



Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Martin J. Walsh, Mayor

DISABILITY COMMISSION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Boston City Hall, Room 900, 9th Floor

Thursday January 22, 2015

5:30-7:30 p.m.

AGENDA- REVISED

- Call to Order
- Introductions
- Approval of December Minutes
- Chair's Report – *Heather Watkins*
- Commissioner's Report – *Kristen McCosh*
- Architectural Access Update – *Kathryn Quigley*
- Guest Speakers
 - *Alice Brown, Mobility Action Plan*
 - *Mimi Turchinetz, EITC Campaign 2015*
- HP Parking – Review of Issues
- Old Business
- Old Action Items
- New Business – *BCIL and Alternative Housing Voucher Program*
- New Action Items - *Letter welcoming Governor Baker? Olympic Committee?*
- Public Input
- Adjournment

Next meeting: February 26th, 5:30-7:30pm

MEETING ACCOMMODATION NOTICE

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Boston Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Minutes for Wednesday, January 22, 2015
9th Floor, Room 900, Boston City Hall, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Present:	Staff Present:
(AS) Allegra Stout (BR) Ben Roux (CR) Carl Richardson (HW) Heather Watkins (JW) John Winkse (On Phone) (KR) Kyle Robidoux Not Present: (ZA) Zary Amirhousseini (On Phone)	(KMC) Kristen McCosh, Commissioner (JD) Jessica Doonan (KQ) Kathryn Quigley

December Meeting Minutes: Motion to approve December minutes made by Kyle Robidoux (KR) and seconded by Carl Richardson (CR). Minutes approved by board.

Chair's Report: Heather Watkins

Heather Watkins (HW) noted that Monday was Martin Luther King Day and reminded everyone of the work being done both on the Board and in the community towards achieving social justice and civil rights for those with disabilities.

Commissioner's Report: Kristen McCosh

Commissioner Kristen McCosh (KMC) mentioned that the Mayor has published his housing plan till 2030 which talks about the state of housing currently in the City of Boston as well as the planning process for future housing with an emphasis on building more affordable and middle income housing. Part of this process includes creating a task force to look at housing for non-elderly disabled individuals. This task force will have its first meeting in February and will include Sheila Dillon, head of the Department of Neighborhood Development. The emphasis will be put on making a case for housing that will be accommodating for all individuals with disabilities, not simply elderly. KMC also mentioned that she has been appointed to the Taxi Commission which consists of 24 individuals from different city departments, transportation network companies, taxi drivers, and community residents. This commission is working on emerging issues with transportation network companies such as Uber and Lyft related to fare prices, regulations, access for people with disabilities. No recommendations have been made by the commission at this time.

KMC mentioned that the Commission will be partnering with the Department of Recreation and Conservation Access Program to host an inclusive skating event with at the Frog Pond on Boston Common on Feb 25th from 6-8pm. Another event is the 25th anniversary Americans with Disabilities Act celebration on July 22nd which will be held on the Boston Common from noon to three. There is also a monthly TV show that the Commission staff Ken Meyer hosts called Disability News and Views which is currently looking for ideas for individuals or organizations to interview of the show. KMC also reiterated that the Advisory Board meetings have now been moved to the fourth Thursday of every month. The Board also has two open seats and to apply individuals should e-mail KMC a letter of interest and their resume. To qualify for the Board a person must live in the City of Boston and either have a disability or have a close friend or family member with a disability.

Architecture Report: Kathryn Quigley

Kathryn Quigley (KQ) spoke about accessibility trainings that have been and will continue to be done with Inspectional Services Department and upcoming trainings with the Department of Public Works. KQ will also be working on a web based training for the Boston Society of Civil Engineers to elevate access across the city and connecting accessible routes.

Guest Speaker: Alice Brown, Mobility Action Plan

Alice Brown (AB) introduced herself and gave a brief overview of the Mobility Action Plan which is being put together by the Boston Transportation Department (BTD). This plan will encompass pedestrian routes of travel and their safety, bus and other transit routes, as well as alleviating congestion at heavy use intersections. The Mayor's Mobility Plan Advisory Committee is co-chaired by Representative Russell Holmes, who represents the Sixth Suffolk district in Boston and Richard Dimino, President and CEO of A Better City. Commission member John Winske (JW) is also a member of the advisory committee. The plan will be informed by individuals participating in a Question Campaign by donating their question in-person through the "What's Your Question" truck, donating online at GoBoston2030.org, tweeting their question using the #GoBoston2030 hashtag, or texting questions to 617-925-6914. A list of locations the truck will be sent out to the Board. A vision report will then be produced based all the responses in May or June. The final plan will be produced in March 2016 with specific policies, programs, and transportation network changes planned. The plan will then guide capital spending and outline priorities that funding will be channeled to.

HP Parking Review

KMC noted that the Commission has been working with a few other departments on issues related to handicap parking (referred to in this meeting as "handicap" not "accessible" due to the wording in Massachusetts state laws) and introduced James Colimon (JC) from Intergovernmental Relations and Robin Casper (RC) for Councilor Flaherty's office. One of the issues that has been brought up recently is the abuse of handicap parking. Most of the abuse seems to be centered on placards. These placards are issued by the Registry of Motor Vehicles and were being looked at by a task force headed by the Attorney General. Within the City there may be some reform in regards to cracking down on abuse and may focus on the ability of those individuals with placards to park for an unlimited amount of time for free at city meters. There has been a non-scientific study done by the Boston Transportation Department which estimates that 75% of metered parking in the financial district during the day are used by cars with placards. A few Boston papers have done stings that have shown abuse but there is no really good system in Boston to track abuse. Jessica Doonan (JD) spoke briefly of the changes that have happened in other major cities such as New York City and San Francisco, emphasizing that many cities have implemented both paying and time limits to their metered parking. Some cities have also started using a tiered placard system which determines if they pay at meters and how long they can park at that meters. There was a brief discussion regarding the technicality of making reform both in the City and the state.

KMC asked the Advisory Board members feelings on the possibility of making the meters time limited or having to pay the meter. KMC is currently not in favor of paying at the meters due to the inaccessibility of the meters themselves but is in favor of possibly implementing time limits. It was suggested that getting rid of the sleeve on the placard that covers the photo may lessen the abuse by those who are using other people's placards but KMC noted that only Boston Police can ask to see the picture on the placard, not parking enforcement officers that check the meters. A major concern of the Board centered on the need for more enforcement of the existing laws (ticketing individuals who do not have

handicap plates or a placard) before any reforms should be made. Another major concern is having rules in Boston different from the rest of the state as well as the hardship it might cause for working disabled individuals who have to move their car during the day, especially in bad weather. KMC pointed out that the purpose of metered parking in the City is not for all day employee parking but instead for short term parking to allow for quick turn over.

It was decided that an ad-hoc committee will be formed to tackle the topic of abuse at metered spaces, changing residential accessible spaces to have a residency requirement, and to look into getting the state law changed from "handicap parking" to accessible parking. CR made a motion to create an ad-hoc committee to discuss handicap parking which was seconded by AS and approved by all.

Guest Speaker: Mimi Turchinets, EITC Campaign 2015

Mimi opened by stating that the Earned Income Tax Coalition has now changed its name to the Boston Tax Help Coalition and it is a partnership of City departments, nonprofits, businesses, and community organizations. This campaign provides free tax prep, asset building services, credit counselling services as well as other financial services for roughly 12,000 low to moderate income residents across Boston. These services are provided in seven different spoken languages and also a pilot in American Sign Language at certain locations. The campaign launches end of January/beginning of February and there are 27 different tax sites throughout the City. 26 of the 27 tax sites are wheelchair accessible and 10 of the 27 sites provide optional "financial check-ups" in which a credit report is run and individuals are coached on how to improve their credit for the next year. Mimi is also working closely with the Disability Commission to create an accessibility pilot allowing for more individuals with disabilities to access the programs. Right now roughly 17% of individuals who use the services self-identify as having a disability. For more information about this year's campaign people can check out the website at <http://www.bostontaxhelp.org/>. Individuals who want to participate in the accessibility pilot should contact Mimi at mimi.turchinets@boston.gov.

Old Business

No updates.

Old Action Items

No updates.

New Business

Allegra Stout (AS) spoke briefly about the Alternative Housing Voucher Program and noted the Board's support of it last year. This program provides mobile vouchers for low income individuals with disabilities who are under age sixty which allows them to pay 30% of their income on market rate apartments anywhere in the state. Last year the program was increased \$100,000 which is a step in the right direction. Currently the program is funded at 3.55 million dollars and consists of 420 vouchers and over two thousand people on the waiting list. Affordable housing is a serious need with over 30,000 individuals with disabilities on the waiting list for section 8 housing and with the major barrier to the Money Follows the Person initiative in Massachusetts being the ability to find affordable housing outside of nursing homes. Boston Center for Independent living is looking to double the funding from 3.55 million to 7.1 million, restoring the 800 vouchers the program originally had in 1995. AS would like the Board's support with this campaign by signing on as an endorser. CR made a motion to be on the list of supporters to support BCIL in their effort to support housing voucher which was seconded by AS and was unanimously approved. CR made a motion to support BCIL during the state budget process in writing letters to increase the line item to the amount that BCIL feels would support the current housing

crisis and need for housing vouchers which was seconded by AS and unanimously approved by all. AS thanked everyone and promised to update the Board of the progress of this issue.

New Action Items

HW brought up whether or not the Board would like to write up a letter welcoming Governor Baker which was supported by the Board. KMC also brought up the prospect of the Olympics and offered that the Board writes a letter to the Mayor offering the Board as a resource moving forward, especially since the Paralympics would be hosted in Boston as well as the Olympics. KMC noted that there will be Olympic community meetings all over the City to get the public's input on whether or not the Olympics should be held in Boston. KMC will send out the list of dates and locations of these meetings to the Board. CR made a motion to write a letter welcoming Governor Baker which HW seconded and was unanimously approved by all. AS made a motion to write a letter to the Mayor regarding the Olympics offering the Board as a resource for accessibility issues which was seconded by CR and unanimously approved by all.

Public Input

Marc (Moses) Mallard vocalized his concern at not seeing the mental health field represented during the meeting. HW thanked him for his thoughts and acknowledged that while the Board did not specifically speak about mental health during the meeting, many Board members may have experience with mental illness. Dusya Lybouskaya (DL) also introduced herself and informed AS that she will be talking with the autism community about the housing voucher program and possibly getting the Autism Advocacy Network to sign on as an endorser. DL also vocalized her support of the positive things that may come from the Olympics being hosted in Boston in terms of accessibility and being an example of equality and inclusion.

Allegra quickly spoke about Hidden Army Boston. Hidden Army is an organization that was started in DC that she is working to start in Boston that gives young adults up to age 35 with disabilities an opportunity to come together to socialize and network. The first event will be the evening of Wednesday January 28th at a restaurant in Harvard Square. As will send out info to Board and encourages them to spread the word.

CR made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by AS and unanimously approved by all.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:13 p.m.