

**COMMISSION ON ACCESSIBILITY  
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2014 at 4:00 PM  
MINUTES**

Chairman Fleischer called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM

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

Members absent: Rechsteiner and Shack

Also present: ADA Coordinator Michelle Collette, Sign Language Interpreter Christina Stockin, Jim Lyons of the Northeast Independent Living Program, Ed Doucette of Seven Hills, and Trails Committee Chairman Paul Funch

**SEVEN HILLS FOUNDATION**

Ed Doucette of Seven Hills Foundation attended the meeting at the Commission's request. Members were interested in learning more about Seven Hills and the needs of its residents to participate in community activities.

Mr. Doucette said Seven Hills operates 150 facilities in Massachusetts and Rhode Island including the 83-bed pediatric center on Hillside Avenue and the five-bedroom adult group home on Sand Hill Road in Groton. Seven Hills residents and their caregivers attend Grotonfest and utilize the Nashua River Rail Trail (NRRT). However access to the NRRT can be difficult and Grotonfest can be difficult to navigate for people with mobility challenges.

Paul Funch said there is an easement from the group home on Sand Hill Road to the NRRT that could be used as access. Mr. Doucette said the route from the group home to the NRRT is 200-250 ft in length and may be challenging because there are significant grade changes.

Mr. Doucette said the pediatric center on Hillside Avenue abuts the NRRT but public access to the NRRT may create insurance and liability issues for Seven Hills. He said all Seven Hills facilities are fully accessible.

Member Harker said the Commission would like to work in partnership with Seven Hills to help its residents participate in community activities. Mr. Doucette said he would provide the name of a contact person at Seven Hills facility in Groton.

**ADA TRANSITION PLAN**

The Commission met with Jim Lyons of the Northeast Independent Living Program about preparing an ADA Transition and Self-Evaluation Plan for parks, playgrounds, and open space areas. Mr. Lyons described the work of his non-profit organization that helps people remain independent and stay in their homes. The agency is supported with Federal funds.

Mr. Lyons said the NEILP also consults with cities, towns, and private businesses on ADA compliance matters. The NEILP provided services for the Town of Westford, the City of Haverhill, and the Town of Ipswich on improving parks, playgrounds, and open space. The main interest is to make such areas more accessible in reasonable ways. The project will involve members of the community, the Commonwealth Commission on Disabilities, and the local Commission on Accessibility. An implementation plan to correct physical barriers with a timeframe for completing the improvements will be created. When the plan is approved by the Selectmen, the Town must comply with the recommendations by the completion dates.

Member Harker asked what time of year is best for the project. Mr. Lyons said spring is a good time to start.

ADA Coordinator Michelle Collette said the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) funds must be approved by Town Meeting in April 2015. The funds will be available on July 1, 2015. The two-page letter was submitted in October, the preliminary application is due on January 12, 2015, and the final applications are due on March 26, 2015.

The Commission will review the list of sites to include in the plan at its meeting on December 8, 2014 and will meet with the Park Commissioners before finalizing the list. The Commission will also work with the Conservation Commission, the Groton Conservation Trust, and New England Forestry Foundation on the project.

### **COMPLAINTS OR CONCERNS**

Members reiterated their concerns about lack of accessible parking at Town Hall. ADA Coordinator Michelle Collette said the Town Manager and DPW Director are working to address these concerns.

Member Harker expressed frustration about people driving with placards in place which is a violation of law. ADA Coordinator Michelle Collette suggested that Member Harker discuss the matter with the Police Chief because it is a traffic safety issue. Member Harker said he would do so.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, December 8, 2014 at 4:00 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 5:10 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette  
ADA Coordinator