



Robert K. McCarthy
Acting Mayor

COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES

CITY OF SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS
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MINUTES OF THE SALEM COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES FEBRUARY 21, 2023

A meeting of the Salem Commission on Disabilities was held on February 21, 2023, at 4:30 p.m., via ZOOM, an online video conference call system in accordance with Chapter 107 of the Act of 2022.

Present on call were: Chair Debra Lobsitz; Commissioners: Darren Black, Rebecca Christie, Ezekiel Holt, David Moisan, Kerry Neenan and Kate Zuraw; Lisa Cammarata, ADA Coordinator, HR Director, Alan Hanscom, SATv, Jeff Cohen, City Council Liaison and Acting Clerk Joanne Roomey (noted by last name in the minutes). Absent were Maureen McKinnon and Manda Spittle.

1) Introductions/welcome

Lobsitz called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m. and she extended a welcome to everyone. Each commissioner and invited guest introduced themselves.

2) Approval of Minutes of January 2023 meeting

Moisan made a motion to approve the Commission on Disabilities Meeting Minutes of January 17, 2023. Seconded by Neenan. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

3) Guests

Kerry Murphy, the Health & Wellness Coordinator, thanked the commission for donating two ADA accessible picnic tables that will be placed on the pathway at Mack Park. Lobsitz asked her where the picnic tables would be stored when they were not in use. Ms. Murphy said there is a shed there and will ask DPS for assistance.

4) New Business

a. Construction update; Engineering Department

Deb Duhamel sent Cammarata an email regarding construction going on from December 1st until April 1st. No updates effect any of the ADA standards. Cammarata will keep the commission informed of any new information.

- b. ADA Symposium; May 21 -24, Kansas City; Zeke Holt/Lisa Cammarata/Deb Lobsitz

Holt spoke to the commission regarding the Annual ADA Symposium that he is going to in Kansas City from May 21st to the 24th. It is a comprehensive conference that offers 91 sessions on a wide range of topics presented by nationally recognized experts on the ADA and disability issues. Since Holt is ADA certified, this is a great opportunity for him to keep up with all the legal updates, etc. Cammarata will find out about travel funding to see if anyone else is interested in attending. Mr. Holt will follow-up with the commission when he gets back.

- c. Community Access Monitor Training, virtual, April 5 and April 6

Lobsitz said the Community Access Monitor Training is extremely informative and they explain all of the laws around accessibility and she strongly encourages folks to go. Christie said after being on crutches for four months, she realized how difficult it was to get around things regarding accessibility. Lobsitz and Moisan both said they have wheelchairs if anyone wanted to borrow them to see how to navigate around and accessibility issues. Christie and Neenan plan on attending the virtual training and will update the commission.

5) **Old Business**

- a. ADA Transition Plan

Cammarata said at the Senior Staff Meeting they were discussing projects at Charlotte Forten Park. She said there is an RFP and accessibility is including in there and is a priority for the city.

- b. Subcommittee reports and assignments:

- **ADA Updates and Transition Plan:** Debra Lobsitz, Darren Black, Maureen McKinnon.

Lobsitz said the owner of Bit Bar contacted her and sent an email regarding their application for a variance to the second floor. They want to have the exact same environment on the second floor as they have on the first floor to make sure the second floor is accessible and is ADA approved. The commission would like to invite the owner to the next meeting.

- **Project funding:** No new updates
- **Social Media:** No new updates
- **Pedestrian Safety:** No new updates
- **SCOD** representative to Salem Human Rights Coalitions/Kerry Neenan

Neenan said Witch City Direct meets to focus on homelessness. They collect shoes and other items to give away to disabled homeless people as well. Councilor Cohen said they meet every Saturday at the House of Pizza.

- c. Mack Park Food Farm accessibility and picnic tables; Rebecca Christie

There was a discussion regarding the Mack Park Community Food Farm that started in 2018. They use about ¼ acre of the land to grow vegetables for residents. They also grow fresh herbs and have berry bushes. They work with the Salem Pantry for cold storage on site. The Farmer's Market is every other Saturday and anyone can go. The season starts in April and goes until mid-November.

Maitland Farms, Andy Varela, uses his plow to get the soil ready. Councilor Cohen said you can even bring your compost there to be mixed into the soil. Christie said she volunteers and it is so nice to see everything come to fruition. It is a great way for the community to get together and have fresh and healthy foods. Volunteers are welcomed!

Cammarata will follow-up with the status of the picnic tables and said once they get the tables, the commission should have a meeting there.

- d. Wheelchair Rental Program; SCOD role; update/follow-up, if applicable; Kerry Neenan

The commission discussed locations, rental hours for pick-up and drop-off and places to store the wheelchairs. Moisan suggested maybe people who come off the train, uber or taxis would need wheelchair assistance.

Neenan will reach out to Kate Fox regarding the logistics of wheelchair rentals and will update the commission.

- e. Canal St. pathway: a request of using funds to add entrance/exit indicators for the visually impaired; Meg Stott/Jeff Cohen, *follow-up, if needed*.

Councilor Cohen spoke about the Canal Street development next to Bertinis. He said they want to put a small park at the end of the pathway where it meets Canal Street. This way people can use the pathway and go into the park and have an easier access.

- f. Advisory Group Open Space and Recreation Plan; Tom Devine; Senior Planner; (or Lobsitz)

Christie participated in the Advisory Group Open Space meeting and will update the commission with her notes at the next meeting.

- g. Support (letter) for affordable accessible housing in Salem; Maureen McKinnon; update if applicable

This has been tabled until the next commission meeting.

- h. Accessibility of trail at Forest River; Rebecca Christie

Christie has been in touch with Kate Kennedy in the Planning Department regarding moving the project forward. Councilor Varela said they were working with Barbara Warren from Salem Sound Coastwatch and she has lost the manpower, so they will be stepping back. He also said the CPA Grant that was given for the walking bridge is still in process and the money is earmarked for materials. Everything is close to being ADA accessible except for the handrails on the bridge.

The next step would be to get a contractor and some volunteers for the labor. Christie said she would ask the Friends of Salem Woods to help and ask how they recruited volunteers on their projects. Councilor Varela will follow-up and make sure this gets accomplished, with the commissions help.

6) **Announcements/Questions/General discussion/Ideas for future meetings**

- Cammarata got an email from Joe Ferrari, the Director of Salem Film Festival regarding sponsorship from the commission. Holt will contact Mr. Ferrari to see what films they are offering and which ones would be a good fit for the commission. Cammarata will invite Mr. Ferrari to the next meeting.

6) **Next meeting:** March 21, 2023 via ZOOM

7) **Adjournment:** There being no further business to come before the Commission on Disabilities this evening, Moisan moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Neenan. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne M. Roomey
Acting Commission Clerk

**Know your rights under the Open Meeting Law M.G.L. c. 30A §18-25
and City Ordinance Sections 2-2028 through 2-2033**