



TOWN OF GRAFTON
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2021 REPORT OF THE GRAFTON DISABILITY COMMISSION

The Grafton, MA Disability Commission, consisting of seven (7) members met thirteen (13) times during 2021.

Due to Novel Coronavirus / COVID-19 restrictions, all of our meetings during 2021, except for July 15, 2021 were held live via Zoom teleconferencing and taped for later viewing on Grafton Community Television (GCTV). That July meeting was also videotaped and was hybrid, allowing for Zoom participation.

Since this report is a summary of our 2021 activities, we invite the public to go onto Grafton's website, www.grafton-ma.gov to review the details contained in our meeting agendas, meeting packets, approved minutes, and the recordings maintained on-line through GCTV via the Town website.

We welcomed three new Disability Commission members: Laura Deneen, Robert (Rob) Polsinelli and Robert (Bob) Berger, Grafton's Inspector of Buildings and ADA Coordinator as the Select Board Representative. We also extend our thanks to the following members for having served on the Commission during 2021 and wish them well in their endeavors: Melissa Lackey (Clerk), Jennifer Pearson, and Mathew Often (Select Board Representative).

At the beginning of 2021, Kristie Proctor assumed the role of Clerk and took accurate minutes throughout the year, always presenting draft minutes to the Commission on a very timely basis and submitting approved minutes to the Town Clerk on an equally timely basis. During our reorganization in July, Kristie remained as clerk, Daryl Rynning remained in her role as Vice Chair, and Roger Trahan, Jr. remained as Chair. During his tenure as Chair since September 2019, Roger has put together our monthly agendas and meeting packets, and penned the Commission's annual report for 2019, 2020, and 2021.

During its 2021 meetings, the Commission's focus and activities included:

- Reviewed and organized Grafton's June 2019 municipal (non-school) ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan to develop a long-term strategic plan. Thank you to Catherine Dore and Mat Often for their efforts in completing their subcommittee work in breaking down this document which the vendor had not presented in Excel format. Special recognition to Mat for his technical skills with Excel.
- Created a subcommittee (10/21/2021) consisting of Kristie Proctor and Rob Polsinelli who began to work on amending the Disability Commission's charge to reflect the current need to create accessible, inclusive, and welcoming environments to persons with disabilities in Grafton. The Commission began discussing some possible changes and will resume this in 2022. Any recommended changes would be by Disability Commission vote for referral to the Select Board to amend the Commission's charge.
- Endorsed Municipal ADA Improvement Grant applications which were offered through the MA Office on Disability (MOD) for fiscal year 2022. This led to an award of

\$23,331.25 to the Grafton Public Library toward the purchase of assistive technology for those with blindness or low vision. Special recognition goes to Disability Commission member, Kristie Proctor for her significant input with this grant application, and to Grafton Public Library Director, Beth Gallaway for her continued focus on accessibility.

- Endorsed additional grant applications offered through MOD. Although Grafton was not selected, we look forward to grant opportunities for fiscal year 2023. These applications were:
 - Grafton Public Schools' planning grant request of \$35,000 by Superintendent, Dr. Jay Cummings for an ADA Self-Evaluation of its internal and external facilities. Notwithstanding, the School District contracted for an ADA Self-evaluation which document will likely be available by the publication of Grafton's 2021 Annual Town Report.
 - Grafton Public Schools' project grant request of \$280,000 by Dr. Cummings for playground improvements at S. Grafton Elementary School.

- Endorsed a change order to the Grafton Common improvement project which included making the gazebo/bandstand accessible.

- Continued our efforts regarding closed captioning for in-person and Zoom meetings, and Town Meeting, both live and on playback. To this end, we held a joint meeting with Grafton Cable Oversight Committee to discuss these and other accessibility-related enhancements.

- Monitored the status and progress toward resolution of various citizen complaints regarding accessibility.

Significant accessibility improvements to the back entrances of the Municipal Center were completed as part of a State appropriation (thank you, Rep. David Muradian and Sen. Mike Moore). In addition, accessible brick pavers were laid down as part of the Grafton Common renovation, as well as the creation of accessible seating alongside those brick walkways.

The Grafton Public Library renovation project was completed which significantly expanded accessible space. Disability Commission member, Kristie Proctor has been our liaison to the Library Planning and Building Committee.

Accessibility improvements at various parks and recreation facilities were also completed. Thank you to Recreation Director, Jennifer Andersen for her continued efforts in seeing various projects to completion and toward those which remain.

During 2021, we welcomed Evan Brassard, our new Town Administrator and William Blake, our new Management Analyst/Communications Consultant, both of whom assisted the Commission's efforts.

Disability Commission members took advantage of trainings offered by MA Office on Disability (MOD):

- March 4, 2021- Jennifer Pearson attended MOD's Virtual Summit: Reasonable Accommodations and Socialization in a Virtual World and presented details during a subsequent Commission meeting.

- Catherine Dore, Rob Polsinelli, and Bob Berger attended a webinar which was offered by MOD at various times during November: Accessible Meeting for Municipalities. Catherine presented information and presentation slides to the Commission during its November 18, 2021 meeting.
- Our accessible parking fines account (No. 29.122.280.4233) ended calendar year 2021 with a balance of \$700.00. This account has existed since 2009, with such expenditures governed by MA General Laws, Chapter 40, Section 22G.

We extend our thanks to Bob DeToma and Jack Kelley at GCTV for their time and technical assistance. Also, to Cindy Ide and Joann Duncan in the Select Board / Town Administrator's office, Kandy Lavalley (Town Clerk), Paul Cook (Assistant Town Clerk), and their Administrative Assistant, Jayne Zwicker.

Our Building Inspector / ADA Coordinator, Robert (Bob) Berger (now a Commission member) provided input on many matters that came before us, as did Jeffrey Dougan, Assistant Director of Community Services at MA Office on Disability.

We look forward to a productive 2022 in helping create a more informed and accessible Grafton.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger R. Trahan, Jr., Chair
Daryl Rynning, Vice Chair
Kristie Proctor, Clerk
Robert (Bob) Berger, Select Board Representative
Catherine Dore
Laura Deneen
Robert (Rob) Polsinelli