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DATE: April 11, 2024
TIME: 9:45 AM

BELMONT DISABILITY ACCESS COMMISSION

Minutes, Meeting of March 20, 2024 (Held via Zoom)

Start time 7:08

End time 8:07

Next meeting scheduled for April 10 at 7pm

Present: Andrew Poulsen, Macharia Waruingi M.D., Karen Bauerle and Michael MacNamara

Review of minutes from February 14, 2024.

We began by discussing the absence of a Belmont Town liaison historically and presently. Macharia noted that we are not an ad hoc committee Belmont. We agreed that the town is not free to ignore our requests and concerns. For example, no substantive response has been forthcoming RE: Town Meeting members inability to hear the Moderator when voting. The Town has yet to respond to the use of Bluetooth in the auditorium for hearing impaired members or suggested a viable solution, yet.

We briefly discussed the new library staircase design and whether or not it complies with the ADA or MA state law. It was suggested by Macharia that we contact the Disability Access Consultants and learn more about code compliance and enforcement.

Andrew spoke with the Town Administrators office and Patrice Garvin assigned the assistant Town Engineer, Ara Yogurtian. We should document the violation, if and when tents are placed on the sidewalk. Visual evidence is necessary to evidence the violation. The town will contact Wheelworks once this documentation has been received.

We discussed the Community Path and accessibility. Norma will contact Holly Muson and Andrew will follow up. It was suggested that some members of DAC attend the upcoming meeting and there was a lack of clarity about the number of attendees permitted to join.

Andrew introduced a new issue for the Issue Tracker. Anne Marie Ibner, a former Belmont resident currently residing in Watertown while maintaining commercial ties in Belmont. She noted that the Disabled parking behind Tatte was less accessible than in front of the bakery on Trapelo Road. We agreed this issue deserves our attention and will visit in the coming weeks. Plans to meet there have not been finalized prior to the writing of these minutes.

We discussed in some detail Macharia's experiences interfacing with Belmont. He receives written letters and multipage documents requiring visual capacity which he lacks. No accommodation was offered by the Town. The structure of Belmont, a town of homes run by volunteers on committees, lacks

a consistent means to share communications for visually impaired residents. Macharia could not identify which office sent any letter because he cannot consume the material at hand.

Limited Zoom space for the Town committees required The DAC members to reschedule their regularly scheduled meeting this month. Committees generally do not interface unless the Town establishes viable communication channels. Given that the DAC is not an ad hoc organization we hope the Town will take access issues in town more seriously by supporting the 60 + committees in Belmont.

Draft prepared by Karen Bauerle