

METUCHEN ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES from October 28, 2020

Borough Council Liaison: Sheri-Rose Rubin

Present:

Members: Michael Geschlecht, Rena Kallman, Dave Kallman, Wesley Brooks, Robin Brown, Pat Kay Audra Sbarra (Chair),

.

Absent: Krissy Cantin Garside Gail Zelle Jennifer Asprocolas

Public in attendance:

Old Business:

New Business:

November 18th Presentation

- Robin and Rena noted that the history and success of the committee is of particular importance. It would take too long to discuss the full history of the disability rights movement. The committee history may take this part of the presentation.
- The slide may say ADA passed in 1990 and over time it became important for Metuchen to focus on making it a better place to live.
- In terms of categories, Robin noted it would be important to discuss that not all disabilities are visible and to mention different categories physical, psychological, neurological, cognitive sensory.

- Audra will discuss why we should care about disabilities in Metuchen. This ranges from Metuchen being a progressive town and opening new areas and to stay the friendly community that it is. It is everyone's best interest to help.
- Rena and Wes also discussed the need as to how the people of the town (attendees) can be more understanding to those with disabilities with an emphasis regarding the workplace in general.
- Questions were also raised as to whether an interpreter could participate in this program. While this would be a great benefit, it is not certain that one could be provided at this point. This will be worked out with the borough and committee.
- Sheri's son will share his experiences attending school with a disability. Rena offered to discuss her and Dave's experiences with getting around town (houses and sidewalks) and that all equipment such as elevators are kept in working order.
- The inaccessibility of restaurants and building accessibility were also mentioned as a possible topic.
- On a celebratory note, Metuchen is a very walkable town and that is why it is more disability friendly.
- Pat noted the wonderful transition to her new apartment though some challenges she faced in the beginning in terms of the high price of retrofitting. It all is continuing to go real smoothly.
- She also noted the importance of being a role model for others so they can better see the value in and understand people with disabilities.
- Sheri noted that the story part could be talking about how people with disabilities feel in general. This addresses the conversation side of the talk more broadly.
- Wes noted that it is crucial to note that just because two people have the same types of disabilities, it does not mean they are affected in the same way.
- Pat and Wes discussed the importance of making sure that people are taken for who they are and to not be afraid to directly address those with disabilities and that members of the public should also be allowed to discuss their ideas. While four members offered to share stories, that may be lessened on the day of the presentation.

- Audra will send a final copy to the presentation to the group when completed. Committee was asked to send final ideas by November 11th.

Voting

- Rena noted that there is a lack of communication with voting and those with disabilities and that there will only be paper ballots at the polls this year.
- Audra noted that a flyer was posted on social media and all groups were already in the know of the situation.

Next Meeting will be Wednesday, December 2 2020 at 8:00 PM on zoom. Note the meetings will not be held the fourth Wednesday of November and December due to Thanksgiving and Christmas thus the meeting for November and December will be combined.