

DISABILITY COMMISSION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Boston City Hall, Piemonte Room, 5th Floor

March 12, 2014

5:30-7:30 p.m.

AGENDA- REVISED

- Call to Order
- Introductions
- Approval of November & December Minutes
- Commissioner's Report – *Kristen McCosh*
- Chair's Report – *Ben Roux*
- Architectural Access Updates – *Kathryn Aldrich*
- New Administration of Mayor Walsh – *Carl Richardson*
- Advisory Board Issues
- Upcoming Dates
- Community Forum – May 14, 2014
- Alternative Housing Voucher Program
- Standing Committees – Information Access, Community Access
- Old Business
- New Business
- Public Input
- Adjournment

MEETING ACCOMMODATION NOTICE

All meetings held by the City of Boston are required to be accessible for persons with disabilities under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Accommodations are available upon request to any person who requires alternately formatted materials, auxiliary aids, or another accommodation to ensure effective communication and access to attend meetings held by City departments and programs. 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 or 617-635-3682 (voice) or 617-635-2541 (TTY).

Boston Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Minutes for Wednesday, March 12, 2014
5th Floor Piemonte Room, Boston City Hall, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

<p>Present:</p> <p>(AS) Allegra Stout (BR) Ben Roux (CR) Carl Richardson (HW) Heather Watkins (PH) Paulette Houston (TTH) Tee Thach-Hasan</p> <p>Not Present:</p> <p>(JW) John Winkse</p>	<p>Staff Present:</p> <p>(KMC) Kristen McCosh, Commissioner (KQ) Kathryn Quigley (JH) Jesse Holm (JD) Jessica Doonan (CM) Chris Morawski</p>
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November Meeting Minutes: Minutes approved by board.

December Meeting Minutes: Minutes approved by board.

Commissioner's Report: Kristen McCosh

Commissioner Kristen McCosh (KMC) welcomed the Commission members back and introduced the two new staff members Jessica Doonan (JD) and Chris Morawski (CM) She then noted that there are two openings on the Advisory Board and that she is working with Mayor Martin J. Walsh (MJW) to expand the committee from nine seats to thirteen to include a more diverse sampling of the Boston Neighborhoods and disabilities. Applications are being accepted for the current openings until April 1st and the Board is asked to encourage people to apply. KMC stated that she will be sending out the bylaws to the Board to review. KMC suggested that the Board may decide to review the bylaws for any changes they may wish to discuss. KMC asked the Board to send ideas for committees, trainings, and guest speakers now that there is more staff. Committees are a way for the Board to have an even larger impact on the community as a whole. KMC also talked about a bill that would make changes to remote participation for Disability Commissions throughout the state. Ben Roux (BR) stated that he will draft a letter for the Board in support of this bill.

KMC discussed the Making Connections program with the Advisory Board, noting that MJW is very enthusiastic about meeting people in the community. She explained that this program will allow for volunteers to go out into Boston Housing Authorities (BHA) elderly and disabled housing and help connect residents with the services and information they need. KMC also noted that CM will be assisting with outreach efforts in collaboration with the Elderly Commission.

KMC stated that an article was published recently in the Boston Globe regarding Beacon Hill accessibility. KMC noted that the disability community, advocates as well as constituents have voiced their support for access.

Chair's Report: Ben Roux

BR asked the Board if they felt that an election for new Board officials was due and KMC suggested waiting until additional board members are appointed. KMC also noted that she would look into the

bylaws to see if there were specific rules regarding elections. BR welcomed new staff and suggested that CM join the information access committee since he will be involved in social media.

Architectural Access Update: Kathryn Quigley

Kathryn Quigley (KQ) provided an update on the Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs), stating that the decals had been purchased and they would be going on the vehicles soon. KQ stated that the updates to the webpage will happen once decals have been placed on WAVs. The website will also be updated with a list of all the locations where there are Accessible Pedestrian Signals once they are all installed.

KQ stated that she is working with the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) on article 80 language that will incorporate accessibility. This will allow for accessibility testing to be done when the other testing is done. KQ explained that she has also been attending pre-filing meetings with the BRA and the response has been very positive. KQ stated the hope is that, by being involved in these meetings, access can be incorporated more into the planning stages of the design, allowing for access to be built in instead of designing to meet code.

KQ reminded the Board that they can use Citizens Connect to take pictures of access issues – this is the quickest way to notify the City when you come across barriers. KQ also noted that if construction has an effect on access, the construction company must provide access around that space. If they do not provide access, you can use the Citizens Connect to report this.

New Administration of Mayor Walsh: Carl Richardson

Carl Richardson (CR) suggested that the Board write a letter welcoming MJW to City Hall and outlining some of the main issues that the Board would like to see addressed. CR stated that he will write this letter and then send it to the Board for review.

Advisory Board Issues

CR mentioned that there have been attendance issues with monthly Board meetings. KMC noted that this may be resolved with only ten meetings a year instead of twelve. KMC also noted that with a larger Board it would make a quorum more likely. HW requested that next time attendance is sent out that it be sent out only to the individual it involves instead of the entire Board.

Upcoming Dates

Independent Living Education Day: March 20th, State House Great Hall, 10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
 Deaf and Hard of Hearing Constituents' Day: March 24th State House Great Hall, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
 DeafBlind Constituents Day: April 3rd State House Great Hall, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.
 Community Forum: May 14th, 5th floor Piemonte Room, time TBD
 ADA Day: July 24th 2014
 ADA Day, 25th anniversary celebration: July 2015, date and time TBD

Alternative Housing Voucher Program: Allegra Stout

Allegra Stout (AS) gave a short explanation of the Alternative Housing Voucher Program, explaining that it has been a successful way for people with disabilities to get out of nursing homes and into situations where they can live independently. However, due to a shortage in funding the number of vouchers available has decreased significantly. AS drafted a letter to the state legislature in support of a funding increase for this program and asked the Board to support this letter. Heather Watkins (HW) made a motion to support the letter which was seconded by Paulette Houston (PH) and approved unanimously.

by all present. The Boston Disability Commission will be listed in a joint letter from a number of other Disability Commissions throughout Massachusetts.

Standing Committee: Information Access

BR spoke briefly and handed out a document describing how to make a video blog (vlog) in American Sign Language (ASL) to post on websites as a way to share information. It was noted that the City of Boston Department of Information Technology (DoIT) will be doing an audit of the accessibility of the City of Boston website which should prove to be very helpful in the next year. Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT) staff have met with a staff member, Ken Meyer, for a demonstration of his JAWs software. CR offered for DoIT to come to his office to see how he uses technology. Paulette Houston (PH) stated that she would like to be a part of the Information Access committee going forward.

Standing Committee: Community Access

No Updates.

Old Business

No Updates.

New Business

KMC announced that the Commission was awarded \$1,000 to do an access audit of City Hall. Since that money will not cover the whole building KMC asked if there was a specific part of the building the Board would like the audit to focus on. Accessible restrooms and meeting rooms were to access components that the Board would like the access audit to focus on. KMC stated that KQ will also be creating an updated access brochure.

CR asked about the Government Center MBTA station closing. The closure will happen on March 22nd and is scheduled to last two years in order to create a fully accessible station. CR suggested that Disability Commission staff add access information to the webpage in regards to the station closure.

Public Input

Olivia Richard (OR) introduced herself as a resident of the Patricia White apartments in Brighton. She thanked the commission for installing the new accessible pedestrian signals at the intersection of Washington and Quarry. She also praised the proposed PCA Parking Program, stating that she would love to be part of the pilot program. She then explained that recently there were three fires in her apartment complex in one day and that she was disappointed by the lack of a presence by the Disability Commission during this hectic time. While the Elderly Commission was there they were not able to help her since she is 30 years old. KMC thanked her for her story and explained that the Disability Commission is involved with a proposed Functional Needs Registry, which will help service the needs of constituents with disabilities during emergency situations. KMC also noted that she will ask the Office of Emergency Management to add her to their contact list for when events like this happen in the future. BR suggested that it would be great to have the Office of Emergency Management present to the Board in the future.

Adjourned at 7:20 p.m.