

## **DISABILITY COMMISSION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

Boston City Hall, Piedmont Room, 5th Floor

**March 13, 2013**

**5:30-7:30 p.m.**

### **AGENDA**

- Call to Order
- Introductions
- Guest Speaker: Metropolitan Area Planning Council- Joan Bluestein
- Approval of Minutes – *January 2013*
- Commissioner's Report – *Kristen McCosh*
- Chair's Report – *Carl Richardson*
- Architectural Access Update – *Kathryn Aldrich*
- Snow Storm – Sidewalks
- Temporary Sidewalk update
- Online Distance Education
- Remote Participation Bill
- Standing Committees – Information Access, Community Access
- Nominations
- Old Business
- New Business
- Public Input
- Adjournment

## Boston Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Minutes for Wednesday, March 13, 2013

5<sup>th</sup> Floor Piemonte Room Boston City Hall 5:30-7:30PM

<b>Present:</b>	<b>Staff Present:</b>
(CR) Carl Richardson (AS) Allegra Stout (BR) Ben Roux (HW) Heather Watkins (PH) Paulette Houston (RN) Raine Newman (SL) Suzanne Leveille  <b>Not Present:</b> (AB) Arnold Berry (JW) John Winske	(KMC) Kristen McCosh, Commissioner (KA) Kathryn Aldrich (JH) Jesse Holm
<b>Guest:</b> Joan Blaustein and Emily Torres-Cullinane of Metropolitan Area Planning Council	

**Metropolitan Area Planning Council: Joan Blaustein, Emily Torres- Cullinane**

Guest speakers from The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) talked about their services for people with disabilities. MAPC is located in Boston and work with 101 cities and towns around Boston. JB said that MAPC works on a number of different concepts within urban planning, such as transportation and land use.

ETC distributed MAPC's Annual report and the MAPC 30 year vision plan document to Commission members. JB stated that MAPC acts as a Consultant and offers technical assistance to cities and towns.

JB discussed the experience working with towns on creating a plan to try to come up to speed with accessibility. JB mentioned that, oftentimes, changes are not always made until a grievance is filed.

JB discussed training MAPC has received regarding access recently. JB stated that there was a two-day community access monitor training recently and MAPC staff have participated in workshops conducted by the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH) and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB). MAPC also now has language on all of their meeting notices about accessibility.

CR asked the MAPC if they could provide the Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CPWD) with a broader understanding of what they do.

ETC stated that the MAPC works on “bigger picture” planning and does not focus on things like construction of projects. MAPC is involved in zoning work, streetscapes, housing (affordable), transportation, work, and the built environment. MAPC receives funding on a number of different levels; state, federal, public and private grants.

CR asked what agency in particular does MAPC receive funding from.

JB and ETC mentioned one larger funder is U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

JB and ETC asked CPWD if they had input on what MAPC can do to work more effectively with the disability community. JB and ETC would like to continue this conversation with the CPWD and discuss future collaborations.

**January Meeting Minutes:** Minutes approved by board.

**Commissioner’s Report: Kristen McCosh**

KMC stated that the last few years have been about laying the groundwork for what seems to be now coming together. Human Resources posted the Deputy Commissioner position CPWD currently has open. This position is a great opportunity for a person with a high level of knowledge and experience within the disability community. Additionally, the Advocacy and Outreach position will be reposted soon.

KMC stated that the CPWD is working with Nicole Freedman, the Director of Bicycle Programs, on getting an accessible bike for HUBWAY. While the bike cannot be tailored to fit individual needs, CPWD is very excited about having a bike with some modifications. CPWD is looking at a recumbent bike with foot pedals, and maybe in the future CPWD will work on getting a bike with hand pedals as well. KMC stated that the pilot project details are still being discussed.

KMC mentioned that ADA Day is Thursday, July 25<sup>th</sup> this year. It will be the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual celebration of the passing of the American’s with Disabilities Act. KMC stated that if anyone is interested in helping with the planning of the event, CPWD is going to begin planning in late March to early April. CPWD is hoping to add more to the event this year; perhaps a job fair or an advocacy component.

KMC stated that CPWD continues to work on the issue of accessible taxi cabs. The City of Boston (COB) taxis have technology to be used by individuals with low vision or blind users that will assist them in paying with a credit card. CR tested this technology in a Boston cab and it worked well. This product is used in 75% of taxis now. There will be an official press release at some point soon.

KMC stated that she is now working with Captain McLaughlin of the Boston Police Department (BPD) on accessible taxi cabs; McLaughlin is really committed to fully accessible cabs.

KMC stated that there is a new smartphone application called "HAILO" that is very useful in calling an accessible cab. HAILO calls a cab through your smartphone, but the cab driver does not know if the request is being made by a wheelchair user or not. KMC is working on an alternative plan to access this program for individuals who do not own smartphones.

KMC mentioned that Thursday, March 14<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Office on Disability's Jeff Dougan will be doing a presentation at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital at 6:00pm on emergency preparedness for persons with disabilities.

KMC stated the Mayor's Office has sent out an RFR (Request for Responses) to vendors who have developed Voluntary Emergency Registries for people with disabilities. The City's OEM will review the responses in consideration of starting a voluntary emergency registry for people with disabilities in Boston.

KMC announced that, in collaboration with the BRA, CPWD will be mapping disabled parking spaces downtown. CPWD will be able to distribute a map of all of the Disabled Parking Spaces in Boston's commercial districts and put it on the CPWD webpage. KMC will look into alternative formats of the map for blind users to access as well.

KMC continues to work on how to incorporate the disability history walking tour in with other historic tours in Boston, such as the freedom trail and the black history freedom trail through the Connect Historic Boston Project

KMC received approval to have ADA liaisons appointed in City Hall Departments. Liaisons will be responsible for posting public notices of accessibility, etc. Liaisons will receive disability awareness and sensitivity training, compliance with the ADA, etc.

KMC continues to work on an issue regarding City Council meetings being made accessible to individuals who are deaf and/or hard of hearing. Hoping to establish CART services and come to full ADA Compliance by July 2013.

#### **Chair's Report: Carl Richardson**

CR mentioned that he attended a hearing with KA at the Architectural Access Board (AAB). CR stated he attended a hearing regarding the Charles playhouse although the Commission opposed the Charles Playhouse variance request, the AAB approved it. CR also discussed the variance hearing on Arlington St. Church, stating that the Board approved their proposal to install a ramp rather than a lift.

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

KA said that Architectural Access Board (AAB) wants input from Disability Commission. KA states that when variance information is sent out to the Commission, it is requested that Commission members review the information and send KA feedback. KA stated that reviewing plans is less about the actual drawings and more about looking at the variance from a civil rights perspective. KA also mentioned that if there is a specific question about a plan, you can contact her.

KA is working on a number of collaborations with PWD, such as the Mason Street Project, and Boston Medical Center, both inside and outside of the hospital. Boston Center for Independent Living (BCIL) and Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS) are also involved with the Boston Medical Center Project.

**Old Business/New Business:**

KMC gave a brief update on snow issues. KMC mentioned that while all property owners are responsible for snow removal, not everyone is physically able to do so. KMC is working on a possible plan for volunteers and/or teenagers clearing these walkways, but it is still in the brainstorming stage. Public Works Department (PWD) has been clearing curb cuts this season, even though they are not obligated to.

CR asked about temporary pedestrian ramps that were referenced in earlier Commission meetings. KMC mentioned that she did follow up regarding these sidewalks and PWD said these temporary ramps were in place because PWD did not have time to finish these sidewalks before construction season ended. PWD stated that these temporary ramps will be the first ones to be fixed when construction season opens in April.

CR mentioned remote participation, and that there is currently a bill pending that would exempt Disability Commissions from having to be physically present at meetings, thereby allowing remote participation. CR noted that this would not affect any of the 8J legislation. CR will send out information regarding remote participation and the OML.

CR asked standing committees to give a brief discussion as a follow up to the last Commission meeting.

BR discussed access on the City of Boston (COB) website for individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing. BR said that some things needed to be better explained on the CPWD website, such as what the Commission's purpose is. BR wants to find out how the CPWD can be more effective in reaching the deaf community through our website so that individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing have full access to housing, emergency preparedness, and other web resources. BR also mentioned that Teletypewriter (TTY) equipment is outdated and is not often used anymore by the deaf community, 90% of people who are deaf and hard of hearing use video services. BR mentioned that a survey to the community to see how much information they have on the CPWD might be helpful data. BR said that this might help the CPWD improve

resources to the deaf community. BR also stated that YouTube videos on the COB website would be a great way to reach the deaf community. KMC stated that she is trying to acquire video phone; BR mentioned that KMC should contact the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH) for video phone information.

KMC mentioned that she met with Mainstreets and is planning to do a presentation for them next month; KMC will update CPWD at the next Commission meeting.

CR opened the floor to nominations for positions of Chair and Vice Chair for the CPWD. KMC mentions that nominations can also be sent to JH, who will compile list for April 10<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting.

KMC stated that she will gather information about scheduling training in OML for new Commission members and will follow up with the Commission in April.

AS mentioned a Jewish Community organization that had a large meeting recently that was not accessible. AS mentioned that a friend of hers is interested in gathering information on meeting locations that have accessible meeting spaces. AS asked CPWD if anyone might be interested in assisting with this project.

HW discussed a new initiative that she is involved with, "Divas with Disabilities." HW stated that this is a group that supports women of color with disabilities. HW will e-mail links to the website to the CPWD.

**Public Input:**

TTH stated that she is excited for the possibility of offering another parents input and perspective on disability.

Adjourned at 7:30PM.