

Commission on Disability, Easthampton, MA
1/4/2022

recorded by Kate DaSilva

Attendees: Angelique Baker, Eli Damon, Jeff Bagg, Stan Diamond, Jeff Brown, Mary Morris, Molly Goodwin, Marty Klein, Bob Nichols, Sara Chaplin

convene - 10:03AM

public speak – N/A

Stavros Presentation:

Jason Montgomery – Director of Development

- Shared presentation of the day-to-day services at Stavros (see attached power point)

Yashira Ruiz – Director of Independent Living services

- Stavros serves anyone who identifies with a disability. “No wrong door” approach. Will discuss resources available, in house, or with state partners. Barriers identified and the goal is to empower the individual requesting services. Services are always “person centered”. Services range from housing supports, community accessibility, legislative advocacy, medical equipment procurement, peer counseling, education on rights and entitlements, etc.
- Independent Living Plans are developed by the consumer. The consumer can abandon the plan at any time.
- The preference is to work with, and educate businesses, about accessibility and how they can comply with the ADA.
- Questions:
 - Jeff Brown asked about how one would employ the services of Stavros as it relates to inaccessibility issues in the community.
 - Mary asked about “self-referral”. Does the person need to be in financial need?
 - Stavros has no financial requirement. However, some agencies they contract with may have financial requirements or other requirements. Stavros could meet with folks to discuss what options would be available if someone doesn’t fall within the requirements.
 - Jeff Bagg – receives questions about issues/concerns related to disability from residents. Does Stavros see a lot of towns/cities putting up information about the services Stavros offers? How can the CoD best direct people to Stavros?
Jason recommended sharing information about Stavros directly. It’s the most straight forward and direct way to receive services. Jason offered to meet and assist with getting the best information up on the town website.

Angelique had to leave at approximately 10:45am. Co-chair Eli Damon took over the meeting at this point.

Survey Subcommittee meeting update:

- Planning intern to help with survey results. There’s a mass of data so some help form an intern would be very helpful. Someone from UMass or perhaps the Pioneer Valley

Planning Commission. Jeff Bagg felt it made sense but getting an intern for one project may be tricky. Jeff suggested PVPC may be the best option but getting started may be a bit involved. The commission should decide what they want to exactly do with the data prior to involving an intern. Stan asked about employing a senior, through the Senior work program in Easthampton. Mary asked about reaching out to MRC. Jeff brought up the five-year plan that the commission has yet to solidify. It may be best to nail that down first. However, there's no harm in reaching out.

Snow Ordinance Update:

- Eli shared information about the public safety meeting about the snow clearing issue. The DPW rep said there wasn't enough money, and they can't transfer money from roadway to sidewalk clearing. Lindsey Rothschild suggested adding selected sidewalks for snow removal. A list of high priority sidewalks was developed. No action items were noted at the end of the meeting. Jeff Bagg brought up the complication of funding issues for the DPW in all aspects, not just the sidewalk issue. Perhaps we should come up with a plan and aim for getting something done for next winter. A PSA could be a good option to get the word out about the serious issues with uncleared sidewalks. Also, some of the sidewalks have private properties adjacent to them. One effort could be exploring this avenue of having the residents clear their own sidewalks. Other sidewalks without a private property attached, would be a great area for focus and effort for the DPW to look at. Williston was asked about maintaining the bridge on Park Street, as it's close to their property. Billing a homeowner for private plowing would require a change to the ordinance, which are very outdated. In addition, it would be quite difficult for the town to procure a private contractor on call for these services. Jeff Bagg asked Eli to put sidewalk clearing on the next agenda and invite Lindsey to the February meeting to give an update. Jeff will circle back to Stan and anyone else to explore a plan for late January/February to start to set up a PSA video. Riverside Industries may be a good partner in this issue. Kate offered to reach out to the new executive director (Lynn Ostrowski-Ireland) and inquire about their involvement. Jeff reiterated that this will take some time. Eli also brought up that a great number of folks mentioned on the survey that sidewalk snow removal was an issue.

February agenda

- Jeff asked to add the following to the February agenda: update on ADA grant. Easthampton was notified that they did get the grant, which is great news. It's roughly \$43,000 to hire a consultant to come up with a plan. Jeff will invite the consultant to the February meeting. Once issues are identified, we can apply for more targeted funding.

Next meeting is on February 1st.

Meeting adjourned at 11: 09 am.