

## **DISABILITY COMMISSION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

Boston City Hall, Piemonte Room, 5th Floor

**July 10, 2013**  
**5:30-7:30 p.m.**

### **AGENDA- REVISED**

- Call to Order
- Introductions
- Approval of May & June Minutes
- Commissioner's Report – *Kristen McCosh*
- Chair's Report – *Ben Roux*
- Architectural Access/Main Streets Updates – *Kathryn Aldrich*
- 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, July 10, 2013

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

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| <b>Present:</b><br>(AS) Allegra Stout<br>(BR) Ben Roux<br>(JW) John Winske<br>(HW) Heather Watkins<br>(SL) Suzanne Leveille<br>(TTH) Tee Thach-Hasan<br><br><b>Not Present:</b><br>(CR) Carl Richardson<br>(PH) Paulette Houston<br>(RN) Raine Newman | <b>Staff Present:</b><br>(KMC) Kristen McCosh, Commissioner<br>(SA) Sophia Apostola<br>(KA) Kathryn Aldrich<br>(JH) Jesse Holm |
| <b>Guest:</b> No Guest  |  |

**May Meeting Minutes:** Corrected "Houston" to "Heaton" on page 4.**June Meeting Minutes:** Minutes approved by board.**Commissioner's Report: Kristen McCosh**

KMC discussed assessment of accessible taxi cabs in the City of Boston, stating that the City has hired a consultant to provide recommendations regarding accessibility. The consultant met with the Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities and will give recommendations in September. Some potential recommendations are: 1.) That every cab be inspected after modifications are completed, 2.) That Wheelchair Accessible Van (WAV) owners go to experienced modifiers, and 3.) That every taxi cab be made accessible.

KMC mentioned that there are some short term and long term plans for taxi cab accessibility. KMC stated that the Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities would like to institutionalize the gains that have been made regarding cab accessibility. KMC stated that the whole Hackney program is being looked at; radio calls, seatbelts, access ramps, and driver knowledge.

KMC also mentioned that she was recently interviewed for the Boston Globe regarding an accessible playground in Charlestown. This is one of Mayor Menino's signature programs before he leaves office.

KMC discussed A.D.A. Celebration Day, which will be held on Thursday, July 25<sup>th</sup> from 10:30-3:00 p.m. This year the Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities will recognize

Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital. Oz Mondejar, Vice President of Human Resources and Community Relations for Partners Continuing Care, will be representing Spaulding and giving a short speech. There will be an adaptive, recumbent bike, which is being introduced through the Hubway, on display. KMC mentioned that there will be a flash mob put on by youth with Easter Seals during A.D.A. Celebration day as well; this flash mob will represent youth from five cities in Massachusetts, including Boston neighborhoods. Their ages range between 14 and 26 years old and they are expecting more than 100 kids to perform; they will dance to "Born this Way" by Lady Gaga. KMC also stated that a large number of t-shirts were ordered, Mayor Menino will speak at the event, there will be music, and lots of food. KMC stated that she will make name badges for Commission Members because she would like to introduce them in her speech, and she hopes that they will be able to go up to podium to be introduced to the crowd. Sophia Apostola (SA), the new Deputy Commissioner, will be in charge of the Civic Involvement Breakfast from 10:30-12:00 p.m. KMC has been in touch with Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) to see what departments will speak at the breakfast; some ideas are Elections, and Mayor's office. There will also be tours of the accessible features of City Hall.

KMC introduced the new Deputy Commissioner, Sophia Apostola (SA) and asked SA to give a brief summary of her professional experience. SA stated that she has previously worked at Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership MBHP as a hearing officer. When SA was a hearing officer, she reviewed and granted many reasonable accommodations. SA stated that she saw the need for more training and education about disabilities in the housing field. SA stated that in law school she focused on housing, specifically Section 8 landlord-tenant law. Prior to law school, SA worked in the Massachusetts Senate.

**Chair's Report: Ben Roux**

BR stated that recently he received an e-mail from Disability Advocates Advancing our Healthcare Rights (DAAHR) regarding the OneCare Initiative. BR asked Allegra Stout (AS) if she would discuss some of this program.

AS stated that One Care is in response to the Affordable Healthcare Act; people with disabilities who have MassHealth and Medicare (also known as "dual eligible") qualify. One Care will be a managed care system. DAAHR is working from the consumer perspective.

AS stated that in October 2013 services will begin for individuals who opted in. For individuals who opted out, they will be automatically enrolled in January of 2014. AS stated that the consumer can opt out at any time and that the program is designed to put the consumer in full control of their services.

AS stated that there are three Integrated Care Organizations (ICOs) participating in the One Care program. The first is Boston Community Medical Group (BCMG), the second is Fallon Total Care, and the third is Network Health. AS stated that instead of being fee for service it will be a flat amount every month.

John Winske (JW) described two examples of how One Care and Integrated Care Organizations will operate. The first example is of an elderly Jewish man in an assistive living facility. Staff

noticed he was becoming depressed. Staff figured out that he missed his Synagogue and arranged for transportation to Synagogue and he was no longer depressed. The second example is an elderly woman who was in the Emergency Room three Saturdays in a row for stomach pains and each time nothing could be found that was wrong with her. Eventually, it was discovered that the woman had help during weekdays but not weekends, and when she was mugged on her way to a diner by herself, she stopped going and developed stomach aches. It was arranged to have a companion go with her to the diner so she felt safe and her stomach aches stopped. JW stated that the theory behind this model of care is that if you keep people in community, then you keep people healthy. JW stated that he believes a lot more doctors will now have to become accessible to people with disabilities.

BR stated that it has been a few months since he has been appointed to the Commission Chair position, and asked if board members have any comments or feedback on how it is going so far; is anything we should add to the agenda for the next few months?

KMC suggested that board members e-mail BR with ideas, comments, or feedback.

BR stated that he will not be at the next Commission meeting on August 14<sup>th</sup> and that Heather Watkins (HW) has agreed to lead the meeting.

#### **Architectural Access Update: Kathryn Aldrich**

Kathryn Aldrich (KA) discussed Copley Place Associates, who met with the Disability Commission Advisory Board approximately one year ago regarding a project. She said they have a new design that they would like to present to the Commission and that they have changed their design a great deal. KA stated that they are really trying to make the space accessible for all. Some of the changes that have been made are as follows:

- 1.) A new entry system so that all individuals will enter through the front entrance.
- 2.) The elevator is to be much larger than the original design; there will also be a double escalator. They are also adding another elevator in another location.
- 3.) There is no brick in this plan at all. They will be putting large granite pavers and will have signage and way finding.

JW asked if they had addressed the visibility issue. KA stated that they are reaching out to the Institute for Human Centered Design (IHCD) as a consultant regarding the visibility issue.

KA discussed that she attended a Boston Medical Center (BMC) scoping session with the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) for the clinical campus master plan. They addressed the following issues: pedestrian ramps, disabled parking, and reducing overhead and making the campus more efficient. KA stated that they are really hoping to drive home Universal Access as a concept; access is not just about wheelchairs.

KA stated that the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) contacted the Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities regarding the Business Improvement District (BID). KA explained

that the BID provides greater design services beyond what the city is able to do. The Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities submitted comments to BID on sidewalk, materials, and way finding regarding the Downtown Crossing area of Boston.

KA mentioned that the Mayor's office contacted the Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities regarding access issues for a new art project called "Pulse of the City." This art project consists of a large heart on top of parking meters; individuals can go up to the large heart and hold it and their heart rate is taken.

#### **Survey of Mayoral Candidates: Carl Richardson**

SA handed out general ideas of potential questions for candidates regarding disability issues. SA stated that if Commission Members would like to add questions, e-mail SA what you have and she will compile. SA will e-mail documents to missing Commission members.

JW stated that there are twelve Mayoral candidates at this time.

#### **Standing Committees: Information Access, Community Access**

No updates on Information Access.

No updates on Community Access.

#### **Old Business**

JW stated that he is working on a letter about the Gay Pride Celebration and lack of access. JW stated that he will present the letter to Commission members soon.

JW asked what is on the form for requesting the use of City Hall Plaza for events in terms of access? KMC stated she will look into what is on the event request form for access.

AS stated that she likes the idea of having an access checklist.

#### **New Business**

JW stated that a friend of his who owns a business was hit by ADA Lawsuit from Florida. This happens sometimes and the intent is to settle and get a few thousand dollars and then disappear. JW stated that he knows the business is close to code. JW stated that there tends to be 20-30 of these lawsuits that crop up in one area and then they go away. JW requested that if anyone has heard of something similar happening, to please contact him.

HW updated Commissioner Members on her presentation to youth involved in Empowering People for Inclusive Communities (EPIC). The request for a speaker came through Councilor Tito Jackson's office. HW stated that she spoke for approximately one hour on what the Disability Commission Advisory Board does and her own personal experience with advocacy. HW stated that the youth were between 12-20 years old and were a very enthusiastic and dedicated group. HW said that participants signed up to vote and asked HW many insightful questions.

**Public Input**

A representative from Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong asked to briefly discuss a program that they are starting, called New Freedom Volunteer Driver/Supporter Project. Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong is an advocacy group run by self-advocates; they train people with disabilities to speak up for themselves. The New Freedom Volunteer Driver/Supporter Project is looking for volunteer drivers to help people with disabilities to gain access to accessible and efficient transportation and support. Drivers will receive gas cards and will be refunded for tolls. For more information, please e-mail lyleen Ismail at [lyleen.mass.office@gmail.com](mailto:lyleen.mass.office@gmail.com).

Adjourned at 7:07 p.m.