

DISABILITY COMMISSION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Boston City Hall, Piemonte Room, 5th Floor

June 12, 2013
5:30-7:30 p.m.

AGENDA- REVISED

- Call to Order
- Introductions
- Approval of May Minutes
- Commissioner's Report – *Kristen McCosh*
- Chair's Report – *Ben Roux*
- Architectural Access Update – *Kathryn Aldrich*
- Informational Presentation – *Val Leiter*
- Survey for Mayoral Candidates – *Carl Richardson*
- Main Streets Updates
- Standing Committees – Information Access, Community Access
- Old Business
- New Business
- Public Input
- Adjournment

Boston Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Minutes for Wednesday, June 12, 2013
5th Floor Piemonte Room, Boston City Hall, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

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

May Meeting Minutes: Not Reviewed.

Commissioner's Report: Kristen McCosh

KMC described how the Wheelchair Accessible Van (WAV) audits are progressing. KMC stated that they are seeing some trends and assessments would be finished by Friday, June 14th. KMC stated that there is also a survey being done of all WAV drivers with questions about how to use the accessible vehicle, the perception of the disability community and gratuity, and their perceived attitude of the disability community. KMC noted, as an aside, that MV-1 has been shut down.

KMC responded to an issue she received information about regarding interpreters and Pride celebrations on City Hall Plaza. KMC provided background information for those unaware of this issue; someone who was part of planning for Pride mentioned that they had called in to request six American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters for the event a few months ago. ASL Interpreter requests were not received and therefore interpreters were not available at the Pride celebration. As a result, the deaf community that was present protested. KMC was notified of this issue and was able to have someone attend the event to provide CART services at the last minute. AS mentioned that she had heard from others that the CART services did not work properly.

AS described the protest in more detail, stating that there were approximately 20 deaf and hard of hearing people as well as advocates who protested at Pride as a result of the lack of ASL Interpreters. Additional AS noted her concern over two performers at the PRIDE celebration who used inappropriate language. AS posed a question to the Commission about whether or

not the Commission should draft a letter regarding these issues. JW stated that he will draft a letter for next meeting to be sent to Mayor Thomas M Menino (TMM) regarding PRIDE celebration issues.

JW asked if there is a way that the Commission can put together a checklist of requirements that are needed to appropriately provide access for the disability community in City Hall Plaza event request forms. KMC stated that the Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CPWD) should check on that, and make sure that is already a part of even requests and, if it is not, create a comprehensive checklist for events.

KMC also discussed a recent issue where a constituent contacted the City Clerk's office to request ASL Interpreters for a marriage ceremony. The Clerk's office contacted KMC regarding what their office should do, and wasn't clear about why the Clerk's office had to provide ASL Interpreters at the event if all the necessary information was e-mailed to the constituent. KMC stated that this is an example of why she continues to try and advocate for department liaisons, so the knowledge on the appropriate steps to fulfilling a request like this and why it is important are clear to all City Hall Employees.

Chair's Report: Ben Roux

BR thanked Commission members for being involved in the letter of support for the project "Using IT to Improve Care for Patients with Disabilities." BR stated that he will keep the Commission updated periodically on this project.

BR stated that he attended the Statewide Commissions on Disability (COD) meeting in Marlboro, MA on June 7th. BR handed out document describing some of the key points that were talked about during the meeting.

CR asked how our Commission mission and vision aligned with other Commissions.

BR stated that there were many similar issues, such as: taxis, public transportation, housing, snow storms and sidewalks, voting, building accessibility. BR mentions that web access for people with disabilities was very interesting and a fairly new topic for most people.

KA stated that the missions of other Commissions were consistent with the Boston Disability Commission but the scale is obviously much larger in Boston and therefore a bit different than some of the much smaller towns.

AS stated that many Commissions talked about what they did with the fines collected from Disabled Parking

KMC stated that all fines collected from Disabled Parking violations go into the City of Boston general fund.

Architectural Access Update: Kathryn Aldrich

KA stated that she has been attending a lot of walking tours lately. KA discussed a walking tour in Back bay which highlighted both positive and negative accessibility issues. KA stated that on Boylston St owners chose their own materials for sidewalk construction so there are a lot of different materials being used.

KA mentioned another walking tour took place on Beacon Hill and looked at street ramps and existing conditions. Public Works Department, Neighborhood Services, and Tom Hopkins of AAB were in attendance.

KA also attended a walking tour with Connect Historic Boston Landmarks Commission to review material proposal for the Boston Freedom Trail.

Informational Presentation regarding sidewalk Conditions: Valerie Leiter

Valerie Leiter (VL) introduced her research, stating that she received a small amount of funding from the American Sociological Association and worked on this research with students and John Kelley (JK). VL and JK stated that they looked at the Architectural Access Board (AAB) complaint form in order to come up with specific questions of accessibility on the properties surveyed. VL and JK looked at Boston Housing Authority (BHA) properties that serve the elderly and disabled population. There were thirty-five properties that were labels at elderly and disabled. There were three family developments that they also looked at that stated they had some access features. Anything that would have been subject to an AAB complaint was logged in their research. VL stated that their research around BHA property was conducted around three blocks of sidewalk in any direction, just three total blocks. VL stated that they determined which sidewalks around the building to use depending on where a person might want to go if they lived in the neighborhood. VL stated that all findings were logged in an excel spreadsheet and statistical package but were not measured by severity of issues.

VL handed out a document titled "Sidewalk Conditions Surrounding Boston Housing Authority Senior/Disabled Housing Developments: A Preliminary Briefing" to Commission members. VL described "Table 1" of the briefing as how many problems they encountered while surveying the sidewalk conditions around the buildings. Overall, VL stated that the research showed that Hassan in Mattapan was very accessible with brand new sidewalks and curb cuts. VL said that the least accessible buildings were Ausonia in the North End and Franklin Field in Dorchester. In Ausonia, while there were two entrances the front isn't accessible at all. Around Ausonia, the brick sidewalks made the area very inaccessible. In Franklin Field (Dorchester) the sidewalks are in disrepair, there were debris from a memorial and an overflowing dumpster on the sidewalks.

JW asked what VL would like the Commission to do with the presented information.

KA stated that the Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CPWD) works collaboratively with the Public Works Department. KA stated that curb cuts can potentially be addressed as there is a list prioritizing curb cuts.

Main Streets Updates

No updates.

Standing Committees- Information Access, Community Access

No updates.

Old Business

No updates.

New Business

AS stated that there will be a “One Care” meeting on Wednesday June 19th for people who are interested.

AS also stated that with the Senate election coming up a week from Tuesday, BCIL will be surveying polling places, parking areas, voting machines, and door accessibility to make sure that voting is accessible to people with disabilities. If anyone would like to volunteer with this, contact AS. AS mentioned there may be a small stipend available for which the exact amount is to be determined. AS will e-mail information out to Commission members.

JW stated that Friday, June 14th there will be a hearing on the MBTA settlement from 1:00-3:00 p.m. at the Transportation building.

KMC discussed A.D.A. Celebration Day – stating that plans are finalized. There will be a Civic Participation Breakfast starting at 10:30 a.m. where a continental breakfast will be served and people can register to vote, learn how city government works, and meet their City Councilors. Additionally, this early registration for A.D.A. day means you can get your t-shirt and food ticket early on and not wait on line later on in the day.

KMC stated that the new Deputy Commissioner will begin on July 1st. Her name is Sophia Apostola and she is a Lawyer who works at Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership (MBHP) on adjudication and individual and systemic advocacy.

JW mentioned that with the new Deputy Commissioner beginning soon, maybe it is time to revisit visitability (being able to visit your neighbor’s house). If people want to be part of the community and their neighborhood they should be able to visit their neighbors.

KMC agreed that visitability should be on a list of priority issues.

Public Input

None.

Adjourned at 7:10 p.m.