



Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Martin J. Walsh, Mayor

DISABILITY COMMISSION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Boston City Hall, Room 900, 9th Floor

Thursday March 26th, 2015

5:30-7:30 p.m.

AGENDA-REVISED

- Call to Order
- Introductions
- Approval of Minutes
- Chair's Report – *Heather Watkins*
- Commissioner's Report – *Kristen McCosh*
- Architectural Access Update – *Kathryn Quigley*
- The Boston Home Presentation- *Francis Murphy III*
- Old Business
- Old Action Items- *Letters*
- New Business
- New Action Items
- Public Input
- Adjournment

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

MEETING ACCOMMODATION NOTICE

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Disability Commission Advisory Board

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KRISTEN MCCOSH
Commissioner

Boston Disability Commission Advisory Board Meeting

Minutes for Thursday, March 26, 2015
9th Floor, Room 900, Boston City Hall, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Commission Members

Heather Watkins
Chairperson

Allegra Stout
Vice Chairperson

John Wnske
Secretary

Zary Amirhosseini

Marc (Moses) Mallard

Carl Richardson

Kyle Robidoux

Ruben Roux

Present:	Staff Present:
(AS) Allegra Stout (BR) Ben Roux (HW) Heather Watkins (KR) Kyle Robidoux (ZA) Zary Amirhosseini (MM) Marc (Moses) Mallard Not Present: (CR) Carl Richardson (JW) John Winkse	(KMC) Kristen McCosh, Commissioner (JH) Jesse Holm (JD) Jessica Doonan (CM) Chris Morawski
Presenters: Lieutenant Lema, BPD Hackney Carriage Unit Francis Murphy, The Boston Home Marva Serotkin, The Boston Home Philippe Saad, The Boston Home Dimella Shaffer, The Boston Home	

January Meeting Minutes: Motion to approve January minutes made by Kyle Robidoux (KR). Minutes approved by board.

AD HOC Parking Committee Minutes: tabled vote till April meeting so all Board members can review minutes.

Allegra Stout (AS) called the meeting to order and proceeded with roll call.

Commissioner's Report: Kristen McCosh

Commissioner Kristen McCosh (KMC) welcomed the newest Board member Marc (Moses) Mallard (MM) and mentioned that there are about half a dozen applicants for the last available Board seat which will hopefully be filled by the April meeting. KMC then gave a recap of the Parking Subcommittee call. The subcommittee felt strongly that if time limits were imposed that the time limit should be no less than four hours and that no changes should be made in regards to paying the meters due to the inaccessibility of meters. The Subcommittee was also in favor of imposing residency requirements for residential accessible spaces located in "resident only" areas in order to cut down on visitors parking in these spaces. KMC will be sending out additional info to the Board regarding any accessible parking enforcement done by Boston Transportation Department and Boston Police Department.

KMC then asked Jessica Doonan (JD) to update the Board regarding the Earned Income Tax Credit Program. JD stated that a Deaf Tax Day was being held March 28th from 9-1 at Dorchester House in Dorchester and American Sign Language interpreters would be provided.

KMC then spoke about a Housing Task Force that has been created in partnership with the Department of Neighborhood Development with the goal of making non-elderly disabled residential recommendations to Mayor Martin Walsh regarding the City of Boston's 2030 Housing Plan. KMC and AS serve on this Task Force.

The Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAV) Program with Hackney is continuing to be reviewed with ten new WAVs being added to the fleet. KMC will be making flyers to advertise this improvement to the WAV fleet. Lieutenant Lima will be speaking to the Board in more detail regarding the WAVs.

KMC then reviewed the dates for a few events that are occurring in the City of Boston. Tentatively the Annual Community Forum is scheduled for May 13th but more concrete information will be given to the Board in April. Another event is the 25th anniversary Americans with Disabilities Act celebration on July 22nd which will be held on the Boston Common from noon to three. Internally there will be a presentation regarding mental health done by the Boston chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness for staff within the Health and Human Services cabinet.

Architecture Report: Jesse Holm

Jesse Holm (JH) gave the architecture report on behalf of Kathryn Quigley. The Sidewalk Café Design Guidelines Policy was approved by the Public Improvement Commission in December of 2014, to be effective for the 2015 April-October Sidewalk Café Season. As the season opens, any complaints should be e-mailed to disability@boston.gov so that those issues can be sent to with Code Enforcement. The Boston Redevelopment Article (BRA) 80 Project Review Requirements Accessibility Checklist Amendment was approved by the BRA Board in June of 2014. Since June, all proposed project teams must complete the Accessibility Checklist to be submitted to the Commission for Persons with Disabilities for review and comment. JH encouraged Board members to go online and look for the checklist in the appendix of each project notification form on the bostonredevelopmentauthority.org website.

Jesse then gave updates on a few presentations. The Fair and Accessible Housing Training Presentation took place in late January to promote and review access requirements with Inspectional Services Department plan, building and housing inspectors. In February an hour long Architectural Access Specialist Presentation was given to 300 online attendees at the Boston Society of Civil Engineers, to discuss how the Commission for Persons with Disabilities goes about Making Boston Accessible, ideal dimensions and clear path of travel. Inspectional Services Department (ISD) has agreed to cohost a Universal Access User Experience Workshop with the Disability Commission. This will be a workshop dedicated to the effort of elevating access for able bodied individuals by showing the power of first-hand experience to influence social understanding and potential for changes in design and policy. The initial workshop will be dedicated to wheelchair use, but provide the format to go further into exploring other disability opportunities.

There are many projects currently that are happening to work on improving public paths of travel. The Sidewalk Accessibility Partnership Program has gained momentum with the Public Works Department and an area has been identified as the Pilot Area in the Leather District. The Disability Commission will work to organize the community, neighbors, and areaway owners to participate in an areaway structural and waterproofing assessment to allow for discontinuance of the areaways, followed by sidewalk reconstruction in coordination with Public Works. This will bring areas of sidewalk that are currently unusable into compliance.

Guest Speaker: Lieutenant Tom Lema, Hackney Carriage Division

Lieutenant Tom Lema (TL) introduced himself to the Board and explained that as of April of last year he is the Inspector of the WAV vehicles for Hackney. While there are WAVs available, he is working to make sure overall service improves. Commissioner McCosh recently tested two new vans to see about allowing the factory modified Chrysler vehicles to be part of the updated fleet. This is great progress towards compliance as it opens up the market for competitive pricing for the taxi owners and drivers. One of the pushbacks from cab owners tend to be that WAVs are more expensive than regular cabs and hopefully the new vehicle option will lessen that pushback. All WAVs have letter grades on the back of each vehicle which states how compliant the vehicles are. At the next inspection in April KMC will be given a new count of how many WAVs are accessible and compliant. KMC explained with the new vehicles it is much easier to get a person in and out of the WAV which is an incentive for drivers to purchase the new vehicles. The parts on the new vehicles are

replaceable and relatively inexpensive which will cut down on repair costs. The drivers also purchased their medallions at a lower cost which is an incentive in itself to have a WAV instead of a regular cab. KMC also noted that TL also sits on the taxi commission.

Guest Speaker: The Boston Home

Marva Serotkin (MS) introduced herself as the Director of The Boston Home and explained a bit about what The Boston Home is. The Boston Home is a skilled nursing home that provides services for adults with progressive neurological diseases such as multiple sclerosis. It also includes a wheelchair enhancement clinic and support services related to exercise and wellness. Currently their facility has 96 residents and also provides day services to individuals living in the community. The Boston Home then presented a housing project they intend to build on the six acres they own near the Ashmont train station. There would be 39 units, 33 of which will be affordable. Seventy five percent of the building will house those with neurological diseases while twenty five percent will be for anyone. MS noted that the residents in the current building enjoy being integrated in the urban environment and many are involved in the leadership of the organization through a residential council. As for a time frame on this development, The Boston Home is applying for funding and approval now and hopes to have a more concrete timeline by the end of the summer. Once started, construction is expected to take roughly fourteen months.

Chair's Report: Heather Watkins

Heather Watkins (HW) checked in with the Board regarding the accessibility of the City during the winter months. KMC recognized that the winter was exceptionally bad in terms of the amount of snow the City received but she felt that the City did a good job with the resources at hand. The City of Boston will debrief internally regarding the winter and KMC will report back to the Board. BR asked about the number of complaints received which KMC explained that while there were a large number of complaints in the beginning, they lessened after the first few storms which she believes is due to people understanding the City was doing the best it could but that the clean-up would take some time. Zary Amirhousseini asked about shoveling resources and KMC explained that there are small pilots happening through Suffolk County Corrections but for the most part homeowners had to budget for snow removal as part of homeowner expenses. MM notes that while the sidewalks got shoveled to some extent after most storms the corners at intersections became increasingly treacherous with each storm. He also noted there are some mental health issues that need to be considered during such long periods of isolation that occur during such an extensive series of storms. HW ended her report reminding members that in the next few months Board elections will be held and asked the Board to think about whether or not anyone would like to run for an officer position on this Board.

Old Business

No updates

Old Action Items-Letters

Three letters have been drafted, including one letter that was spoken about in November regarding the Long Island Bridge. The Long Island Bridge letter was never officially voted on to send but KMC still believes it is relevant and important to send since the bridge was just demolished earlier in the week and housing for those homeless that were displaced is still an issue. The other two letters are a welcome letter to Governor Baker and a letter thanking Mayor Walsh for providing American Sign Language Interpreters for all of the emergency snow press conferences. There is one letter still being worked on that is related to the Olympics. AS made a motion to approve the letters and send them to Mayor Walsh and Governor Baker which was seconded by MM and approved by all present.

New Business

No updates.

New Action Items

No Updates

Public Input

Olivia Richard voiced a few concerns regarding snow removal and the dumping of snow on pedestrian ramps and curb cuts. She suggested that additional fines be added on for snow removal when it is not removed from an accessible

feature such as a parking space or ramp. KMC noted that she will make note of it. She also thanked the City for the installation of audible pedestrian signals near her building in Brighton. HW asked about the volume of the audible pedestrian signals and JD talked about what kind of complaints our office has received regarding volume of these signals. KMC noted that she will be meeting with BTM soon to discuss these signals overall. Olivia also noted that some of the complaints she placed through Citizens Connect had been closed without the work being done. KMC asked her to notify her if that happens to let her know so that she can investigate it. She also asked about parking protection for those who assist individuals with disabilities and mentioned that she is struggling with the parking situation for the PCAs/Doctors/Nurses and Boston Housing Authority. KMC said she will discuss the issues directly offline with Olivia and see if the Commission can assist.

Final Thoughts

KMC noted that Chris Morawski (CM) e-mails out a weekly newsletter if the Board is interested in signing up for it and also encouraged individuals to follow the Commission on social media. KMC also reminded the Board that Chris needs each Board members biography for the City website. CM spoke briefly about his role at the Advocacy and Outreach Specialist and KMC noted that he will begin planning education for the community as well as City of Boston staff. MM offered for CM to come with him on his outreach trips that he does through National Alliance on Mental Illness.

HW asked about internships for the summer and JH explained how the process works currently. Typically the Commission takes a youth intern from Boston Center for Independent Living and a few other individuals as well as partnering with Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission to place ten adults throughout City Departments. Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission also holds a one day Mentoring Day with ten adult and ten youths within City departments. MM asked if the City directly works with at risk youth and KMC noted that the City as a whole does a lot of work with at risk youth.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:13 p.m.