

DISABILITY COMMISSION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Boston City Hall, Piemonte Room, 5th Floor

August 14, 2013

5:30-7:30 p.m.

AGENDA- REVISED

- Call to Order
- Introductions
- Approval of July Minutes
- Commissioner's Report – *Kristen McCosh*
- Chair's Report – *Heather Watkins, Vice-Chair (for Ben Roux)*
- Architectural Access Updates – *Kathryn Aldrich*
- Copley Place Expansion/Re-Development - *Simon Property Group*
- Survey for Mayoral Candidates – *Carl Richardson*
- Standing Committees – Information Access, Community Access
- Old Business
- New Business
- Public Input
- Adjournment

Boston Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Minutes for Wednesday, August 14, 2013

5th Floor Piemonte Room, Boston City Hall, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Present: (AS) Allegra Stout (CR) Carl Richardson (HW) Heather Watkins (JW) John Winske (PH) Paulette Houston (TTH) Tee Thach-Hasan Not Present: (BR) Ben Roux (SL) Suzanne Leveille (RN) Raine Newman	Staff Present: (KMC) Kristen McCosh, Commissioner (SA) Sophia Apostola (KA) Kathryn Aldrich (JH) Jesse Holm
Guest: Simon Property Group	

Commissioner's Report: Kristen McCosh

KMC distributed copies of the City of Boston Public Event Application for Advisory Board members to review. KMC stated that right now the only question that relates to disability concerns is whether accessible toilets are needed for an event or not. KMC will look into potentially updating the form to reflect the need for maintaining access throughout the access path during any public event on City Hall Plaza.

JW stated that the access path has been blocked a number of times recently. JW noted that a day after KMC left for vacation, the access path was blocked again.

KMC stated that the access path needs to be a priority and that a large amount of money was spent to construct it and that it really needs to be used for its purpose.

KMC stated that she will speak with Property & Construction Management about this issue.

KMC gave an update on Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs) and taxis in Boston. In September KMC is going to draft a recommendation regarding taxi accessibility and KMC has a lot of on how accessibility can be improved with WAVs. KMC stated that one thought is that taxi owners should be required to go to qualified companies that modify for accessibility according to regulations. Additionally, KMC stated that WAVs should be inspected for compliance following modifications.

KMC stated that her draft of recommendations will be distributed to Advisory Board members at the September meeting for review KMC stated that she will make short and long term

recommendations regarding WAV taxis. KMC also stated that, on average, it costs approximately \$12,000 more than medallion owners are currently paying to provide WAV taxis that are in full compliance. Full compliance is the ultimate goal.

Vice- Chair’s Report: Heather Watkins

HW said that she is happy to lead this month’s meeting for BR. HW thanked everyone for a great A.D.A. Celebration Day.

Architectural Access Update: Kathryn Aldrich

KA stated that Beacon Hill Inter-Agency working group is reviewing the proposed presentation and plans for street work to incorporate accessibility upgrades.

KA stated that she has not sent out Architectural Access Board (AAB) variances because there have not been many accompanying CDs; we should be getting more in the fall.

July Meeting Minutes: Minutes approved by board.

Copley Place Expansion/ Re-Development: Simon Property Group

The Copley Place Expansion Project team described changes in accessibility that had been incorporated into the re-development design since 2012.

The main entrance was reconfigured from the previous design and took into consideration comments from the Mayor’s Commission for Persons with Disabilities. The main entrance now illustrates integration and access to the two main entry points of the building; there are reduced architectural barriers, such as no stairs and the areas of congregation are incorporated into the natural flow of the space.

The materials illustrated in the newest design do not use brick; the design now utilizes large, smooth granite pavers on the interior design and poured concrete for the entire exterior design.

Additionally, this design incorporates wider escalators and a larger elevator to accommodate more people.

The Copley Place Expansion Project team stated that they have solicited bids from two consulting agencies for compliance review: the Institute of Human Centered Design (IHCD) and Universal Designers & Consultants, Inc. in Maryland.

Survey of Mayoral Candidates: Carl Richardson

CR stated that the Mayoral Primary is September 22nd, 2013.

JW stated that candidate questions are being drafted electronically. JW stated that while we do not support any one Mayoral candidate, the Advisory Board can suggest potential questions and distribute to Non-Profit organizations in the disability community.

SA is in charge of researching Mayoral Candidates and summarizing information about their candidacy. SA stated that she will send a draft of this information out on Monday, August 19th.

JW stated that there is no discussion happening right now with candidates on disability issues.

Standing Committees: Information Access, Community Access

CR inquired about whether or not there has been a full web audit completed for accessibility issues on the cityofboston.gov webpage. KMC stated that she would check in with the Department of Innovation and Technology (Dolt) regarding a complete access audit. TTH stated that it might be helpful to have resources for disability services linked to our webpages.

SA stated that she will be working on the issue of Closed Captioning for public meetings and that this is a work in progress.

KMC stated that she is hoping to have the map that highlights all of the HP parking spaces in downtown Boston on our webpage soon.

KMC stated that she will meet with Boston Main Streets again in the fall.

Old Business

No updates.

New Business

JW discussed an issue regarding the creators of E-books. Amazon, Kobo and Sony have petitioned the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to exempt e-readers from accessibility laws. The comment period is open until September 3rd. JW will send out the information to Advisory Board members as soon as possible.

JW stated that the Disability Policy Consortium (DPC) is holding their first annual reception on October 3rd. This event will honor TMM.

KMC suggested that if you had thoughts on the Copley Place Expansion/Re-Development Plan, whether it is something you'd like to see changed or make comments on, maybe the Advisory Board might want to write a letter. KMC stated you can also submit your comments to KA who will be writing a letter regarding this project. Public Comment period ends September 30.

CR mentioned that on Wednesday, October 16th there will be an Assistive Technology event at the Statehouse. This event is open to the public and more details will be coming soon.

CR stated that the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) has a new Commissioner, Paul Saner. CR stated that Commissioner Saner is a good fit for the role.

AS stated that it might be a good idea to bring the organizers of The Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights to an Advisory Board meeting for a presentation. KMC stated that AS can plan having a guest come to the Advisory Board meeting through the Advisory Board Chair.

Public Input

None.

Adjourned at 7:29 p.m.