



Kevin J. Murphy  
*City Manager*

December 22, 2016

Mayor Edward J. Kennedy, Jr.  
and  
Members of the City Council

REFERENCE: **8.2 2016/736 C. Rourke** - Req. City Mgr. establish an E-Commerce position at the LPD to provide a safe location for legal E-Commerce transactions.

Dear Mayor Kennedy and Members of the City Council:

I am writing in response to the above motion request by Councilor Dan Rourke regarding sales transaction safe zones. Nationwide, private online business transactions such as E-Bay and Craigslist continue to grow and projected to rapidly increase in the future. However, with this expanding type of e-commerce comes a downside. Crime related incidents related involving face-to-face private transactions are on the rise nationally.

In an effort to be proactive, my office is designating the main entrance on JFK Plaza of the Lowell Police Department as an "Online Purchase Safe Zone" for e-commerce transactions. Individuals can finalize the exchange outside the main doors. An individual shall inform the desk officer the purpose of their presence. These areas are under 24 hour surveillance. Please be aware, law enforcement officials will not be involved in verification, monitoring or facilitating the private transactions, this program is designed to provide a known, well-lit and secure location to conduct business.

My office wants to make clear that we are not reacting to any one specific incident, but rather are trying to be proactive and provide a location where the citizens can feel safe meeting another unknown party to conduct their private business.

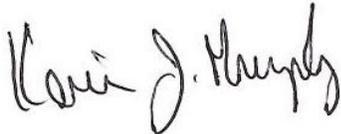
Assistant City Manager Mike McGovern spoke to the Director of Consumer Education from the Massachusetts Department of Consumer Affairs and registered the above location. The site is listed on their web page. Below are a few important details to keep in mind when conducting e-commerce transactions:

- transaction zones apply to legal transactions only,
- best practice suggests making transactions during daylight hours. While nighttime hours are not prohibited and most departments do not have specific hours they permit transactions to occur, meeting a stranger during daylight hours is wisest,

- interaction from police officers varies for each department. Locations are typically under 24/7 video surveillance and some department's request you call ahead so they know what is occurring, however, many do not. Moreover, most departments have little to no oversight of the transaction: police do not supervise the transaction, confirm identities, or check the items to ensure authenticity or that they are not stolen,
- be wary of people unwilling to conduct business at the police station,
- always use caution. Making a transaction on police property does not guarantee your safety, and
- trust your instincts. If something feels uncomfortable, notify the police.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Lowell Police Department at (978) 937-3200.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin J. Murphy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "K".

Kevin J. Murphy  
City Manager