



TOWN OF LUDLOW, MASSACHUSETTS
COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

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ADA COORDINATOR: BJ
TOWN OF LUDLOW

CHURCH

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Ludlow Commission on Disability

Minutes of meeting held on May 22, 2025

Present:

Christopher Harkins, Chairperson
Tara Bronner, Vice Chairperson
Diane Shea Walton, Treasurer
Joanne Odato-Staeb, Secretary
Tamara Huntley, Member
Beverly Dudley, Member
Jennifer Wright, Member

Absent:

Harry Mills, Member

Guest: Riane Flavin, Representative Big Y Foods, Ludlow

I. Called to Order: 6:01 P.M. Role Call and Signature Attendance Sheet shared.

II. Review and Accept Minutes: Beverly Dudley motioned to accept. Tamara Huntley, seconded. Jennifer Wright and Diane Shea Walton abstained. 5-0 in favor.

III. Budget/Expense Sheet:

- a. **Budget Status:** Diane shared the final update of what was spent last fiscal year as well as the amount approved for the current fiscal year. The current balance is \$4055.28 remaining.
- b. **Fundraising:** Vilia Rose restaurant for a fundraiser dinner is scheduled for June 11th at 5:30. Some Commission members will attend as a group. Diane and Beverly have prior commitments and may not be able to attend for the 5:30 start. Tara reached out to Kathy Green (Friends of the Seniors) (589-1689 kareen554@aol.com), for 505-3B non-profit funding option to determine if the funds generated can be held by the Commission to start a Scholarship fund. Tara is not confident that would be in place prior to the June 11th date which may require the dinner to be postponed. Diane and Beverly will reach out to the Lyons club to see if they might be able to assist with hosting the funds on behalf of the Commission. This will need to be done as soon as possible to support promoting the event.
- c. **Ludlow Memorial Day Parade Tag & Craft Sale:** Tamara and Chris presented a table to promote the Commission on Disability. Although the attendance was small, several people visited the table. Tamara will submit receipts to Diane for the table rental space as well as for copying of materials to pass along to individuals interested. \$16.00 in donations were given at the event. Diane will hold those funds as determination is made for the 505-3B.
- d. **Portable Walkways:** Joanne measured the walking space needed at Memorial Park. 87.5 feet is one lane and at minimum (based on prior events at the park) 3 lanes plus two or three 19-foot cross overs, would be needed. This may be cost prohibited based on the actual usage. Tara will seek possible grant funding as an option.
- e. **Riverwalk Bench:** Tamara brought up an issue with the limited seating available at the River Walk site, especially after the Compass Health facility. She discussed recent situations involving individuals needing to sit more frequently and if the Commission could purchase a bench (or two) for Riverwalk and possibly something for the Ludlow Reservoir. Jen will reach out to the Ludlow DPW as well as the Springfield Water Department to determine the process to secure additional bench seating options. Joanne Odato-Staeb made a motion to allocate \$1,500 of the Commission's current budget to purchase these options. Diane Shea Walton seconded, 7-0 in favor.

- f. **Whitney Park Signage:** Joanne shared several options for "handicap drop off" signage to be placed inside the gate at Whitney Park. She discussed this option with Debbie Gates from the Park and Recreation and it was agreed that if the Safety Committee approved the placement, then she would agree for a drop off only, so an individual could access the new handicap picnic table but no inside-gate parking. Tara Bronner made a motion to allocate \$75.00 in funds to purchase the signage. Jennifer Wright seconded, 7-0 in favor.

- g. **Handicap Parking warning stickers:** Chris will bring the stickers to the June meeting.

IV. Old Business/Correspondence:

a. **MOD Training:**

- i. Chris and Jenny have completed the two days of CAM training and received their certificates. Beverly and Tamara are scheduled for the Sept 18th and 25th sessions. Unfortunately, Harry was unable to attend the second day of the training due to illness. Other members have work scheduling conflicts and will not be able to attend the options offered this year. Once Beverly and Tamara attend, it will be a total of 5 (Joanne is previously certified) members which offers a solid foundation of the information.

b. **Subcommittees:**

i. **Town Accessibility:** (Harry, Tamara and Beverly)

1. **Grange Building:** Diane share that the Grange is interested in using only the first floor of the Grange and will commit to making sure the site is accessible as well as the bathrooms on the first floor. They will not be addressing any issues of accessibility with the second-floor bathrooms as they will not be using anything on that level. Richard Moll, from the Grange, will be applying for a grant to pay for upgrading the bathroom for accessibility.
2. **Whitney Park:** Joanne met with Debbie Gates at Whitney Park to see the installation of the new picnic table (it looks great!) Debbie is in support of the Commission having a dedication ceremony however the day may be an issue if it is on the weekend as the front gate is not open. The DPW has a key, but they don't work on the weekend either. Joanne will reach out to Marc Strange for thoughts on how to address access. In addition to the new table, Joanne and Debbie discussed access to the park at other locations as well as the John Thompson Pool. Debbie said the pool is under the state although the town supports access. The pool is totally accessible with a lift as well as a gradual ramp in the water if someone were to remain in a wheelchair. Joanne will reach out to Debbie to see if there is a water access wheelchair available. Tara Bronner made a motion to use Commission funds to purchase a chair to provide a different access for community members to use the pool, Tamara seconded, 7-0 in favor. The Commission discussed promoting all of the new accessibility options (once completed) for Whitney Park on social media as well as the register to possibly coincide with the Picnic dedication ceremony. Tara will follow-up with the Safety Committee regarding Whitney Park signage, Jenny will check about other options for access with the DPW.
3. **Voter Accessibility:** Kim Baptista asked Joanne to share information about Accessibly Vote by Mail Ballots if an individual has difficulty to mark a paper ballot. Go to Mass.Gov and type in Accessible Vote by Mail Ballot. Check the box at the bottom of the online application to get an Accessibly Vote by Mail Ballot. It allows for a type-written signature.
4. **ADA Coordinator:** Chris followed up with Marc Strange about BJ's availability to the Commission to discuss accessibility concerns. This continues to be an issue as BJ has not responded to repeated attempts to contact.
5. Joanne provided Chris with the Assisted Listening Device from the Senior Center for members and/or others to use.

- ii. **Scholarships:** (Tara, Jenny, Chris) See updates under Fundraising.

- iii. **Disability Commission Policies** (Joanne, Jenny, Diane). The Selectmen approved new amendments and updates copies were provided to each member electronically as well as print copies are made available.

V. New Business:

a. Member Updates/Commission membership:

- i. One voting member slot is still open. An applicant expressed interest to attend the May meeting, but did not show up. Chris will reach out to her to see if there is continued interest. In addition, two other individuals reached out via email, however, have not responded to continued interest.
- ii. Harry Mills shared (through Tara) that the medical challenges he is currently experiencing is limiting his ability to participate and be an active member of the Commission. He will be submitting a formal resignation with the Selectmen. Diane Shea Walton made a motion to purchase 5 prepared meals from the Delany store to send to Harry to assist him during this difficult medical challenge Beverly Dudley seconded. 7-0 in favor


b. Memorial Picnic Table Dedication: See above Whitney Park update

- c. Big Y Accessibility:** Riane Flavin a representative from Big Y attended the Commission meeting. She shared the information they have had an influx of cars being taken from their property and being left at the Ludlow Housing Authority, which has a self-made path to access Big Y from the Housing Authority. When they were made aware of the situation, they placed bollards in the path to prevent this, but now a person with a wheelchair cannot get through. Amy Kurtz has also informed the ADA Coordinator, Ludlow Housing Authority and representatives Safety Committee who represent the Police & Fire Departments to see if they have any additional input. The Commission was able to discuss the pathway issue with Riane. There are concerns, also, that this pathway, although supports many of the individuals who live in the housing units and is a much shorter access to the store, ends into an open lot that is used by the distribution and delivery trucks, making it unsafe. It is unclear how this pathway came about and does not appear to be something that was created to be a shorter handicap access to the store. It does require further assessment, especially by BJ. Riane was also going to attend the town Planning Committee to discuss the issue further. Chris and/or Tara will follow up with the Planning Committee. Upon receiving the initial complaint from Karen Klimek, the ADA Commission Chairperson, Christopher Harkins, assisted with filing a formal accessibility complaint U.S Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, to address the issue. Chris will also follow back up with Karen to share Big Y's commitment to supporting accessibility and to discuss their serious efforts to address the pathway issue.

- d. File Cabinet:** Thanks so much to Amy Kurtz! The Commission's file cabinet is now accessible for use.

A motion to adjourn was made by Tara Bronner, seconded by Beverly Dudley. Vote 7-0 in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m. **PLEASE NOTE** The next meeting date: **June 26, 2025, 6:00 PM Town Hall, Room #1, in the First Floor Conference Room.**

Respectfully submitted,


Joanne Odato-Stach, Secretary

Minutes accepted as read:

By  Date 6/19/25

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