

Parking woes at GO?lot lead to altercation

By Mark Pavilons

A Schomberg woman is continuing her fight with Metrolinx, over what she sees as a chronic lack of enforcement and support for patrons using accessible parking spots.

Sandra Kendall launched a suit with the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal in 2014, claiming the transit authority doesn't maintain access to handicapped spots at the King City station.

Kendall, who suffers from rheumatoid arthritis, has used the King City station for years, and always arrives early, en route to her job in downtown Toronto. The problem of drivers blocking the eight handicapped spots when dropping off riders is almost an epidemic, and it's getting worse.

The most recent incident occurred March 19. It began like any typical day, with Kendall arriving about 20 minutes early, to secure her spot. The Metrolinx parking officer on duty came over to chat with her and they discussed driver behaviour.

A man drove in, blocking two vacant accessible spots with his vehicle. The officer went over to speak to him. A younger man, presumed to be the driver's son, approached Kendall and the officer had to physically hold him back. Kendall feared the young man was going to hit her.

The next day, Kendall's husband drove her to the station to ensure her safety. She saw the same motorist again, who gave her the finger.

No one was issued a citation, but the officer did indicate he filed a report and would speak to the offender.

Wow, Kendall said. Why are you angry at me? I just want to get into my accessible spot.

Kendall, through her lawyer, is trying to secure the video tape of that morning's incident.

Anne Marie Aikins, media relations officer with Metrolinx, said she couldn't comment on any ongoing complaints or legal proceedings. She also was unaware of the March 19 incident.

Kathryn Smyth, King Township's clerk, heard about the incident, and Kendall's complaints from 2014.

Smyth said back in the winter of 2014, King bylaw was contacted about vehicles blocking access to accessible parking spaces by idling in front of them while waiting for the train.

We attended and attempted to resolve but were advised by Metrolinx that we did not have the authority to enforce on their property, and that they monitor and enforce their properties, which is consistent with other GO parking lots in the Region, Smyth said.

She added Metrolinx hasn't changed its position on enforcement, however, King is exploring other options within their jurisdiction.

Regarding future lands, Smyth said King is working closely with Metrolinx to expand parking in the area, both on Township lands as well as lands that they have acquired. Unfortunately, the expansion projects are not immediate and will take some time to be constructed, through the appropriate approvals, permits and budgets.

Councillor Cleve Mortelliti reiterated that King doesn't have the authority to enforce its parking bylaw on Metrolinx's property, or alternatively enforce their own parking bylaw on their property.

What I am hearing is that Metrolinx has not changed their position on enforcement in the last year, however, staff tell me they are exploring other options within our jurisdiction.

Kendall said the Tribunal will be meeting with Metrolinx and Kendall on May 11.

Her suit isn't about financial gain, but is being fought on principle. She said when she hears other stories of similar injustices, it tears at my heart.

Kendall has become an advocate, through these series of events.