



Dominick Pangallo  
Mayor

# COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES

CITY OF SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS  
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## MINUTES OF THE SALEM COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES MAY 16, 2023

A meeting of the Salem Commission on Disabilities was held on May 16, 2023, at 4:30 p.m., via ZOOM, an online video conference call system in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023.

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

### 1) Introductions/welcome

Lobsitz called the meeting to order at 4:40 p.m. and she extended a welcome to everyone. Each commissioner and invited guest introduced themselves.

### 2) Approval of Minutes of March and April 2023 meetings

Moisan made a motion to approve the Commission on Disabilities Meeting Minutes of March 28, 2023 and April 25, 2023. Seconded by Black. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously.

### 3) Guests

Maura Mazzocca, a representative from Massachusetts Association for the Blind, spoke to the commission about an Assistant Technology Center that is held every Thursday from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Council on Aging to assist visually impaired folks with technology issues. They can also show you how to use Voiceover for your iPhone or android cell phones. Another program is JAWS which is a screen reader developed for computer users whose vision loss prevents them from seeing screen content or navigating with a mouse. Most of the clients are adults but they work with all ages. Another service the Commission for the Blind provides is adjustment counseling. Black said they will work with assessment and training of visually impaired folks even before they are declared legally blind to get them ready for the technical challenges they will face. They understand that transportation is a barrier and suggest ways around that such as the Salem Skipper, Ride Share of public transportation. Black said he wants to take the same transportation as other people, NOT special transportation that is only available to visually impaired or someone with any kind of disability. Black will follow up with Ms. Mazzocca regarding how to use the Salem Skipper. If anyone would like more resources or information, they can go to the Commission on Disabilities website: <https://www.salemma.gov/commission-disabilities/pages/informative-links-disability>

#### **4) New Business**

##### **a. Construction update; Engineering Department**

Cammarata spoke with Dave Knowlton in the Engineering Department and not much to add. McKinnon said the material filled in around the tree pits near the Engine House Pizza are beautiful. She is in a wheelchair and said she can roll right over it, great improvement!

#### **5) Old Business**

##### **a. ADA Transition Plan:**

Lobsitz and Cammarata participated in the webinar regarding Transition plans. The New England ADA Center hosted it. The title was: Why it matters, Sharing Stories of Tackling ADA Transition Plans. To view the recording, please click on this website: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5naDc7b-HQ>. You can fast forward to 1:23:04. It is basically stories to give people a sense of action, opportunity and inspiration.

##### **b. Project funding:**

The Commission purchased two picnic tables for Mack Park. Everyone said they are beautiful, sturdy, and fit great and would like to purchase a third one.

Moisan made a motion to approve the purchase of one more picnic table similar to the previous two picnic tables that were purchased for Mack Park. Seconded by Black. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously.

##### **c. Pedestrian Safety**

Salem Safe Walking Advocacy Group (SWAG) will be holding a meeting on Saturday, May 20th at the Common near the Gazebo and Playground at 10:00 a.m. regarding pedestrian safety. Salem SWAG is a grassroots pedestrian advocacy group devoted to enhancing the transit experience for pedestrians and other vulnerable road users.

##### **d. Wheelchair Rental Program; update/follow-up**

Spittle is waiting for pricing and to figure out what type of wheelchairs to use. McKinnon will also follow-up.

##### **e. Accessibility of trail at Forest River**

Lobsitz said the accessible ramp at Forest River Park keeps filling up with sand every time it rains or we get a storm and suggested using mats to help the sand from piling up. This is an ongoing problem and we need a solution going forward. Cammarata will speak with Trish O'Brien from the Park and Recreation Department and DPS regarding the turnaround time to possibly getting mats.

##### **f. Beep Baseball update; Darren Black**

Black spoke about the Boston Strong Beep Baseball team. He is a coach and a player. Black will get a check list together to start the process on who will be playing the Boston Strong team and to pick a place and date to have the exhibition game.

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

Black was working with the PEM last week regarding accessibility for the poetry festival. They had reserved seats up front and educated volunteers who know sign language. McKinnon said they added steps to the front as well as created a ramp that goes around the back.

7) **Next meeting:** June 20, 2023 via ZOOM

8) **Adjournment:** There being no further business to come before the Commission on Disabilities this evening, Lobsitz moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Moisan. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne M. Roomey  
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**