

## **DISABILITY COMMISSION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

Boston City Hall, Piedmont Room, 5th Floor

**April 10, 2013**

**5:30-7:30 p.m.**

### **AGENDA- REVISED**

- Call to Order
- Introductions
- Approval of Minutes- *March, 2013*
- Commissioner's Report – *Kristen McCosh*
- Chair's Report – *Carl Richardson*
- Architectural Access Update – *Kathryn Aldrich*
- Guest Speaker – Jeffrey Dougan, Massachusetts Office on Disability
- Rep. Ayers' Bill – Allegra Stout
- Online Distance Education
- Elections
- Standing Committees – Information Access, Community Access
- Old Business
- New Business
- Public Input
- Adjournment

Boston Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Minutes for Wednesday, April 10, 2013

5<sup>th</sup> Floor Piemonte Room Boston City Hall 5:30-7:30PM

<b>Present:</b>	<b>Staff Present:</b>
(CR) Carl Richardson (AS) Allegra Stout (BR) Ben Roux (HW) Heather Watkins (PH) Paulette Houston (RN) Raine Newman (SL) Suzanne Leveille (TTH) Tee Thach-Hasan  <b>Not Present:</b> (JW) John Winske	(KMC) Kristen McCosh, Commissioner (KA) Kathryn Aldrich (JH) Jesse Holm
<b>Guest:</b> Jeffrey Dougan, Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD)	

**March Meeting Minutes:** Minutes approved by board.

**Corrected:** Divas “with” Disabilities, not “Divas will Disabilities”, page 5.

“Commission for Persons with Disabilities” added to “CPWD” for clarification, page 1.

**Commissioner’s Report: Kristen McCosh**

KMC discussed recent news about Thomas M. Menino (TMM), Mayor of Boston, and his decision to not run for another term. KMC stated, as a reminder, that positions in the Commission for Persons with Disabilities are appointed and as such, are subject to change with a new Mayor. KMC also noted that Commission members are appointed by TMM and as such, are subject to change. KMC stated that Commission members should not make political, public statements as a City of Boston (COB) special employee. KMC said it is important to note, however, that individuals can voice their opinions on the election as a private citizen.

KMC stated that Commission members will get a letter in the mail from the City Clerk’s office soon with information about being officially sworn in. KMC will set up a group swearing in before the Commission meeting on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

KMC updated Commission members on Deputy Commission position; interviews will begin in the last week of April 2013. KMC stated she might involve Commission members in second or third round of interviews for Deputy Commissioner.

KMC discussed WAV accessible cabs, Boston Police Department (BPD) and the Hackney division. KMC mentioned that there was a report conducted by Northeastern Law students and findings were presented to the public in early April, but KMC was unable to attend. CR mentioned that he was at the presentation and that it went well. CR stated that the report highlights that accessible taxis have a lot of work to do, as the findings in the Northeastern study show.

KMC discussed taxi cab inspections; will conduct these inspections on April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013 with KA and will measure each taxi cab and take photos. KMC stated that WAV vehicles, as they are now, are not accessible. KMC mentioned that during taxi cab inspections, drivers will also be asked to take a survey regarding providing service to people with disabilities.

KMC said that taxi cabs in the City of Boston (COB) are only on the road for seven years. KMC would like to look at these vehicles as they are taken out of service.

KMC also discussed the ongoing issue of captioning the City Council meetings in the COB. One particular constituent has been calling for this change to be made. KMC had a meeting with the COB law department and discussed the need to get out an accurate, cohesive message from the City of Boston as a whole. KMC stated that she hopes to implement captioning changes within the next few months.

KMC advised Commission members to view and provide feedback to the Commission regarding the San Francisco Commission for Person's with Disabilities website. KMC stated that their website access is excellent and could be used as a model for other cities. KMC stated that she will look into where San Francisco's CPWD receive funding from to provide a high level of web access.

KMC discussed upcoming important dates for the CPWD. There will be an Open Forum where COB residents can discuss important issues that they feel need to be addressed within the disability community. This event is also an opportunity for COB residents to meet the Commissioner and Commission members. This event will take place in the BRA Boardroom on the 9<sup>th</sup> floor of City Hall on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013 from 1:00-4:00PM.

KMC stated that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) day will be held on Thursday, July 25, 2013 from 12:00-2:00PM. The theme for this year's event will be "Transitions" and the CPWD will recognize by Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital and TMM. There will be a flash mob of youth with disabilities from Easter Seals that will sing and dance at the event.

KMC discussed the "Disability: Reframed" film series that is jointly run between Cambridge and Boston's CPWD. On April 27<sup>th</sup> there will be a showing of the film *Mary*

*and Max* from 2:00-5:00PM at the Cambridge Citywide Senior Center on 806 Massachusetts Avenue in Central Square. KMC and JH stated they will find out if the film will be captioned.

KMC also mentioned the Abilities Expo event that will be taking place at the September 20-23<sup>rd</sup> at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center. This event is free and there will be many vendors and workshops to attend. The CPWD will have a table set up at this event.

KMC stated that she is working with CR on accessible parking at the Statehouse.

KMC stated that she is planning to submit CPWD “asks” for TMM before he leaves office.

**Chair’s Report: Carl Richardson**

CR stated that there will be an event at the Statehouse on Wednesday, October 16<sup>th</sup> where Easter Seals and a number of other disability agencies will participate in “Assistive Technology Day” in honor of Disability Employment Month. CR will send flier for event when it is completed to Commission members and CPWD.

CR mentioned he is working closely with KA on variance requests and AAB.

**Architectural Access Update: Kathryn Aldrich**

KA discussed a number of variances and provided updates to Commission members.

161 Berkeley Street was sent to Board on March 29<sup>th</sup> and emailed to the Architectural Access Board (AAB) on April 5<sup>th</sup> concerning accessible main entry, treads and risers, and stair nosings.

287 Hanover Street was sent to Board on April 8<sup>th</sup> concerning clear width and dimensions for turnings at landings.

665 Washington Street was sent to Board on April 9<sup>th</sup> and emailed to AAB on April 9<sup>th</sup> concerning bathtub wall reinforcements not being installed.

160 Federal Street was sent to Board on April 10<sup>th</sup> concerning cross slope.

209 Ashmont Street will be reviewed and sent to Commission members by KA regarding accessible Route, stairs, and door width of building.

**Massachusetts Office on Disability: Jeffrey Dougan**

JD described his position at the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) as Assistant Director for Community Services. JD also said he is part of the Scituate Disability Commission.

JD states that the MOD is the Commonwealth's ADA Coordinator. MOD makes sure policies and procedures are not discriminatory against people with disabilities. While MOD doesn't actively support or not support legislation, they do educate on laws that affect people with disabilities. MOD has a Client Services unit as well. This unit provides advocacy with individual needs and helps with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD) process. This unit also makes referrals to other agencies to assist with issues constituents raise.

JD said there are approximately 160 Disability Commissions in Massachusetts, but only about 100 of these Commissions are active. All Commissions are made up of volunteers.

JD states that MOD publishes a small book for information about disability rights laws in Massachusetts. You can call MOD to request a copy of this book.

JD discussed the Community Access Monitor Training. JD stated that this training program helps individual's survey buildings for accessibility and advocates for compliance. The cost of training is \$15 for constituents and \$85 for professionals.

JD also discussed some ideas for goals, missions and objectives for Disability Commissions. JD referenced a sample document created by the MOD that can guide Commissions in creating their own, personalized goals.

JD discussed a handout, "Title II Action Guide," which discusses obligations set forth by Title II of the ADA in an easy-to-understand format. This document discusses recent updates to the ADA and how they have affected city and state government as well as businesses. This document helped clarify the ADA and specifically spoke to the issues of hotel/motel accessibility, service animals, interpreting, and wheelchairs/power mobility devices. JD stated that these standards came into effect in March 2012.

KMC asked if there is currently a venue for Commissions to communicate. JD responded, saying that there had been consideration of regional Commission meetings, but he is looking to find out how much interest there is.

JD states that if a Disability Commission receives or has a question that they do not know how to answer, please call MOD and someone will be able to assist you.

**Old Business/New Business:**

AS briefly discussed the Ayers' bill that has been proposed. AS read the proposal aloud and described it to the Commission. AS stated that this proposal includes increasing the fine for HP Parking and using the money collected for ADA compliance in public access ways. This includes that a \$50 fine will be additional to the current HP fines, which range between \$100 and \$300.

KMC mentioned that cities are already responsible for meeting ADA requirements.

JD mentioned that having Commission members decide how to use the funds collected from fines does put a lot of responsibility on volunteers.

AS stated that Bill Ayers has offered to come to a meeting to discuss the proposal.

CR asked for an update on online distance education; KMC to follow up on for May 8, 2013 Commission meeting

**Disability Commission Elections:**

BR accepted nomination for Chair.

CR accepted nomination for Chair.

HW accepted nomination for Vice-Chair.

JH distributed Commission members voting ballots.

JH collected and tallied ballots.

BR voted for Commission Chair.

Heather Watkins voted for Commission Vice-Chair.

**Standing Committees:**

KMC stated that she is meeting with Main Streets Program the week of April 15<sup>th</sup>. KMC will follow up with Commission at May meeting.

KMC will work with IT on issues of web accessibility. KMC noted that Commission members should send 4-5 sentence biography about themselves for the CPWD webpage.

AS provided update on accessible spaces; stating that her colleague has time in May to discuss this project. Interested parties should contact AS for details.

BR stated that he will discuss Access for Partners Healthcare research project in May Commission meeting.

HW mentioned to KMC that Kroc Center, where Boston Film Series was last held, had major parking issues and Disabled Parking Spaces were far away from the entrance of the building. KMC agreed to look into this issue.

**Public Input:**

None.

Adjourned at 7:26PM.