

COMMISSION ON ACCESSIBILITY
MONDAY, JANUARY 27, 2014 at 3:00 PM
MINUTES

Chairman Fleischer called the meeting to order at 3:15 PM

Members present: Fleischer, Baxendale, Harker, Rechsteiner & Taylor

Members absent: Vega & Shack

Also present: ADA Coordinator Michelle Collette

COMMENTS TO THE PLANNING BOARD – HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN

The Commission discussed the draft Housing Production Plan prepared by the Planning Board as part of the Comprehensive Master Plan, Phase II Implementation.

Member Harker said he would like more specific information from the US Census to identify people with disabilities. ADA Coordinator Michelle Collette said the US Census provides demographic data, but individual names and health information are private.

Member Rechsteiner said he read the plan and was very impressed with the contents of the report. He said the Town should provide an inexpensive transportation system to assist people with disabilities. Member Baxendale said the Council on Aging has a van for senior citizens that is available.

The motion was made by Baxendale, seconded by Rechsteiner, to offer the following comments on the Housing Production plan to the Planning Board:

1. The Commission inquired about the validity of the data on people with disabilities because it was based upon the 2000 US Census. The Commission noted that such data was not collected in the 2010 census and that the American Community Survey (ACS) does not compile disability data for small towns. Therefore, how does the Town determine what the current housing requirements are for people with disabilities?
2. The relationship between housing and transportation is an essential consideration, particularly for people with disabilities. The Commission urges the Board to follow through on the recommendations in the Master Plan Transportation Element goals on "Paratransit" and "Explore and Promote Multi-passenger Modes of Transportation for Groton Residents to Reduce Single Occupancy Vehicle Trips."
3. The Town permitting granting Boards should require that a percentage of affordable housing units be constructed as universally accessible, even for smaller-scale projects. Such units may be needed by people at all stages of life.
4. Moderately-priced "workforce" housing projects should include universally accessible housing units for people who may not qualify for affordable units.
5. The Town should investigate low-interest loans or grants to assist homeowners in modifying existing house when needed. Such housing renovations may allow people to stay in their homes rather than having to relocate.

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The Commission will request that the Planning Board continue the public hearing to a later date to allow for additional comments. The motion passed unanimously.

Members will try to attend the Planning Board's public hearing on January 30, 2014.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, February 10, 2014 at 3:00 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette
ADA Coordinator