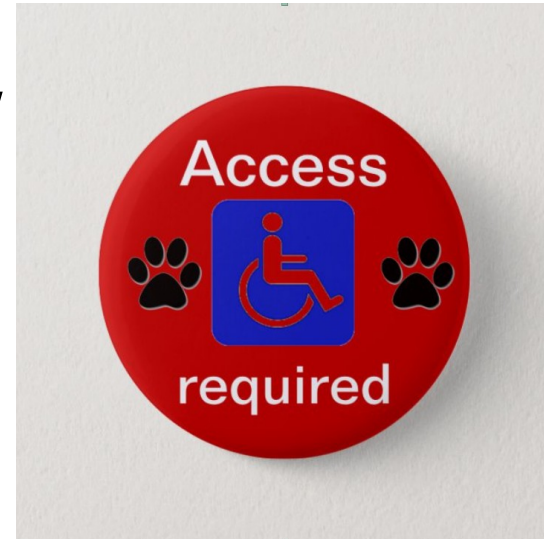


Southborough Public Accessibility Committee



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?

