

Salem Commission on Disabilities Meeting Minutes

January 19, 2021

Meeting held via zoom platform

Commissioners present:

Debra Lobsitz, Chair
Kerry Neenan
Maureen McKinnon
David Moisan
Darren Black
Rebecca Christie
Zeke Holt
Kate Zuraw

Also present:

Lisa Cammarata, ADA Coordinator
Megan Ricciardi, City Council Liaison
Alan Hanscom, SATv
Tom St. Pierre, Building Commissioner, City of Salem
Christy Parker, Attendee
John Femino, Attendee
Nancy Anderson, Attendee
CDerby314, Attendee

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:35PM. Each commissioner introduced him or herself. The Commission welcomed the City of Salem's Building Commissioner, Tom St. Pierre.

Lisa Cammarata (Cammarata) said that the agenda should not have indicated two guests relative to the Old Business item #b would be attending this meeting.

Old Business:

a. ADA Transition Plan Presentation by IHCD and PSHE Committee Meeting update/MOD grant:

Cammarata stated the City was notified it was not a recipient of the MOD grant, for which the City had applied for \$250k for accessibility upgrades to the Salem Willows. Cammarata reported she learned from IHCD that MOD had \$2million to give out compared to \$12million in the past, and had over 100 applications, and awarded approximately 35 grants. Deb Lobsitz (Lobsitz) said we can apply again in the future.

Tom St. Pierre (St. Pierre) added that the City has completed much of the IHCD's recommendations at 98 Washington Street, including a railing extension on the stairway landing, a guard along the staircase, and at 93 Washington Street, uneven tiles were replaced outside of the elevator.

b. Variance request from John Seger (Seger Architects) for 129 Lafayette Street, update and discussion; with invited guests including John Seger and Dan Ricciarelli: (SEGER AND RICCIARELLI NOT INVITED)

Lobsitz reported she had not received anything else from the AAB since last month, when the AAB asked the architect to cost out a lift.

Commissioners are not clear on what Historical Tax Credits are or how they work. St. Pierre deferred to the planning department on a full explanation.

A question was raised that if a window is changed, does that affect a Historical Tax Credit? There was discussion that a lift would be a good compromise, and St. Pierre said that he AAB looks for give and take with a variance request.

Maureen McKinnon (McKinnon) said there seems to be plenty of space to do a ramp, as there are several entrances to the building, and she referenced the basement entrance.

Lobsitz asked St. Pierre what would happen if they go ahead and don't make the building accessible. St. Pierre said that they won't get an occupancy permit.

Kerry Neenan (Neenan) asked if an elevator was required. St. Pierre said only for buildings with four or more floors.

McKinnon offered to notify the AAB of our concerns. Lobsitz asked her to share them before she sent them.

Cammarata said she contacted the Historical Commission's staff planner and explained to her the variance request and the concern the Commission had when the Historical Commission approved the project. Cammarata said she is looking into a liaison and/or meeting with them for the future.

c. Odd Meter Café:

Cammarata reported she went to the Odd Meter Café over the weekend and met the owners who are interested in accessibility for their Café on Washington Street. The Café is accessible with a no stair entry from the hallway, and the restroom is accessible. Cammarata said she and Ezekiel Holt (Zeke) are meeting with Angelica and Eric (owners) on February 11, 2021 to discuss accessibility in the Café. Lobsitz suggested they seek an accessibility designation from the Independent Living Center.

d. Salem Skipper Program:

Cammarata reported that the Salem Skipper Ride Program is successful, ridership increased by 46% last week, and this program has two accessible Dodge Caravans.

e. Sub-committee reports:

ADA Updates and Transition Plan:	They will meet and report out next month.
Social Media:	None
Pedestrian Safety:	None; lack of storms is appreciated
SCOD representative to No Place for Hate:	Kerry Neenan

Neenan reported that a meeting was held with reps from several area groups (NAGLY, NSCDC, HAWC, Pathways for Children, etc. in conjunction with the No Place for Hate mission. She also reported that the Mack Park Food Farm is looking at expanding and installing an accessible pathway. Lobsitz suggested beach mats for this purpose, and the feasibility of stone dust was discussed, too. McKinnon reported that stone dust is suitable for wheelchair use and mats may not create a suitable surface.

f. ALEC update: Kerry Neenan

Neenan reported that she has call with Acting Chief Dennis King and Bill Cannata on Thursday, to discuss the ALEC program and logistics of offering it to the Salem Police Department. She'd like to include the Salem Fire Department, too, after the Police Department.

3. New Business:

a. New England ADA Center Free Virtual Workshop Training:

Lobsitz reported that this training is free of charge, presented along with IHCD, and encouraged the Commission members to register.

b. Variance Request; Salem Arts Council:

Lobsitz reported the variance request resulted in a continuance of the action pending the Arts Council providing information on an easement. Lobsitz provided a copy of the notice from the AAB. Zeke said an easement was a good idea. Darren Black (Black) asked about the building's set up. The first floor is a shop, and the second floor is where the exhibits are. Lobsitz will reach out to Arts Council to offer technical assistance from SCOD.

Announcements/General Discussion and ideas for future meetings; if needed.

Zeke said the National ADA Symposium is offered this year in Arizona, and in his role at Salem State University as the ADA Coordinator, he has attended this in the past. It is valuable, worth attending and a good place to learn and network. He suggested it would be good for Cammarata to attend or other Commissioners.

The group discussed not taking any breaks in monthly meetings, since meetings are virtual, inclement weather is no longer an issue.

The group discussed COVID and age cut-offs/minimums for a vaccine.

There being no further business for the Commission to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:03PM.

LBC