

Salem Commission on Disabilities

August 20, 2013

Introductions

The Salem Commission on Disabilities met on August 20th, 2013. Present were: Debra Lobsitz, Andy LaPointe, co-chairs, Paul Tucker, chief of police, David Tracht, Bill Legault, Amber Gandolfo, of Mass Rehab, David Martel, John Jodoin and David Moisan.

Guest speaker Chief Paul F. Tucker

Debra: I present our guest today, Salem Chief of Police, Paul Tucker.

Paul Tucker: Thanks. I've had some great visits to the Commission in the past. Unfortunately, in our society we have scams, and we are seeing the elderly being scammed. Most of these are well known, but there are new ones we are seeing. We are seeing a group of people come around to elderly homeowners offering to seal their driveways, and offer to drive them to the bank. They'll tell them they'll need more money to complete the job.

It's difficult for homeowners to say "no."

We have seen people make phone calls claiming to be on behalf of an injured relative or one in trouble, and get them to wire money to them via Walmart, Western Union, etc. We have had a half a dozen unsuspecting people who have been taken. We think there's more.

A new one we have just had: Publishers Clearing House, the well-known firm. People have called claiming to be from Publishers Clearing House, and coming in with the Salem PD's caller ID! We are working with Verizon to try to trace these.

Lotteries with fees are very popular.

Two more things: We have a couple of fake charities. We caught a couple that was claiming to collect for the North Shore Cancer Walk. And, sadly, the One Fund, the Boston Marathon fund, has had people trying to defraud them.

Lastly, identity theft: This is so common. I once caught a guy in Quincy who got a gravestone of a deceased child, and used that information to scam someone.

Andy: I'd like to see the Salem PD do a self-defense program. I just want to see a basic course for people with disabilities. What are your thoughts?

Chief Tucker: There's a program out there called RAD, originally intended for women self-defense. I will put together a program with common-sense suggestions.

Lots of people get pepper spray, but forget about having it readily available. This would be a good idea and I will talk to my people about this.

RAD has been really successful, at Salem State College, and other places, and this is what I'd suggest basing our program upon.

I will ask Dennis King, of the Community Impact Unit, if there are any programs. He does all the research for me.

Old Business

Increase in parking fines

[omitted]

Keyless lift for Opus Restaurant

Debra: Keyless lift at Opus. I was there. I looked at the lift. It is keyless, but behind a door and behind another door. It is a bit out of the way, but it does not require a key. I didn't try it.

Jim: A group at the ILCNSCA did try the lift last Thursday. She wondered if it was large enough, but I assume it is.

Update on Salem Trolley access for wheelchair

Debra: Salem Trolley access. Jim?

Jim: Bill and I went on a trolley ride this past Friday. They have these plates on the floor, but no one knows how they work or what they are. They may be straps where a chair can be secured.

Bill: There were older mounts that were slots on the floor that could have been for chair straps.

Jim: My point is not are there straps? But, are the staff trained properly? The staffer I questioned was not aware of that.

Debra: The plan is...training?

Jim: I spoke to Tammy last month and she told me the staffers were trained. But Bill and I went there last Friday. He put on two straps, but didn't know there were two other straps. When I mentioned it to the manager, she said the strap wasn't supposed to be on the wheel but on the frame. I talked to her. I will need to follow through—several other people have contacted me about this.

Jim: They have six trolleys—only three have lifts.

Bill: The driver is the one that operates the HP lift—and is responsible for securing chairs on the trolley.

David T.: Can all the trolleys be made accessible?

John: The older ones were grandfathered in, assuming that they would have a finite lifespan and would be retired.

Bill: They need hands-on training with an actual wheelchair user.

Debra: Were you able to ascertain their schedule? When a wheelchair user comes, do they have to wait for another trolley?

Jim: They alternate vehicles, and run frequent service.

John: They did dispatch a trolley once to service a wheelchair passenger.

Peabody Essex Museum: dates for bringing gallery doors into compliance

Debra: Andy, you emailed about the PEM doors.

Andy: The doors will all be in compliance by the end of October.

New Business

Dunkin Donuts on Canal: complaint re: wheelchair access

Debra: There was a complaint about Dunkin Donuts on Canal St. on wheelchair access. Dunkins made some repairs and talked with the AAB. I have not seen it in person yet.

Jim: It was a problem with the building itself.

Debra: The asphalt did not match the concrete on the ramp.

Jim: Did you see the first set or the color set? Do you know why they moved the HP plate to the opposite side of the lot?

Debra: The AAB is asking for our feedback.

John: The fix they did was not permanent. A traction pad would be a permanent fix, with a contractor that's more familiar with this installation. That's our feedback.

Debra: I will look at that.

MBTA station construction and wheelchair access

Andy: Rob Park contacted me through Jack Harris, citing a problem with access to the MBTA station. There is construction and the signage was not good.

Rob also brought up the fact that as the summer winds down, the lighting will get darker at sunrise and sunset.

David Moisan: I am at the station several times a week. They have improved the signage considerably. I'm also concerned about the lighting on site as fall arrives.

Bill Legault: I will go there late in the evening and check on that.

Other

YMCA Variance

Andy: Lisa's letter is a bit late.

Jim: I did speak with the MAAB. The case has been continued, and this means the ball has been passed back to the YMCA to justify their need for a variance. They have a deadline for September 30th.

Next meeting October 15, 2013