



# Disability Commission Advisory Board

BOSTON CITY HALL | ONE CITY HALL PLACE | 9th FLOOR | ROOM 967 | BOSTON MA, 02201  
617.635.3682 | fax 617.635.2726 | TTY 617.635.2541 | [www.cityofboston.gov/boardsandcommissions](http://www.cityofboston.gov/boardsandcommissions)

KRISTEN MCCOSH  
*Commissioner*

## Commission Members

Heather Watkins  
*Chairperson*

Allegra Stout  
*Vice Chairperson*

John Wnske  
*Secretary*

Zary Amirhosseini

Marc (Moses) Mallard

Carl Richardson

Kyle Robidoux

Ruben Roux

## **DISABILITY COMMISSION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING** Boston City Hall, Room 900, 9th Floor

**Thursday June 25th, 2015**  
**5:30-7:30 p.m.**

- Call to Order
- Introductions
- Approval of Minutes
- Chair's Report – *Heather Watkins*
- Commissioner's Report – *Kristen McCosh*
- Architectural Access Update – *Kristen McCosh*
- Board Elections
- Old Business
- Old Action Items
- New Business – *Olympics meeting*
- New Action Items – *Sandwich board letter*
- Public Input
- Adjournment

Next meeting: July 23rd, 5:30-7:30pm

## **MEETING ACCOMMODATION NOTICE**

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Please allow at least 2 weeks to arrange for accommodations. Requests for accommodations may be sent to the contact person for the meeting, or may be forwarded to: Kristen McCosh, City of Boston Disability Commissioner and ADA Coordinator, at [kristen.mccosh@cityofboston.gov](mailto:kristen.mccosh@cityofboston.gov) or 617-635-3682 (voice) or 617-635-2541 (TTY).

**To participate in this meeting by phone please dial:**

Conference Phone Number: 1-888-322-7166

Participant Code: 4074173#



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Minutes for Thursday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
9<sup>th</sup> Floor BRA Board Room 900, Boston City Hall, 5:30 – 7:30 PM

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Present:	Staff Present:
(AS) Allegra Stout (BR) Ben Roux (CR) Carl Richardson (HW) Heather Watkins (JW) John Winske (ZA) Zary Amirhosseini (MM) Marc (Moses) Mallard	(KMC) Kristen McCosh, Commissioner (JD) Jessica Doonan (CM) Chris Morawski
Not Present: (KR) Kyle Robidoux	

## **April Meeting Minutes:**

Carl Richardson (CR) motioned to accept April minutes, Ben Roux (BR) seconded motion. Minutes approved by Board

## **Chair's Report: Heather Watkins**

Heather Watkins (HW) apologized for not being at the Community Forum and asked Board what was discussed and what questions came up. Kristen McCosh (KMC) noted that there were about 80 people present; a lot of the questions focused around the MBTA and other issues had to do with snow and sidewalk access. CR added that there were issues with housing and education. John Winske (JW) said housing, MBTA, and education were the key issues discussed at the Community Forum. HW noted the video and the 2014 Annual Report is on the City of Boston disability website.

HW noted that the next meeting is July 23<sup>rd</sup>, the day after the ADA25 event; HW wondered what the Board thought about coming back in town to have a meeting the following day after just having our ADA event. JW was in favor of meeting. KMC said when we talk about Board issues she can go over the by-laws that states the number of meetings the Board is expected to have annually.

HW checked in regarding the Board sub-committees and their current status. KMC said the sub-committee on parking has been helpful due to it being issue-based. KMC noted that that method of sub-committees may be more productive moving forward. In response to an inquiry by Moses Mallard (MM) HW explained that the current long standing sub-committees are Information Access, Community Access, Education Access, Legislative Access and Architectural Access.

Allegra Stout (AS) wanted to know if Kathryn Quigley (KQ) has been sending out variance requests to the members of the Architectural Committee. AS was recently at a meeting of the Architectural Access Board with Tom Hopkins who said he continues to get good input from the Commission. KMC said KQ has not done it of late because of staffing issues. KMC asked AS if Tom Hopkins has put his documents on-line. AS said Tom Hopkins said the State has told him it is too expensive to put his documents on-line but he has put his documents on a physical kiosk that can be viewed at One Ashburton Place. KMC acknowledged that getting paper documents is a barrier which needs more discussion. JW suggested documents be scanned and burned. CR suggested that an AD HOC Committee be formed to work with the Architectural Committee to work on making Tom Hopkins documents more accessible.



### **Commissioner's Report: Kristen McCosh**

Deputy Commissioner Jesse Holm's last day with the Commission was last Thursday and the office Administrative Assistant left in September so the office is short two staff members. The Administrative Assistant position will be changed to Architectural Access Project Coordinator and will work closely with Kathryn Quigley. The Deputy Commissioner position will also be changed to Chief of Staff which is more accurate based on job responsibilities.

KMC noted that she has made her recommendation for the open Board seat to the Mayor and that individual is currently being vetted. KMC hopes the individual will be able to start their service at the July Board meeting.

The Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) program now has 18 ADA compliant wheelchair vans. KMC informed the Board that the medallion numbers and cab company numbers are available on the Commission website for the general public's use. There will be 6 more WAVs coming on this year which achieves over 25% compliant by the end of the year and 100% compliant by 2017.

KMC took recommendations from the parking sub-committee and is working on final recommendations to bring to the Mayor. KMC will recommend that the City consider a four hour time limit on meters, residential requirements for residential accessible parking spaces, and changing "handicapped parking" to "accessible parking". These recommendations would have to be brought to the State by the Mayor in order to achieve change. The City is also working on an app so that the meters can be paid remotely as well as a Request for Proposals (RFP) for neighborhood parking analysis.

MM attended the Mayor's South Hampton Street Shelter opening and tour prior to the Board meeting. The men's shelter added 150 beds bringing the total up to 400 beds. Of those 400, 66 beds are for youth and transgender individuals and others with unique circumstances. MM is unsure if the old staff from the Long Island shelter are working at the new shelter. MM spoke to the staff about doing a presentation on disability which they seemed receptive to. KMC said the Mayor released a comprehensive analysis on homelessness and has put the report as well as his plan to end homelessness on-line. The City estimates there are 600 chronically homeless individuals and the number of homeless has made a big drop from 900 in the 1990s. KMC noted that Tuesday, July 7<sup>th</sup> is the next Disability Housing Task Force Meeting and she will update the Board in July.

KMC asked that the Board CC Jessica Doonan (JD) on any e-mail correspondence. JD does the attendance as well as logistics for the Board so it is important that she is in the loop.

KMC reminded the Board that attendance is vital and that the by-laws only require 6 meetings per year. The Board might want to consider not meeting in December and January which can be difficult for some and in August some take vacations. KMC asked the Board to think about it so that it can be discussed thoroughly at a later date.

KMC noted the ADA 25 event will be held Wednesday, July 22<sup>nd</sup> from 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM on the Boston Common. There will be a march kicking off the event at 11:00 AM on the corner of Boylston Street and Tremont Street. Mayor Walsh and Felix Arroyo will speak at the event. HW asked if ADA presenters will be diverse and KMC said the committee did their best to make sure presenters were diverse.

HW asked if increasing the Board to 13 or 15 was still on the slate. KMC confirmed that Mayor Walsh and the Intergovernmental Relations Department have submitted it to the State Legislature for approval. MM suggested that the Board members be given a stipend for the work they do and KMC said she will look into it with the Law Department. KMC said right now the requirements for being a Board member are Boston residency and being disabled or a parent of someone who is disabled. Prompted by discussions with advocates, KMC suggested that one of the new seats be for someone who is unable to leave their home but wants to participate.



### **Architectural Report: Kristen McCosh for Kathryn Quigley**

KMC provided an update on the Beacon Hill sidewalk issue by saying the judge sided with Beacon Hill and a temporary injunction was placed on the city. However, the judge's reasoning does give some hope that the City will be able to move forward since it was a technicality of State funding vs. City funding. While City funds were used and not State funds, the judge believes that the State should have signed off on this process. The Law Department will go over all the papers and make sure everything is in order for next steps.

KMC has been working with Public Works Department (PWD) to update the curb cut transition plan. An agreement was made three years ago to make 5,000 curbs ADA compliant over the next 15 years. The PWD is well ahead of schedule on this with 38% of the ramps compliant in 3 years. KMC and KQ are working with PWD to update the transition plan and look at improvements.

John Winske (JW) noted that this winter was rough on the sidewalks and streets especially where the curb meets the street and wondered if there is plan to address these issues. KMC said the Mayor has a comprehensive pothole initiative to assess the damage done this winter. In the meantime if any Board members see an area that needs repair please notify the Mayor's hotline at 617-635-4500. PWD will send out an investigator and will work on repairing it. Jessica Doonan (JD) also noted the citizen connect app allows constituents to post a photo of the curb cut or other concern to the appropriate City department. It will also provide the constituent with a tracking number. MM wondered how the general public is informed about this phone number and app. KMC said the City has dozens of ways: the City truck that goes through the neighborhoods, social media, the City website, email lists, and community meetings. Another constituent initiative that the Mayor is launching next year is a 311 City services phone number. Related to sidewalks the City recently finished an inventory of every sidewalk and curb ramp and the data is being used so that people can map out accessible routes from point A to point B. The map will give conditions of the sidewalks, material of sidewalk, slopes of sidewalks, conditions of curb ramps and compliance of curb ramps. This is potentially a big initiative and currently a small pilot app of the one of the neighborhoods is being looked into.

KMC said the Boston Redevelopment Authority is currently working on a master plan for the City which has not been done in over 40 years. The Commission is asking that they go beyond meeting basic ADA requirements in favor of ideal ADA conditions.

KMC announced that City Hall has now installed gender neutral bathrooms on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor for all users and they will be fully ADA compliant within the next few weeks.

### **Board Elections: Heather Watkins**

Zary Amirhosseini (ZA) made a motion to accept the slate of nominations of officers (Heather Watkins as Chair, Allegra Stout as Vice Chair, John Winske for Secretary, and Moses Mallard as Treasurer) and to vote by acclamation which was seconded by CR and unanimously approved by all. The vote was held and unanimously approved by all.

### **Old Business**

CR asked KMC if there was anything that the Board could do in regards to the Beacon Hill sidewalk issue. KMC asked the Board to hold tight while the City goes through the appropriate channels.

JW provided an update on the Uber meeting facilitated by Councilor Michelle Wu to discuss access vehicles. JW noted that the big question is whether or not Uber is required to be ADA compliant. KMC suggested to Uber that they could partner with taxis on this issue, but Uber pushed back because they are in competition with taxis. KMC asked the Board if Uber should be a sub-committee. JW agreed and suggested that a committee be put together to look at this issue not only as a civil rights issue but as a human rights issue. KMC suggested that the sub-committee could write a position letter to the City. JW suggested bringing the issue up again in the next meeting for further discussion.

## **Old Action Items**

No updates

## **New Business**

KMC mentioned that Kyle Robidoux (KR) suggested that someone come in and speak about para-Olympics but since KR is not here the topic would be tabled till the July meeting. JD announced to the Board that the next City-hosted public meeting on the Olympics will be held Tuesday June 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM in Jamaica Plain.

AS announced that the State Legislature has started a Disability Caucus which has been spearheaded by Representative Provost from Somerville and Senator Barrett from Lexington. CR said he is seeing a positive attitudinal shift in the Legislature in hiring interns with diverse disabilities. HW asked if the Commission has youth summer interns and KMC said not this year due to staffing issues.

AS informed the Board that there will be a rally by 1199 FICU to raise the wages for PCAs to \$15.00 per hour and for fair contracts Tuesday June 30<sup>th</sup> in front of the State House on Beacon Street. The demonstration will be all day from 7:00 AM – 10:00 PM and the rally will be at 4:00 PM.

MM will be presenting at the Sharon House August 12<sup>th</sup> at 1940 Washington Street at the Transitional Center and asked for the Board's support.

## **New Action Items**

KMC said that sandwich boards impede access and suggested that a letter be drafted and sent in advance of the City Council hearing expressing concerns regarding accessible paths. CR motioned that a letter be drafted which was seconded by MM and unanimously approved by all present.

MM suggested that the Commission have a "jeans and sneakers day" in the community so that the Commission does not lose touch with the constituents who may not have access to information through the standard channels. HW suggested that maybe the Board should have more events in the community. KMC said the Health and Human Services Cabinet goes into the neighborhoods and meets constituents to let them know of the services the City provides. KMC and Chris Morawski will follow up with the cabinet outreach person to see what is being done. ZA agreed that the Board do more to be visible and let the people know about the work being done.

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

Meeting was adjourned at 7:20pm.