

APPROVED SPAC 7/18/2023 MEETING MINUTES

**Town of Southborough, MA**

**Meeting of the Southborough Public Accessibility Committee (SPAC)**

**Tuesday, July 18, 2023 at 9AM.**

**Southborough Town House, McAuliffe Hearing Room  
17 Common St, Southborough, MA 01772**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Committee Members Present:**

- William (Bill) Sines (BS), Chair
- Marguerite Landry (ML)
- Bonnie Phaneuf (BP)
- William (Will) Warren (WW), Clerk

**Absent Committee Members**

- None

**Ex-Officio Members Present**

- Mark Purple (MP), Town Administrator / ADA Coordinator
- Casey Burlingame (CB), Building Commissioner / Zoning Enforcement Officer

**Absent Committee Members and Ex Officio Members:**

- None

**Representatives of Other Town Entities Present:**

- Tim Davis (TD), Recreation Director
- Jay Montijo (JM), Technology Manager
- Sam Stivers (SS), Select Board Member

**Other Attendees:**

- Tim Litt (TL)

1) **Meeting called to order** by the Chair BS at 9:00 AM.

2) **Approval of Minutes:** BP made a motion seconded by WW and voted unanimously to approve the minutes of 6/20/2023 minutes as written.

**3) Topics of Discussion**

**a) Town's Website Update**

- i) JM gave an update on the status of resolving issues with the Town's updated website.
- ii) WW handed out a draft of a list of new website accessibility / useability issues to committee members only to show progress on this task that was assigned to him by the SPAC. The SPAC did not review the list in detail at this meeting.

**b) Inviting Representatives from MCB and MOD**

- i) WW confirmed with the SPAC that he should invite representatives of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) and the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) to attend meetings of the SPAC at their earliest convenience to address the following issues:
  - (1) Which navigation applications / technology would the MCB or the MOD recommend for aiding the visually impaired with navigating on Town roads, in Town buildings, and outside on Town trails and other recreation areas.
  - (2) The availability of shared Braille printing services that the Town could use for printing Braille paper documents, durable outdoor signs, or thermos plastic placards.

**c) Scope of the SPAC in Reviewing Building and Site Plans**

- i) The SPAC discussed and agreed that helping private, non-government organizations to obtain funds for ADA compliance such as that organization that is planning to renovate the Fayville Village Hall is not in the scope of the SPAC. In addition it was also agreed by the SPAC that this committee should not offer suggestions for how ADA issues might be addressed because such suggestions might conflict with those of CB, the Town's building inspector. The Planning Board and the Town's Building Inspector have primary responsibility for ensuring ADA compliance with the buildings in their scope. Though not strictly in his scope, CB volunteered to review site plans for ADA compliant parking facilities including handicapped parking, curb cuts, grades, etc.
- ii) With respect to the plans that the SPAC would like to see, it was agreed with CB that the SPAC should see all plans that involve activities undertaken by the Town or that involve affordable housing units (e.g., "40b" projects). CB agreed that he would forward all plans that he is reviewing to the SPAC.
- iii) MP raised the possibility that the SPAC is free to submit comments on Town projects not strictly in its scope through the public comment process. CB raised the fact that his reviews of site and building plans often have deadlines for comment. The SPAC agreed that it would attempt to comply with such deadlines and, if necessary, would schedule special meetings as needed. However, the SPAC also agreed that no plan reviews should be held up beyond established deadlines waiting for SPAC comments.
- iv) CB agreed that sidewalks and pole placement are not in his scope though, if asked, he would look at plans for these. Sidewalks and pole placement are in the scope of the Town's DPW and the Select Board.

**d) SPAC Page on the Town Website**

- i) WW committed to adding materials to the SPAC page on the Town's website to include:
  - (1) Statuses of the remediation of ADA issues identified by the Town's ADA Self-Assessment.
  - (2) Guidelines for holding virtual meetings that are accessible to all people including those with visual impairments.
  - (3) Applicable ADA-related laws, regulations, and guidelines.
  - (4) Resources and tools for the visually impaired including navigation apps, screen readers, text-to-speech tools, sources of audio books for the visually impaired, etc.
  - (5) Resources for recreation and employment for the disabled.
  - (6) TL's presentation, "Sidewalks are for People".
  - (7) Photos of utility poles that were placed in the past in the path of Town sidewalks and that block passage of pedestrians on foot and in wheelchairs that the SPAC is trying to have moved.
  - (8) Parking regulations as they obtain to blocking sidewalks along with photos of sidewalks being blocked by vehicles or garbage bins.

**e) *NOTE: BP Left the Meeting at This Point***

**f) Update on Keeping Sidewalks From Being Blocked**

- i) TL reported that at least where he walks regularly, the blockage of sidewalks by vehicles and garbage bins seems to him to be on the rise.
- ii) TL spoke to Southborough's Police Chief Ryan M. Newell who encouraged TL and other Southborough citizens to report these incidents when they occur via the Police Department's non-emergency phone number for its communications center, 508-485-2121.
- iii) ML asked if a reminder could be added to the Town's website reminding people not to block the sidewalks and make life in Town better for everyone.

**g) Update on Automated Sidewalk and Pavement Checks**

- i) SS reported that the Select Board has signed a contract with the Town's pavement maintenance contractor to do an assessment over the next 12 months of the Town's roads and sidewalks including an ADA assessment to figure out where we need ramps on sidewalks at intersections to make them more ADA compliant.
- ii) The Select Board will also be soliciting suggestions where new sidewalks should be built.

**h) Date for Next SPAC Meeting**

- i) August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023

- 4) Meeting adjourned at 10:20 AM by a unanimous vote of the SPAC members on a motion by BS with WW seconding.**

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- 5) Documents Shared / Discussed at the Meeting
- None

Minutes Prepared and Respectfully Submitted by Will Warren