



TOWN OF GROTON
COMMISSION ON ACCESSIBILITY
173 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 25, 2011
TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Michelle Collette, Community Access Monitor
for the Commission on Accessibility
RE: Universal Access at Town Meeting

At its meeting on March 24, 2011, the Commission on Accessibility met with Scott Harker regarding his concerns about accessibility issues at Town Meeting. The Commission reviewed Mr. Harker's letter dated March 14, 2011 and the memorandum dated March 23, 2011 from Building Commissioner Mark Dupell. The Commission thanks Mr. Harker for his efforts to call attention to this important issue.

The Commission voted unanimously, with all members present, to recommend that the Board of Selectmen work with the Groton Dunstable Regional Schools to implement the following short-term measures prior to the April 25, 2011 Spring Town Meeting:

Parking:

1. The seven existing accessible parking spaces should have permanent signage as required in 521 CMR 23.2.2. (This step should be taken immediately regardless of Town Meeting.)
2. Temporary signage for additional accessible parking spaces should be installed for Town Meeting. The Commission recommends that the entire parking area between the Middle School South and the Florence Roche School be reserved for people with disabilities and their caregivers. There are approximately 25 parking spaces in this area.
3. A designated drop-off area should be provided at the main entrance to the Middle School South building. Signage should be provided to indicate the location of the drop-off area.
4. The Police Officer on duty should be instructed to enforce the above parking measures.

Seating:

The Performing Arts Center (PAC) is classified as a "Place of Public Assembly" and should meet the requirements of 521 CMR 14.1 – 14.4.4) as indicated in the Building Commissioner's memorandum. Several physical modifications to the PAC are required. However, the following steps should be taken in the interim:

1. Nine (9) spaces for wheel chairs should be designated in the rear of the PAC (five on one side and four on the other) with seats for caregivers. Proper signage should be placed showing the location for wheelchairs. The 36" pathway to the seating should be clear of any obstructions. The Commission realizes the wheelchair seating should be distributed throughout the auditorium, but changes to the permanently installed seating would be required. Seating in the front of the auditorium is not an option because the emergency exits at the front are not accessible.
2. Five seats should be reserved on each side in the front rows of the middle rear sections for people with disabilities and their caregivers. Proper signage should be placed on the seats.
3. Volunteers with hand-held microphones should be available for people with mobility issues so they may be able to address the meeting.

Public Outreach:

The warrant mailed to all residents should include a statement about universal accessibility at Town Meeting including diagrams, if possible. The warrant should also provide information for those who may need additional accommodations such as a sign-language translator for the hearing impaired or computer-aided support for the blind. A telephone number to call one week in advance to make such arrangements should be provided.

Long Term Measures:

The Commission recommends that the Board of Selectmen forward the Building Commissioner's memorandum to the GDRSD on the additional accessibility issues that have been identified at the campus.

The Commission hopes the above measures will encourage voters to attend Town Meeting and participate in the process.

cc: Building Commissioner Mark Dupell, Town Clerk Michael Bouchard, GDRSD Karen Tuomi



TOWN OF GROTON

173 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450-1237
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Office of:
Building Commissioner
Zoning Enforcement Officer

MEMORANDUM

To: Michelle Collette, Land Use Director / Town Planner

From: Mark Dupell, Building Commissioner / Zoning Enforcement Officer *MD*

Date: March 23, 2011

Re: Groton Dunstable Regional Middle School – Performing Arts Center and Parking Lots

Accessibility Compliance Inspection: Wednesday, March 23, 2011

1. Middle School South / Performing Arts Center parking area:

- a. Ramp:
 - i. Slope and handrails: OK
 - ii. Unlevel surface a bottom landing (521 CMR 24.4.1)
 - iii. Ramp itself and Accessible Routes in need of repairs and maintenance
- b. Parking spaces:
 - i. 7 Accessible spaces provided
 - ii. 1 (of the 7) appears to be Van Accessible (521 CMR 23.2.2)
 - iii. All spaces are lacking required signage (521 CMR 23.6)
- c. Accessible seating (places of assembly, 521 CMR 14.1-14.4.4):
 - i. There is space for wheel chairs in the rear of the auditorium, but they are not distributed throughout the entire area as required
 - ii. There doesn't appear to be any companion seating in conjunction with the wheel chair accessible locations
 - iii. There are no armless seats at aisle location as required
 - iv. There doesn't appear to be any signage addressing accessible seating locations

2. Middle School North parking area:

- a. Parking spaces:
 - i. 6 Accessible spaces are provided
 - ii. Only 2 (of the 6) appear to be Van Accessible
 - iii. There are 5 signs installed for the 6 spaces; the 5 signs state in part: "Van Accessible"

- iv. All of the spaces appear to be in excess of 200' from the accessible entrance (521 CMR 23.3.1-23.3.3)
- v. The passenger drop-off area (passenger loading zone) at the accessible entrance (noted in iv above) does not appear to comply with 521 CMR 23.7-23.7.2

3. Florence Roche Elementary School parking area:

a. Parking spaces

- i. The spaces provided at the Performing Arts Center adjacent to the Roche School do not have adequate or compliant access to the Florence Roche School
- ii. There are 2 accessible spaces on the lower level of the right side of the building
- iii. There is no directional signage for accessing these spaces and no signage identifying these spaces
- iv. The required level surface at the entrance door is not maintained and is in need of repair
- v. If the front entrance is to be a passenger drop-off area (passenger loading zone), it lacks an accessible aisle, as required, as well as a compliant curb cut

4. Florence Roche Elementary School – rear parking area:

a. Parking spaces

- i. 2 spaces are provided
- ii. These spaces do not comply with slope requirements
- iii. There is no signage
- iv. The rear entry door in this area is not compliant

In summary:

- 1. It appears that the overall campus parking areas are non-compliance in the number of required accessible parking spaces
- 2. The spaces that *are* provided have signage and other compliance issues
- 3. The seating in the Performing Arts Center does not comply.

March 14, 2011

To: Groton Board of Selectmen
Selectman's Meeting, 7:00 PM, March 14, 2011
Town of Groton, Massachusetts

Groton Town Hall,
Main Street,
Groton, Massachusetts 01450

Subject: Resident's Request, with Proposals, for Handicapped Accessibility at the Groton-Dunstable Middle School Auditorium Before and During Groton Town Meetings.

To those present;

History: Handicapped accessibility to Groton Town Meetings has been inconsistent, at best, and publication of that accessibility, if available, has been non-existent.

(A) Parking Facts: The Medical Affairs Branch of the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles has indicated to me on Thursday, February 17, 2011, there are, at present, Two Hundred Sixty-Five (265) Handicapped placards issued to Groton residents. In addition, there are also between Ten (10) and Fifteen (15) Handicapped plates believed to be issued to Groton residents.

There are, at present, a total of Seven (7) Handicapped parking spaces close to the Groton-Dunstable Middle School Auditorium. Assuming a total number of Two Hundred Eighty (280) Handicapped Placards and Plates issued to Groton residents, this number of parking spaces only permits a total of Two point Five Percent (2.5%) of those Groton residents with physical Handicaps to park and attend Groton Town Meetings.

(B) Seating Facts: There have been no, specific, seating locations identified within the Groton-Dunstable Middle School Auditorium, on a consistent basis, for Handicapped individuals at Groton Town Meetings.

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Handicapped Accessibility Proposals:

First, for Handicapped Parking Accessibility: This Document proposes that Groton's Selectmen, in collaboration with Groton's Commission on Accessibility, take such steps as may be appropriate to insure:

- (1) that a minimum of Twenty (20) additional, temporary, parking spaces are set aside nearest Groton-Dunstable Middle School for use as Handicapped parking for any scheduled Groton Town Meetings;
- (2) that signage be prepared and utilized to adequately identify both permanent and temporary parking spaces on evenings of Groton Town Meetings;
- (3) a Police detail be made available to enforce the appropriate use of both sets of Handicapped spaces; and,
- (4) that the location of said spaces be publicized and diagramed in any future Groton Town Meeting Warrant.

Second, for Handicapped Seating Accessibility: This Document proposes that Groton's Selectmen, in collaboration with Groton's Commission on Accessibility, take such steps as may be appropriate to insure:

- (1) at least fifty (50) seats are identified and set aside, on a permanent basis, within the Groton-Dunstable Middle School Auditorium, for use by Handicapped individuals and their care-givers if any, during any Groton Town Meeting;
- (2) that open spaces at both the left and right rear of said Auditorium are made available for access for those with wheel and power chairs and their care-givers if any;
- (3) that additional microphones are set up at the rear of said Auditorium during each Groton Town Meeting for the use of Handicapped individuals using wheel and power chairs, and their care-givers;
- (4) that signage be manufactured to permit adequate identification of aforementioned Handicapped seats and spaces at Groton Town Meetings; and,
- (5) that said Handicapped seats and spaces be identified in an appropriate Auditorium seating diagram to be published in, or with, each future Groton Town Meeting Warrant.

Sincerely,



Scott Evans Harker
341 Martins Pond Road
Groton, Massachusetts 01450-1433