

**Salem Commission on Disabilities Meeting Minutes**  
October 27, 2020  
Meeting held via zoom platform

**Commissioners present:**

Debra Lobsitz, Chair  
Kerry Neenan  
Maureen McKinnon  
David Moisan  
Darren Black  
Rebecca Christie  
Christopher Nagle

**Also present:**

Lisa Cammarata, ADA Coordinator  
Megan Ricciardi, City Council Liaison  
Alan Hanscom, SATv  
Jeff Cohen, No Place For Hate  
Kate Zuraw, Applicant for Commissioner

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:35PM. Each commissioner introduced him or herself.

Old Business:

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

Lisa Cammarata (Cammarata) stated this item will be on the agenda every month to keep this matter on everyone's mind. Councilor Ricciardi stated that she can bring an update to the Public Safety, Health, and Environment Committee as needed, and that Councilor Dibble has not mentioned it. The group discussed keeping track of what has been done so far for compliance.

**MOD grant:**

Cammarata reported the City applied for a 250K grant from the Massachusetts Office on Disability for accessibility improvements at the Salem Willows. There was discussion about the location, the specific areas affected, the crosswalks, the beach, and the bathrooms. There is a concern that the men's bathroom has excess water on the floor.

Maureen McKinnon (McKinnon) asked about beach mats. Cammarata said the Commission's funds from handicap violations should be used to purchase them. McKinnon agreed to research them for three beaches, Dead Horse, Waikiki, and Forest River and report back on the cost. McKinnon also asked if the funding the City applied for was something that could be done in-house, ie, the Public Services Department. Lobsitz said this was a much bigger project than the City's Public Services could handle.

Darren Black (Black) praised the application, and he said that he was excited to go through the application, given the number of people who visit the Salem Willows, residents and non-residents.

Cammarata resent the plans in an accessible format to Chris Nagle (Nagle), and she agreed to obtain the Word version of the grant application to resend in PDF the next day.

**b. Safety and wellbeing of the disabled community in Salem**

Nagle said he was disappointed in the number of locations in the city without tap boards, despite the ordinance. He was pleased there were tap boards at some locations, but not all.

He mentioned the tables outdoors at Opus, and Far From the Tree, and asked that Tom St. Pierre review them. McKinnon said she agreed. Nagle suggested spray painting where things should go to ensure compliance. He asked that we look at the ramp to New Derby Street that floods which will freeze in the winter.

The discussion included concerns about navigating areas where parklets are, that there are areas where it is difficult to cross the street, areas on Washington Street, and that there needs to be a lot more thought put into these projects. Deb Lobsitz suggested we contact IHCD to see if they offer a training on accessibility for our business owners. Cammarata said she would contact IHCD.

**c. Fall Election Working Group update**

Rebecca Christie (Christie) updated the group about early voting, accessibility, and forwarded information to us about the COA offering rides to the polls, along with other assistance. Christie also informed about the Federal Court's approving the Agreed Judgment in the DLC's case to ensure accessible vote by mail for people with disabilities. Christie said she would keep us up to date on that matter.

**d. Subcommittees and Assignments**

Lobsitz mentioned that we had several committees, and she asked if sub-committees were meeting. Our subcommittee are as follows:

Project Funding / Lisa Cammarata, Becky Christie, Maureen McKinnon

ADA Updates and Transition Plan / Debra Lobsitz, Darren Black, Maureen McKinnon

Social Media / Davis Moisan

Pedestrian Safety / Davis Moisan, Chris Nagle (resigned)

SCOD representative to No Place for Hate / Kerry Neenan (alternates: McKinnon and Christie)

**New Business:**

**a. Variance request from John Seger (Seger Architects) for 129 Lafayette Street**

Lobsitz reported she received a variance request for work being done at the old St. Joseph's Rectory. The building is being renovated for housing, and the variance request is to have accessible units in the old convent building and not the rectory, and the basis for this request is so as not to disrupt the pristine front of the building, and a lack of space. Lobsitz agreed to write a letter to the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB), since the MAAB is receptive to a Commission's opinions on variance requests.

McKinnon suggested that accessibility not be afterthought. After much discussion it was decided that the Commission should invite John Seger to the next meeting to explain the request.

**b. Accessibility discussion relative to increased visitors to the City.**

Lobsitz and the group agreed we had already covered this matter earlier in the meeting.

**c. Resignations and openings for new Commissioners.**

Cammarata stated she had received a notice of resignation from Chris Nagle (Nagle), and she read it to the group. Cammarata thanked Nagle for his service to the Commission, and each Commissioner joined in thanking him, along with telling him the door was open if he ever wanted to return. Cammarata introduced Kate Zuraw (Zuraw) as an applicant to the Commission, who will be recommended to the City Council by the Mayor at the next meeting. Zuraw said she was impressed with the Commission's dedication and was looking forward to her appointment.

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

Kerry Neenan (Neenan) provided an update on the ALEC program, to provide training to the City's police officers relative to how to best address and assist individuals with Autism. She will continue to update the Commission, now that October is over, as the Police Department has been very busy. The group agrees we should use our funds to assist with the cost, which could be close to \$15,000.00.

Lobsitz reported she and others attended the photo opportunity at Forest River Park, where the SCoD assisted with funding for the lift in in the press box. Lobsitz said it was a nice event, and she said the lift has already been used. She also reported that the commission may be asked to assist with funding the maintenance contract for the lift, per her conversation with Peter Porcello.

There being no further business for the Commission to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:45PM.

LBC