



***Nantucket Commission on Disability
Minutes
Open Session
Wednesday May 17, 2023***

Due to the current State of Emergency in the Commonwealth due to the Covid-19 virus outbreak, and pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Regarding Open Meeting Law, this meeting was conducted remotely by video conference via Zoom and the meeting will be aired at a later time on the Town's Government TV YouTube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-sgxAlfdoxteLNzRAUHIxA>

Present:

Mickey Rowland, Jeanette Topham, Georgia Snell, Maribeth Maloney, Augie Chotkowski, and Brenda McDonough.

Absent: All present.

Guests:

Jessica Simmons, CORD Independent Living Program Manager

Call to Order: 3:00 p.m.

Mr. Rowland read the "Script for Remotely Conducted Open Meetings" and all members present via Zoom responded affirmatively as Mr. Rowland called their names.

Agenda: 3:00 p.m.

Mr. Rowland stated, by unanimous consent we are adopting the agenda.

Note:

Minutes: 3:46 p.m.

Ms. Topham motioned to approve the November 9, 2022 minutes, which Ms. Maloney seconded, and all the present eligible Commissioners voted in favor of this motion.

Open Session: 3:04 p.m.

New Business: 3:04 p.m.

Topics:

Cape Organization for the Rights of the Disabled (CORD)

Jessica Simmons, Independent Living Program Manager with CORD, attended our meeting and briefed our Commission about CORD's programs and services.

- Founded in 1984, **Cape Organization for Rights of the Disabled (CORD)** is a non-profit organization that advances independent living and the rights of people with disabilities on Cape Cod and the Islands. As the only independent living center for the Cape and Islands region in Massachusetts, CORD provides services and advocacy that enable choice, dignity, full access to the community, and control over your life.
- CORD's mission is to advocate for the rights of people with disabilities and to promote a barrier-free environment for all. The organization shall also provide independent living services to people with disabilities.
- CORD's values — equality, opportunity, and inclusion — drive our work. CORD is run mainly *by people with disabilities for people with disabilities*, so they understand the barriers encountered by our community.
- If you have a disability and don't need the services of one of our specialized programs, CORD's Independent Living (IL) advocates will work with you, including children of all ages. From housing to benefits, assistive technology, employment, or fighting back against discrimination. As in all of CORD's programs, the IL program believes in your right to determine the course of your life. CORD believes that people with disabilities have the right to try, the right to succeed, the right to fail and the right to try again.
- Finding affordable, accessible housing can be one of the biggest challenges faced by people with disabilities. At CORD, they provide the resources and assistance people need to find housing that works for them.
- CORD's TAP advocates work with students who are transitioning from special education to adult life to prepare for the demands and responsibilities of adulthood. Whether they want to go into adult services, employment, or secondary education, CORD will help guide them and plan for their future. They will work with the students, their families, and the school to ensure that an appropriate IEP is in place and a transition plan has been created. The program runs groups that provide a fun, educational and supportive environment for students while we educate them on topics such as budgeting, communication, life skills, disability awareness, and more. We also work with youth on an individual basis.
- CORD and Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands joined together to form the Aging and Disability Resource Consortium (ADRC) of Cape Cod and the Islands. This collaboration provides a "no wrong door" point of service for adults with disabilities and seniors looking for long-term care services. By providing short-term decision support, CORD's trained Options Counselor will go over the many options you have around long-term care.

- CORD offers many workshops and training to people with disabilities and the community on the Cape and Islands. Training includes topics such as emergency preparedness, budgeting, Housing 101, Special Education rights, low tech assistive technology and more.
- The lack of money and health insurance can be a huge barrier to independence. CORD's advocates can help you learn about what you may be eligible for. Whether it's Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability (SSDI), SNAP benefits (formerly known as food stamps), MassHealth or something else, we will work with you to help you get what you need to succeed in the community.
- All the programs and services that CORD offers are free.
- CORD pays for internships.
- Mickey Rowland asked Ms. Simmons how CORD services Nantucket? Ms. Simmons replied that CORD can send someone to the island. Mr. Rowland asked if CORD ever sent anyone to Nantucket. How does anyone know about CORD's services here on Nantucket?
- Ms. Simmons replied that CORD could do outreach to educate people on Nantucket about all of these services and programs.
- Ms. Topham commented that if CORD advertises that it services the islands, then why are they not serving Nantucket.
- Ms. Simmons replied that it is difficult to find clients, but she can work with Elder Services to reach out to the Nantucket community.
- Ms. Topham mentioned that CORD could attend the Cottage Hospital's health fair as part of community outreach.
- Ms. McDonough mentioned that there is no on-demand accessible taxi service, riding service on the Cape. Therefore, if someone from Nantucket were visiting the Cape, they would have to bring their accessible vehicle, which is a major expense, or would have to reserve a ride through the Cape Cod Regional Transit ADA Para Transit a day or days in advance, and only the times that this service is provided. Ms. McDonough mentioned that this might not be CORD's responsibility, but CORD is such a powerful organization for the rights of the disabled, that maybe CORD could advocate for accessible taxi service. Ms. McDonough mentioned that Nantucket Commission on Disability advocated for accessible taxi service on Nantucket and now Nantucket has 4 accessible taxi licenses.
- Ms. Simmons responded that she is a member of a local Cape Commission on Disability and that she would mention this to her Commission.

3:43 p.m. Ms. Simmons left our Zoom meeting.

3:46 p.m. Ms. Topham motioned to approve the November 9, 2022, minutes, which Ms. Maloney seconded, and all the present eligible Commissioners voted in favor of this motion.

Old Business: None

Public Comment: None

Update:

***Topics Not Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of Meeting:**

Adjournment: 3:46 p.m.

Ms. Topham motioned to adjourn Open Session, which Ms. Snell seconded, and all voted in favor of this motion by the following roll call vote:

Mr. Rowland: Aye

Ms. Snell: Aye

Ms. Topham: Aye

Mr. Chotkowski: Aye

Ms. Maloney: Aye

Submitted by:

Brenda McDonough, Facilitator