



Dominick Pangallo
Mayor

COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES

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DRAFT

MINUTES OF THE SALEM COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES

August 15, 2023

A meeting of the Salem Commission on Disabilities was held on August 15, 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, David Moisan, and Kerry Neenan.; Lisa Cammarata, ADA Coordinator, HR Director; Alan Hanscom, SATv; Jeff Cohen, Commission of Disabilities Clerk Morgan Sax. (noted by last name in the minutes). Absent were Ezekiel Holt, Maureen McKinnon, Mandee Spittle and Kate Zuraw.

1) **Introductions/welcome**

Lobsitz called the meeting to order at 4:44 p.m. and she extended a welcome to everyone. Each commissioner and invited guest introduced themselves.

2) **Approval of Meeting Minutes of May 16 and June 21, 2023 meetings**

Moisan made a motion to approve the Commission on Disabilities Meeting Minutes of July 18, 2023. A correction was made to the spelling of the name Erin Turkowski. Seconded by Kerry Neenan. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously.

3) **New Business**

- a. Mayor Pangallo joined the meeting and thanked the commission for the efforts in making the City of Salem more accessible. Some key take aways are the outdoor dining changes as well as the work done at the Mac Park Community Garden.

4) **Old Business**

a. ADA Transition Plan:

No updates at this time. L. Cammarata will have SmartSheet to Commission members prior to next month's meeting.

b. Project funding: Cammarata

Handicap parking fund will be used to purchase some wheelchairs. L. Cammarata will be working to review exact numbers.

c. Social Media; David Moisan

Moisan provided background history of the Commission's relationship with social media. He provided information about some other issues from other cities and countries he discovered by gaining relationships through social media. He believes currently social media is too chaotic for the Commission to have a strong presence on each platform.

d. Pedestrian Safety

Moisan explained that he has not spoken to Erin Turkowski since the previous meeting. Debra also confirmed she has not received an email from Erin at this time to discuss choosing a sidewalk downtown for future monitoring.

e. SCOD representative to Salem Human Rights Coalitions/Kerry Neenan (alternates: McKinnon and Christie)

Neenan explained that the SHRC is starting to focus on new immigrant resources such as housing in the city. She had a conversation with Captain Burke of SPD to determine where the community can find resources in finding housing and other needs they may have.

SHRC is also looking at additional income for lower income families. She mentioned that Cambridge has been trialing a program with this as well and they will closely watch how each family's quality of life changes.

f. Wheelchair Rental Program; update/follow-up

L. Cammarata explained that there is no update on this topic at this time. L. Cammarata will follow up on speaking to Legal regarding any insurance issues that may arise.

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

Councilor Cohen said that there are no updates at this time, and will be working with Brendan Linard, AICP Transportation Planner, to see if there were any updates. Mr. Linard said if they get any changes or updates, he will let him know.

He also mentioned that the new Canal St. station project also known as Bertini's would impact the entrance/exit indicators of the public space. He said that with these changes it will be a much easier and accessible location for everyone.

He then provided an update on sidewalk improvements being done in the city. He let the Commission know that there were two SeeClickFix reports issued today for a sidewalk in his Ward regarding accessibility issues. He encouraged the community to report everything on SeeClickFix as well as reaching out to their Ward Councilors.

Council Cohen explained how to access and use SeeClickFix (https://seeclickfix.com/salem_ma) as well as what sidewalk issues were acceptable to report on the site.

Attendee Chris Nagle asked why SeeClickFix does not notify the City Councilor for any Ward Related problems. Councilor Cohen advised that he does have notifications set for his ward and members of the community are not required to reach out to their Ward Councilor when reporting on SeeClickFix. C. Nagle also asked why there is no ADA reporting category in SeeClickFix.

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

No new updates.

i. Beep Baseball update; Darren Black

Black said that he was very excited to see that we can have an exhibition of Beep Baseball (adaptive baseball for adults and children) this will be happening on the Salem Common on September 17th from 11AM or 12PM for four hours. This event will have the Boston Strong who is a Beep Baseball team and will be having an intersquad scrimmage so other members of the community can participate as well. There will be a sensitivity and skill building session where people can try out the sport. Darren Black, Chris Nagle, and Joe Quintanilla will be working together to organize the event in terms of permits, volunteers as well as sound surrounding the event since that is how the game is played, by listening.

Darren Black asked questions surrounding the following topics:

Volunteers – He would love everyone on the commission to act as a safety Marshall around the perimeter of the field so that the players who are blindfolded on the field as well as pedestrians will be safe. Darren also mentioned he would love to have an Umpire from the city involved. L.Cammarata will work with Darren to outline what we need for volunteers and how each volunteer will be assigned. Darren announced that he is the volunteer contact person.

Darren is wondering what is permitted at the Common, i.e., can adaptive sports have a table or a tent so that players can get out of the sun. If there is a significant number of people watching, could there be a PA/narrated so any visually impaired spectators can hear.

Council Cohen will reach out to the other 10 councilors and let them know that Steve Kapantis will be donating \$50 for each councilor that gets up to bat. Chris Nagle and Darren Black said they would gladly match the \$50 per elected official.

Kerry Neenan will contact the unified sports team to see if the Coach and any of the team members would be willing to volunteer at this event.

Alan Hanscom advised to get the Salem Common Neighborhood involved in this planning. Also, the sprinklers in the ground at the common could be an issue for those who cannot see while running. Darren explained that the square footage of grass that is needed will be near the flagpole and Chris and Darren will go out there with a tape measure to ensure there are no sprinkler heads.

Lisa Cammarata and Darren Black will be scheduling a call to iron out further details.

David Moison made a motion to vote for the Commission on Disabilities to sponsor this event. Seconded by Kerry Neenan. A roll call was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously. (Please note that R.Christie had technical difficulties and was unable to vote on the call but emailed L.Cammarata after the meeting with a vote of yes.)

5) **Announcements/Questions/General discussion/ideas for future meetings**

L. Camarrata said that everyone met yesterday regarding the outdoor dining surveys. Most, if not all establishments were open to the surveys, education and adjustments asked. She explained that it was comforting to see the openness of the businesses and their willingness to adjust.

Councilor Cohen said the eight establishments that he surveyed were put into categories of very difficult, some who were doing the minimum of having outdoor dining as well as extraordinary who went beyond willing to make sure their space and their staff were educated.

6) **Next meeting:** September 19, 2023

7) **Adjournment:** There being no further business to come before the Commission on Disabilities this evening, Moisan moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Black. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Morgan E. Sax
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**