

## 2009 Report of the Commission on Disability

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Our Chairperson, Cynthia Levine first proposed the formation of a Commission on Disability to the Board of Selectmen during its meeting of September 2, 2008.

The authorization to establish the Commission arose from Article 18 of the semi-annual Town Meeting of October 20, 2008. Specifically, the Town voted to accept the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40, Section 8J.

The Board of Selectmen then formed the 7-member Commission during its meeting of February 17, 2009, giving the Commission the following charge:

“The mission of this Commission is to assure that all people in Grafton have an equal opportunity to participate in all functions involving living, working, and enjoying recreation activities. The Commission will work toward this end by informing, educating, monitoring and advising the public, including the business community and the Town administration.”

The first meeting of the Grafton Commission on Disability occurred on April 16, 2009; we met a total of seven times in 2009. Shortly after our first meeting, we developed a web page on the Town’s web site, [www.grafton-ma.gov](http://www.grafton-ma.gov). This included our members’ names and email addresses, our meeting agendas and our minutes. The minutes have been submitted in large print in order to assist those with low vision. We invite the public to read our minutes, attend our meetings and provide input.

During 2009, we worked closely with Apple Tree Arts and the Grafton Town House Oversight Committee regarding plans to make One Grafton Common an accessible building. Representatives from both groups came before our Commission to discuss the detailed plans for that building. We also made ourselves available for letters of endorsement needed for the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board, other State agencies, and for grant applications.

During our meeting of August 27, 2009, Grafton’s Building Inspector, Bob Berger came in front of our Commission for 45 minutes, discussing his role and the role of the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB), and provided a handout of CMR 521 through page 181. Our discussion also touched upon the distinction between MAAB and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

On August 27, 2009, our Commission also met with representatives from the Board of Library Trustees and the architectural firm, Skanska. We subsequently endorsed the use of Community Preservation funds to construct a ramp and create a fully accessible restroom at the Center Library. The necessary appropriation was approved under Article 17 at our semiannual Town Meeting of October 19, 2009.

During our September 24, 2009 meeting, Mr. Thomas P. Hopkins, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board gave a very informative 90-minute training. He was accompanied by Mr. Mark Dempsey, Compliance Officer for that Board.

Cynthia Levine and Roger Trahan, Jr. presented to the Board of Selectmen on October 6, 2009 regarding handicapped parking fines. During that meeting, the Board voted to exercise its authority under Mass General Laws, Chapter 40, Section 22G to appropriate all fines received from handicapped parking violations to the Commission on Disability. Our Treasurer/Collector, Deborah A. Fox created Account No. 29.122.280.4233 pursuant to that vote.

Our Commission will continue to educate the public around issues of disability, using all available media. We will also collaborate with Boards and Committees to create a more accessible Grafton. Lastly, we extend our thanks to Mary White for her service on the Commission during 2009.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Levine, Chairperson  
Cathy Jacques, Vice Chairperson  
Roger R. Trahan, Jr., Clerk  
Cindy Vegnone  
Charles Villet