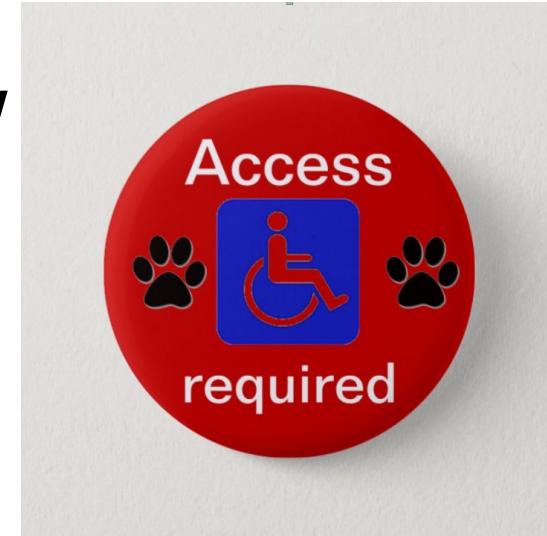


# Southborough Public Accessibility Committee



Proposed bylaw overview  
T. Litt  
in support of the ADA committee  
10-Feb-2020



# Background

- Ad-hoc Americans with Disabilities Act Committee
  - Charge: “identify community needs under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) law”
  - ADA passed in 1990, many other laws/regulations created since
  - Current charge precludes desired goal:
    - Monitor/advocate for access for **ALL** members of community to Town facilities, programs, and services, whether or not having a disability
    - Avoid remediation expense / limit liabilities for failure to comply with **all** applicable rules.
- Ad-hoc not appropriate for long-term need (so far, decades)

# Background

- Demographic changes, increased public awareness raise profile
- Almost everyone is “disabled” at some time
  - Accident/illness/age (young and old)
  - Shopping carts/strollers/luggage
  - Caregiver to disabled, elderly, children
- Many facilities benefit all
  - Document access for the blind also helps search engines
  - Ramps/elevators help wheels – and heels
- Diverse community is a richer place to live
- Fairness: everyone pays taxes, should be able to access services
- And ... It's the law!

# Bylaw provisions

- Five voting members appointed by BOS, plus ex-officio: Building Commissioner, SPAC Coordinator
- Reviews existing and proposed Town facilities, programs and projects for accessibility
  - To that end, has budget for consultants (similar to Planning, Conservation), other expenses
  - May request input from other Town entities during reviews
  - Accessibility defined broadly, but MOD's list of applicable laws/regulations used for context
  - Advises proposer of inadequacies - **NOT** an enforcement agent[1]
- May (and should) advocate for/conduct outreach on accessibility
  - For everyone - not just "disabled"[2]
- Accepts and tracks dispositions of any concerns raised
  - Coordinator is front-line: most concerns recorded and dispatched to responsible entity (e.g. schools, personnel, recreation, facilities, etc) between meetings.
  - Measurement **across all Town entities** is important - managers get what they measure
- Reports to BOS and Town Meeting

[1] *The current ADA coordinator is also the Personnel Director; he and the Building Commissioner **do** have enforcement responsibilities in those roles. The SPAC may refer some concerns to them in those roles.*

[2] *Facilities for the "disabled" benefit almost everyone at some point: ramps help wheelchairs and people with luggage and strollers; documents accessible to screen readers for the blind are also accessible to search engines and to people who listen by choice. "Able 4 bodied" people have accidents that cause short-term disabilities; e.g. crutches, slings, illness.*

# Miscellaneous

- Carries forward language from ADA Committee's charge
  - Superset – nothing is lost
  - Massachusetts **Office on Disability's** list of laws/regulations used for context, not limiting
    - SPAC is advisory, tracks and encourages compliance. Forwards issues.
    - SPAC does **not** enforce, but **does** monitor issues for trends
- Proposed interim update to ad-hoc committee name/charge
  - Essentially same provisions, limited to Selectmens' authority
  - Bridge – Bylaw wouldn't take effect until next Fall (AG review gates)

# Questions?

