



Town of Sheffield
Commission on Disabilities
Town Hall – 21 Depot Square
P.O. Box 325
Sheffield, Massachusetts 01257



Monday, February 27, 2023
Virtual Meeting Via Zoom

Commission Members

Present: Laura Grunfeld, Chair
Pam Mercer
Gail Mullen
Nan Wells
Absent: Tod MacKenzie
Priscilla Rueger
Guests: None

The meeting was called to order at 2:41 PM and was chaired by Grunfeld. The meeting was not recorded due to a technical malfunction.

- 1.) **Approval of July 1, 2022 minutes:** By consensus, the July 1, 2022 minutes were approved.
- 2.) **Welcome New Member:** The Board gladly welcomed Nan Wells who had previously served on the COD and was now returning.
- 3.) **2022 Annual Report:** Grunfeld reported that she wrote and turned in the 2022 Annual Report earlier in February.
- 4.) **Grit Trail Wheelchair:** The Grit Wheelchair is now housed at the Bushnell Sage library. Select Board Chair Rene Wood, led two introductory trainings at the library. One was recorded and is available on the Library's website. Mercer says we should all spread the word. Wells is on the Ashley Falls Woods committee and invites someone in the Grit chair to try it out on that trail.
- 5.) **Visit to Town Departments for Access Handbook and ADA Self-Evaluation:** On November 7, 2022, Mercer and Grunfeld toured the Police Department and met with Chief Eric Munson. They then went to the library and met with Deena Caswell, the Director. Mercer gathered information for the Accessibility Handbook and Grunfeld for the ADA Self-Evaluation. Both papers are still in process. Wells reported that she and Munson talked about making sure that people with disabilities are included in the messaging about emergency situations. The phone system needs to be checked monthly or every other month to see if it is working. Sheffield citizens should call the Sheffield Town Hall and sign up. Wells said she would follow to up with the Chief and LaBombard.
- 6.) **Sheffield Fair:** Mercer represented the COD at the table and showed off the Grit wheelchair. Grunfeld worked accessible parking for the fair. Wells was at the fair representing the United Cerebral Palsy organization and was not yet a COD member.
- 7.) **Town's Portable Toilet:** Due to a lack of availability for accessible portable toilets, one was not provided for the Town Hall parking lot during the summer of 2022. The portable toilet provided was a

standard-sized toilet and not accessible. Grunfeld wrote to LaBombard advising she reserve an accessible toilet for the summer.

8.) Moving Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs): Wells suggested that the ALDs be moved from the Senior Center to the Town Hall or the Town Library to be used at the Annual Town Meeting and other town meetings. Wells said that when she donated the funding, in memory of her husband Dave Wells, to purchase the devices, they were meant to be loaned out to other Town Departments. Mullen and Wells think the devices should be available for pick up by the meeting organizer and offered at each town meeting. Wells states they are not being used at the Senior Center. Grunfeld described the 3 types of Assistive Listening Systems available at the Senior Center. The three types are for:

- one-on-one conversation,
- small group meetings around a table, or
- large meetings in a large room with a public address system.

Committee members think they would best be housed at the library where they are available six days a week and they have a check-out system in place.

- Wells will ask Kathy Loring, Senior Center Director, if she is okay with moving the devices to the Town Hall or the library.
- Grunfeld is tasked to speak with the library Director to see if she is open to housing the ALDs.
- Mullen suggests doing a demonstration at the library with United Cerebral Palsy staff who know these systems.
- Town Hall would push the message that all meetings should use the ALDs. The responsibility would fall on the host of the meeting.

9.) Sheffield Times' article: Mercer wants to get out and try more trails if her schedule will permit. Mullen suggests that we write an article about the ALDs including where they are and how to request their use. The information would also be placed in the upcoming Accessibility Guide and on the COD page of the Town website. We could ask if the librarian wants to write the article for the Sheffield Times.

10.) Library's Evacuation Drill: Mullen does not have updates. She will ask Caswell about it. Mullen states that we are not looking for perfection, but we want to know where the problems are. Wells points out that it is a big risk to not have a system in place.

11.) New Marlborough COD (NMCOD): Members of the NMCOD want to join one of our meetings. There is an opportunity to do a group meeting with Sheffield, New Marlborough, and Great Barrington. The Great Barrington COD chair, Richard Flach, passed away last summer. The Sheffield COD might attend the Pittsfield COD if they are virtual. Mullen said she would send the NMCOD and GBCOD emails about meeting.

12.) Member's Items: Grunfeld stated she would be resigning at the next meeting and asked that other members consider if they are willing to serve as an officer.

13.) Visitors' Items: There were no visitors.

14.) Items for next meeting's agenda: Minutes, Resignation and new Chair/Clerk, Sheffield Times article.

15.) Date, time, place for next meeting: Zoom is best.

16.) **Communications:** There were none.

17.) **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura Grunfeld". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Laura Grunfeld
Chair, Commission on Disabilities