



TOWN OF GRAFTON

GRAFTON MEMORIAL MUNICIPAL CENTER

30 PROVIDENCE ROAD

(508) 839-5335 FAX (508) 839-4602

www.grafton-ma.gov

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMISSION (AAC)

(Regular Meeting)

Approved Meeting Minutes 8-17-23

Thursday, July 27, 2023 – 6:30 p.m.

2023 AUG 22 1 AM 9:55

RECEIVED TOWN CLERK
GRAFTON MA

Chair Rob Polsinelli called the meeting to order at 6:33 pm.

Attendance was taken by roll call:

Catherine Dore (CD) - Y

Robert Berger (RB) - Absent

Roger Trahan (RT) - Y

Alexis Henry (AH) - Y

Kristie Proctor (KP) - Y

Rob Polsinelli, Chair (RP) - Y

Guest: Paul Letourneau has been approved by the Select Board to join the Commission but has not been sworn in yet. He will watch tonight's meeting.

1. Announcements

- a. AAC Vacancy filled (see above) - remainder of unexpired term through 6/30/2025
- b. Certificate of Reorganization – Rob will send information to the Town Clerk with our commission's updated member information.
- c. July 26, 2023, marked the 33rd anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Marked the anniversary on various social media accounts.
- d. National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month – For more information, please visit:
<https://www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov/minority-mental-health/>
- e. Any other announcements:

- a. Adam Lapointe has been named the Director of the Recreation Department.
- b. New assistant Town Clerk and a new Veteran's Agent

2. External Correspondence - none

3. Meeting Minutes – June 15, 2023

Action: Roger Trahan made a motion to approve the June 15, 2023 meeting minutes; Kristie Proctor seconded. After a discussion, Chair Polsinelli took a roll call vote:

KP	Y
RSB	-
RP	Y
CD	Y
AH	Y
RT	Y

The June 15, 2023 meeting minutes were approved, 5-0. The vote was declared carried.

4. Subcommittee update - web page content

Robert Polsinelli, Alexis Henry

Alexis shared with commission members a draft document from the subcommittee who met twice this past month. Organized information and resources to include on the Town's Commission's web page. 12 Categories were created to be included on the page's side bar. Discussed the commission email address. Reviewed the 12 categories. Description of site and link to site included for each item. Roger suggested that when the document is finalized, approved, and published, we present this new web site information to the Select Board, introduce the purpose and announce that this tool is available for anyone to use. Suggestions were made to add to the list. We will always consider adding new information to the web site, and taking down old information so that the information stays current. Alexis asked, "How would we collect feedback from the

community on the draft?" Discussed when and how to collect feedback. Include a version in the meeting packet so that the public can read anything we provide in advance. Go to the end of the meeting minutes to read the document from tonight's meeting:

DRAFT – Web site links for Town of Grafton Accessibility Advisory Commission Resource Page – July 2023

5. Old Business

- a. Grafton By-Law Study Committee; Article 12, Safety and Order, Sections 21-1 through 21-4. Replies from Mike Kennedy at Center for Living and Working, and Jeffrey Dougan at MA office on Disability. Discuss how to address the issue of responding to the by-law proposal/edits discussion. The plan is for the draft of the By-Laws to be published next month in preparation for the Fall Town Meeting (October). Concern for ableist language. (We, as a commission, may introduce a warrant article regarding a by-law at Town Meeting without going through the By-Law Committee). Use of strike-through rather than color-coded highlights which would be unreadable for anyone who is color blind. Also, remove gray backgrounds which reduce acuity and needed contrast. Chair Polsinelli will respond with an email to the memo on color-blindness from Mr. Robbins sent July 13th, 2023. Discuss how the Town Meeting packet can be posted in advance of the Meeting as a link on the Town Clerk web site as an accessible PDF or Word document. Rob shared his screen to share an example of the red and green highlighted areas on the Draft By-Law document. Recommend using a readable font, such as Arial or Calibri in 14-point font. We are going to find out more information on these specific by-laws referenced above from AAB and MOD and get back to Dave Robbins as soon as possible.
- b. National Night Out – Tuesday, 8/1/23 We have a table. Easel with two posters for post-its. One poster: Ways Grafton is accessible? Other poster: Ways Grafton isn't accessible? Kristie will bring materials for this activity and silver ribbons to hand out. Roger will bring sidewalk chalk. Roger will make the commission sign and bring the Disability Pride flag outlines for coloring. Gather real-time data from attendees. Bring lawn chairs. Roger reminded Rob to post the

National Night Out as a meeting 5-8 pm. Catherine will bring her wheelchair Barbie.

- c. Grafton Common, including exterior parking, pavement – no update or response from the Architectural Access Board (AAB) yet to Mr. Ricker’s complaint.
- d. Any other old business items: Roger Trahan shared that the new charge has been updated on the Town web site. Also, the Gummery Woods entrance at the bottom of Wheeler Road is almost done with a mat and pea stone to make it an accessible grade.

6. New Business - none

7. Next Meeting Thursday, August 17, 2023, at 6:30p.m.

Action: Roger Trahan made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Catherine Dore seconded. Chair Polsinelli took a vote:

KP	Y
RSB	
RP	Y
CD	Y
AH	Y
RT	Y

Chair Polsinelli declared the motion passed with a 5-0 vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:29 pm.

Respectively submitted,
Kristie Proctor
Clerk

Adjourn

Meeting Packet Link Below:

<https://www.grafton-ma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/9759>

DRAFT – Web site links for Town of Grafton Accessibility Advisory Commission Resource Page – July 2023

Accessibility topic

- I. **Ask the Accessibility Advisory Commission a question** [LINK= email to the commission]
- II. **Accessing Support for Municipal Meetings** (we would need to create content) (Rob, pull the language for Town’s meetings, how to request an accommodation, etc.)
- III. **Closed Captioning for GCTV** (we need to create content)
- IV. **Americans With Disabilities Act and Disability Rights**
 - A. *The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*: [LINK=<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/learn-about-the-americans-with-disabilities-act-ada>] is a civil rights law mandating equal opportunity and access for individuals with disabilities. Support for concerns related to the ADA can be obtained from the *New England ADA Center* [LINK=<https://www.newenglandada.org/>]
 - B. *File ADA complaint* (Bob), <https://www.ada.gov/file-a-complaint/>
 - C. *The Massachusetts Office on Disability* (<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-office-on-disability>) provides information on disability-related civil rights and obligations. MOD helps people with disabilities to understand their rights and helps cities, towns, places that serve the public, and state government agencies to understand accessibility obligations.
- V. **Disability-Related Legal Assistance/Report a Concern or Abuse**
 - A. Report abuse/neglect of an adult with a disability: *The Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC)* [LINK= <https://www.mass.gov/reporting-abuse-and-neglect>] protects adults with disabilities from abusive acts or omissions of caregivers through investigation oversight, public awareness, and prevention. Anyone who suspects the abuse or neglect of a person with a disability should file with DPPC.
 - B. Report child abuse/neglect: *The Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF)* [LINK= <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/report-child-abuse-or-neglect>] works in partnership with families and communities to keep kids safe. Anyone who suspects the abuse or neglect of a child should file with DCF.
 - C. *Disability Law Center (DLC)* (www.dlc-ma.org) is the protection and advocacy for people with disabilities in Massachusetts. DLC provides legal advocacy on disability issues and promotes the rights of all people with disabilities to participate fully and equally in the social and economic life of MA.

- D. *Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee* (<https://mhlac.org/>) MHLAC provides information and advice to individuals involved with the Massachusetts mental health system.

VI. Community and Independent Living Supports for Children and Adults

- A. *The Federation for Children with Special Needs* [LINK- <https://fcsn.org/>] empowers families with children from birth to adulthood through assistance, training, and leadership development. They focus on education, early intervention, health care, transitions, and children in foster care and group homes, to support all children, especially those with disabilities, those at risk, and those with economic, cultural, or linguistic barriers.
- B. *Independent Living Centers* (<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/independent-living-centers>) are private, nonprofit, consumer-controlled organizations providing services and advocacy by and for people with all types of disabilities to support independent community living. With 11 ILCs throughout the state, the Center for Living and Working (<https://www.centerlw.org/>) in Worcester is closest to Grafton.
- C. Finding Caregivers for People with Disabilities: *The PCA Workforce Council* (<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/personal-care-attendant-workforce-council>) works to ensure the quality of long-term, in-home, personal care by recruiting and training the personal care attendant (PCAs) workforce serving MassHealth (MA Medicaid) members, and a helps to connect PCAs and MassHealth members seeking to hire them. *Rewarding Work* (<https://www.rewardingwork.org/>) helps individuals and families hire caregivers and provides a free resource for those seeking work as caregivers.
- D. *REquipment* (<https://dmereuse.org/>) is a durable medical equipment (DME) re-use program offering free refurbished wheelchairs, scooters, shower chairs and more to adults, children and elders living in Massachusetts.
- E. *MassMATCH* (<https://www.massmatch.org/>) is the state's initiative to Maximize Assistive Technology in Consumer's Hands. It is one of 56 state-level AT Act programs in the US. MassMATCH's mission is to promote the use of assistive technology and assistive technology services to enhance the independence of people with disabilities, enabling equal participation in all of life's activities.

VII. Financial Supports (Health Insurance, Disability Benefits, Nutrition Assistance)

- A. *The Massachusetts Health Connector* (<https://www.mahealthconnector.org/>) is the state-based health insurance Marketplace that makes shopping for affordable health and dental coverage easier for Massachusetts individuals, families, and small businesses.
- B. *Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and/or Supplemental Security Income (SSI)* (<https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability/>) The SSDI and SSI programs provide assistance to people who meet Social Security requirements for disability. Additional assistance for Massachusetts residents can be found at: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/how-to-file-a-claim-for-ssdi-or-ssi>

- C. *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)* (<https://www.mass.gov/snap-benefits-formerly-food-stamps>) is a federal nutrition assistance program available to some individuals based on household size, income and expenses. In Massachusetts, SNAP is administered by the Department of Transitional Assistance.

VIII. **Housing, Accessibility, and Universal Design**

- A. MAAB (MA Architectural Access Board) (Bob)
- B. Grafton Housing Authority (<http://www.graftonhousing.com/Home.aspx>)
- C. *The Home Modification Loan Program* [LINK- <https://www.mass.gov/home-modification-loan-program-hmlp>] provides no interest loans to modify the homes of adults and children with disabilities. If you or a household member is disabled or an elder, the Home Modification Loan Program can provide a loan so you can make needed adaptations or modifications to your home to help you remain in your home and live more independently.
- D. *Institute for Human Centered Design* (<https://www.humancentereddesign.org/>) promotes excellence in universal and human-centered design to expand opportunities and enhance experiences for people of all ages, abilities and cultures.

IX. **Employment Services and Supports**

- A. *Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services* (<https://www.mass.gov/vocational-rehabilitation>) helps job seekers with disabilities obtain and maintain a job. VR helps people with physical, cognitive, intellectual, or mental health conditions manage the modern workplace.
- B. *MassHire – the Massachusetts Career Centers* (<https://www.mass.gov/masshire-career-centers>) offer employment and training services for job seekers and employers across the Commonwealth. The center closest to Grafton is in Worcester. (<https://www.mass.gov/locations/masshire-worcester-career-center>).
- C. *Work Without Limits* (<https://workwithoutlimits.org/>) is a network of employers, educational institutions, service providers, government agencies, individuals with disabilities and their families. Work Without Limits programs and services meet the needs of employers recruiting people with disabilities as employees, individuals with disabilities who are seeking jobs, and the employment service providers that serve them.
- D. Working/earning while on SSDI, SSI and/or other benefits. *MRC's Project Impact* (<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/statewide-employment-services>) and *Work Without Limits Benefits Counseling* (<https://workwithoutlimits.org/benefits-counseling/>) are two programs that assist people with disabilities to understand how earnings from work and unearned income (such as gifts) may affect public benefits (SSDI, SSI, Medicaid, Medicare, SNAP) so that people can make informed decisions about working.

X. **Educational Supports**

- A. *Grafton Public Schools' Office of Special Education* (<https://www.graftonps.org/domain/302>) is responsible for ensuring necessary supports and accommodations for Grafton's pupils with special needs.

- B. *The MA Department of Early and Secondary Education (DESE)* As the State Educational Agency, *DESE* (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/>) has responsibility for general supervision under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). DESE provides technical assistance and monitors local education agencies' (LEAs) implementation of IDEA and state special education law.
- C. Grafton Special Education Parent Advisory Council *SEPAC* (<https://www.graftonps.org/Page/378>) promotes understanding of, respect for, and support of all children with special needs in the community. SEPACs provide support for parents and guardians of children receiving special education services as well as recommendations and communication with other entities supporting those pupils.
- D. Community College (Kristie)

XI. **Massachusetts Disability-Serving Agencies**

- A. *The Mass Commission for the Blind (MCB)* (<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-commission-for-the-blind>) serves individuals in Massachusetts who are legally blind by providing access to employment opportunities and social rehabilitation with the goal of increasing independence and self-determination. To *apply for Blind ID/ Cert of Blindness* (https://massgov.formstack.com/forms/mcb_id_and_certificate_of_blindness_request)
- B. *Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH)* (<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-commission-for-the-deaf-and-hard-of-hearing>) provides accessible communication, education, and advocacy to consumers and private and public entities so that programs, services, and opportunities throughout Massachusetts are fully accessible to persons who are deaf and hard of hearing.
- C. As the State Mental Health Authority, *Department of Mental Health (DMH)* (<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-department-of-mental-health>) assures and provides access to services and supports to meet the mental health needs of individuals of all ages; enabling them to live, work and participate in their communities. *Apply to DMH* (<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/applications-for-dmh-services>).
- D. *Department of Developmental Services (DDS)* (<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/departement-of-developmental-services>) provides supports for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities including Autism Spectrum Disorder to enhance opportunities to become fully engaged members of their community. *Apply to DDS* (<https://www.mass.gov/dds-eligibility-services>).
- E. HMEA's *Autism Resource Central* (<https://www.autismresourcecentral.org/>) is a source of information for children and families affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). They provide services such as education, family activities, referrals, and support to families affected by ASD. This should be your first call if your child is diagnosed with ASD.
- F. *Department of Public Health Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (DPH's BSAS)* (<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/bureau-of-substance-addiction-services>) oversees the statewide system of prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery support services for

individuals, families, and communities affected by substance addiction. BSAS hosts the Massachusetts Substance Abuse Hotline (<https://helplinema.org/>) that can be reached at 800-327-5050.

- G. The *Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC)* (<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-rehabilitation-commission>) helps individuals with disabilities to live and work independently. MRC is responsible for Vocational Rehabilitation, Community Living, and Disability Determination for federal benefit programs.
- H. Grafton's *Board of Health's* (<https://www.grafton-ma.gov/448/Board-of-Health>) mission is to protect the health, safety and well-being of the residents of the Town of Grafton.

XII. Transportation and Mobility Resources

- A. *The Worcester Regional Transit Authority* (<https://therta.com/paratransit/ada-paratransit-eligibility/>) provides paratransit services to people with disabilities within the WRTA service area.
- B. *MassMobility* (<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massmobility>) is an initiative to increase mobility for older adults, people with disabilities, veterans, low-income commuters, and others who lack transportation access in Massachusetts.
- C. Through Medical Affairs, the *Registry of Motor Vehicles* (<https://www.mass.gov/disability-plates-and-placards>) issues special license plates and placards to people with disabilities who meet certain medical qualifications. Disability plates and placards allow people with disabilities to park vehicles in designated handicap parking spaces.