

**COMMISSION ON ACCESSIBILITY
THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2025, at 2:00 PM
MINUTES**

Vice Chairman Tom Pistorino called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM at the Town Hall

Members present: Judy Anderson, Molly Foster, Lynne Pistorino, Tom Pistorino, and Barbara Rich
Members absent: Robert Fleischer and Alan Taylor
Others present: Megan Donovan, Executive Director of the Prescott Community Center and Colin Poole of Shanahan Sound & Electronics, Inc.

HEARING CONCERNS

At the last meeting on February 27, 2025, new member Barbara Rich expressed concerns about people who are hard of hearing and not being able to fully participate in public meetings and other events. She suggested looking into installing hearing loops in public buildings where meetings are held.

The Commission met with Colin Poole of Shanahan Sound, representative for New England Hearing Loops. He presented a "Quick Guide" on hearing loops and a variety of assistive listening systems. He said hearing loops require downloading a WiFi application or receivers with different channels for different languages. There must be a receiver for everyone to use the system. The antennas are installed in the ceiling or floor within a minimum range of 3 ft and maximum range of 6 ft, so floor installations are preferable. The installation for each facility can be expensive. About 70% of the wire coil loops are compatible with most hearing aids, but the smaller, less expensive hearing aids do not work well.

Mr. Poole said new technology is being developed, such as the Auracast system that uses blue tooth and is compatible with Apple and Android phones. Volume is controlled by the individual user on their earphones. Tom Pistorino asked if demonstrations of the Auracast system are available. Mr. Poole said on-site walk throughs must be done first.

The Committee thanked Mr. Poole for providing information will look forward to the implementation of the new Auracast technology.

CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

Member Barbara Rich suggested that the Committee consider working with restaurants about setting aside a quiet section in the restaurant for people who have hearing issues.

Member Pistorino said he talked to COA Director, Nicole Sarvela, about setting up a "volunteer program" to assist people who are older or have disabilities with tasks such as clearing snow off cars, yards work, etc. High school students may be able to earn community services credits by volunteering.

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Judy Anderson moved to approve the minutes of February 27, 2025, Lynne Pistorino seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on June 11, 2025, at 2 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 3:15 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette
ADA Coordinator

Shanahan Sound & Electronics, Inc. Assistive Listening Systems Quick Guide

CATEGORY	HEARING LOOP	FM SYSTEM	INFRARED (IR)	Wi-Fi	Auracast as ALS*
People with hearing loss					
Easy to use, with one push button on hearing aids or cochlear implants	●				Yet to be solved
User needs no extra equipment from facility	* ●				Extremely few hearing aid users have Auracast: receivers required for foreseeable future and for those without devices
Does not need a smartphone or app	●	●	●	If receivers provided	If receivers provided
Minimal latency (end-to-end sound delay)	●	●	●		Latency varies depending on transmitter model, settings, and receiving device. Typically > 30 ms.
ADA Compliant	●	●	●		Under investigation
Hearing instruments can connect using built-in telecoils (systems are required to be hearing-aid compatible)	●	** ●	** ●		When used with receiver and neckloop, needed for foreseeable future
Installed in facilities, in 30+ countries	●	●	●	Limited	Extremely few but should increase over next 5-7 years

#Auracast streamed assistive listening is an emerging technology. The full technical name is "Auracast™ Broadcast Audio used as part of Assistive Listening System (ALS)." It can be installed alongside an existing ALS. See Auracast Streamed ALS for more information.

*For ADA-Access hearing instruments with telecoil-enabled hearing instruments (hearing aids, cochlear implants, and bone conductive devices). A list of hearing instruments (3 pages, pdf), with telecoils and Auracast, is available.

** When used with a neckloop.

2023-2025 Center for Hearing Access