

**TOWN OF SHEFFIELD
COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES
Thursday, December 3, 2009
DOWNSTAIRS MEETING ROOM
4:00 PM**

Commission Members Present: Denise Rueger (Chair)
Laura Grunfeld
Noah Parsons
Don Perry
Dave Wells

Commission Member Absent:

Members of the public:

Chair Rueger called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Notes were taken by members but the Commission had not taken formal minutes nor did it have a formally appointed clerk.

IT IS WITH MUCH SADNESS AND REGRET THAT THIS COMMISSION MUST ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF JACK POLLITT: *A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously so approved to accept Pollitt's resignation from the Commission on Disabilities.* It was done with much regret and disappointment. He will be sorely missed but we will willingly take up his dream and carry it forward.

2010 CENSUS FORM COMMISSION INSERT: Discussion followed:

- 1.) 911 disability information possible
- 2.) Get 911 numbers visible from both directions on the road
- 3.) Share Commission concerns already under discussion
- 4.) Ask for Sheffield citizens to share concerns and agenda items for us to consider

ASK CHIEF MCGARRY TO ATTEND COMMISSION MEETING:

- 1.) Ask Chief McGarry if we can have Sheffield residents, who wish, contact him with specific disability needs within a household when a 911 call comes in, in order to help first responders.
- 2.) Maybe have Chief McGarry meet with the Commission so that we can better understand disability concerns he is aware of and first responder abilities already in place or should be considered for future inclusions.
- 3.) Consider whether the Berkshire Sheriff's Department should be informed of specific disabilities within a Sheffield household.

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- 4.) Rueger and Parsons volunteered to sit down with Chief McGarry

DISCUSSION REGARDING MEANING AND INTERPRETATION OF "VISITABILITY" STANDARDS: Grunfeld raised the issue of "visitability," which means that homes are built in such a manner as to make it possible for people with mobility disabilities to visit. Specifically that there will be at least one accessible entrance, one accessible restroom on the main floor, and doors a minimum of 32" wide. Some towns/cities require that new homes be built as visitable, others simply give out the information to people building new homes.

DISCUSSION ENSUED AROUND THE NEED TO MEET TWICE A MONTH OR FOR TWO HOURS ONCE A MONTH: Wells and Parsons voted for meeting 2 hours every month and Rueger, Grunfeld for meeting twice a month, and Perry was neutral. Decision was made by Rueger to meet the 1st and 3rd Thursday at 4 p.m. each month.

DISCUSSION FOLLOWED REGARDING THE BROADER SCOPE OF DISABILITIES:

- 1.) hearing impaired
- 2.) blind/low vision

ASSISTIVE LISTENING DEVICE/SYSTEM WAS BROUGHT UP:

- 1.) access
- 2.) issues

TOWN HALL CONCERNS:

- 1.) road access to the front of the Town Hall does not accommodate disability access from a vehicle
- 2.) front door is not disability friendly
- 3.) no place within the foyer for those with disabilities to wait to be picked up or dropped off
- 4.) no "EXIT" sign upstairs to the back stairs (during the cold season all doors upstairs are closed)
- 5.) elevator not functioning with reliability

ACCESS TO A SIGNER: Discussion followed around letting Sheffield residents know that if they are hearing impaired that a signer should be present and certainly available for all TOWN MEETINGS and at any other time when needed at Town events by request. Tricia Vollmer is a local signer but it is not known whether the signer needs to be certified or not. Decision made to follow up.

SHEFFIELD POST OFFICE ACCESSIBILITY CONCERNS:

- 1.) landlord / tenant responsibilities

SUGGESTED THAT THE COMMISSION SHOULD PUT AN INFORMATIONAL NOTICE IN THE *SHEFFIELD TIMES*: It was suggested and *decided that an informational article be written and submitted to the Sheffield Times about the newly formed Sheffield Commission on Disabilities. Wells [with the assistance of Nan] will write up the informational article and submit it for the Sheffield Times in time to meet the December 15th deadline.*

DECEMBER MEETING CHANGED FROM DECEMBER 10 to DECEMBER 3:

We had to change the Commission meeting date from December 10 to December 3 because Grunfeld had to be out of town on the originally scheduled date of December 10.

Wells signaled to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Perry. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Rueger adjourned the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Dave Wells [assisted by Nan]