar. Coffee Shop}, plus the University, Library and Academy Building re-opening has lead to increased foot traffic in the downtown area. How great would it be to purchase a coffee, juice or snack, or just bring a book and enjoy sitting in the well maintained green area in the center of Bridgewater? Currently, crossing the street is a danger for even residents that are capable of sprinting across the street to the green. Crosswalks are unpainted and barely visible. A variety of enhanced cross walks painted in bold, bright colors that are available. This would lead to a safer and more usable downtown environment. Once Crosswalks are up to standard, we could work with Bridgewater Police to increase vigilance in this area for pedestrians. Suggestions by Karen and Sarah include auditory signals, additional "Walk" signals. Other suggestions included making Music Alley more accessible to residents with Disabilities- seating?

3. Karin Aicher, Assistant professor at BSU, Dept of Communication Sciences and Disorders proactively set up a Zoom meeting between herself, Sarah Parker, Assistant Technology Specialist -Student Accessibility Services and myself to discuss how we can work in conjunction with the Town of Bridgewater to meet the needs of students with various barriers.

4. Open Dialogue between Disability Commission members and Town Manager Michael Dutton. All suggestions are welcome!!

5. Technology Availability: Could the town of Bridgewater write a grant assisting residents with income issues to obtain technology that would keep them connected to their community? It was painfully apparent during Covid that seniors and others without the financial backing to support technology were less connected to activities, to medical care, etc.

Minutes from April Meeting Approved:

Old Business:

1. Contact with Strategic Land Ventures in regards to Apartment Building to be constructed at 85 Plymouth Street. They are looking for the Disability Commission to sign off on Occupancy Permits.

2. Enlist BSU intern to assist in creating Bridgewater Disability Commission Brochure.

3. Reach out to BSU to find out what challenges face students with disabilities and how the Disability Commission can be of assistance. .Karen Aicher to discuss Zoom call held with Sarah Parker to clarify details.

4. Disability Commission projects with Senior Center and Kathy Hayes, Bridgewater Outreach.

New Business:

1. Set up introductory meeting with Bridgewater Police Chief.

New ideas and Goals:

Questions? Open Discussion:

Next Meeting: June 30th- Wednesday- 3 pm