

DISABILITY COMMISSION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Boston City Hall, Piemonte Room, 5th Floor

May 8, 2013
5:30-7:30 p.m.

AGENDA-REVISED

- Call to Order
- Introductions
- Approval of April Minutes
- Commissioner's Report – *Kristen McCosh*
- Chair's Report – *Ben Roux*
- Architectural Access Update – *Kathryn Aldrich*
- Community Forum
- Public Health Issue with the MBTA – *Raine Newman*
- Standing Committees – Information Access, Community Access
- Old Business
- New Business
- Public Input
- Adjournment

Boston Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Minutes for Wednesday, May 8, 2013

5th Floor Piemonte Room Boston City Hall 5:30-7:30PM

Present:	Staff Present:
(AS) Allegra Stout (BR) Ben Roux (CR) Carl Richardson (HW) Heather Watkins (JW) John Winske (PH) Paulette Houston (RN) Raine Newman (TTH) Tee Thach-Hasan Not Present: (SL) Suzanne Leveille	(KMC) Kristen McCosh, Commissioner (KA) Kathryn Aldrich (JH) Jesse Holm
Guest: No Guest	

April Meeting Minutes: Minutes approved by board.

Corrected: "Dugan" corrected to "Dougan." Page numbers added to the top of minutes.

Commissioner's Report: Kristen McCosh

KMC discussed a number of relevant dates with Commission.

Community forum date is finalized; May 21st from 1-4pm. Commission members will sit at the front of the room with the Commissioner and answer questions from the community. KMC said there will be snacks and refreshments, a social component to the event, and then a discussion.

Friday, June 7th the Disability Law Center (DLC), Disability Policy Consortium (DPC) and the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) will hold a meeting for Massachusetts Commissions for persons with disabilities in Marlboro, MA from 9:30-4:00 p.m. All commission members throughout Massachusetts are welcome to attend, but should RSVP and also contact MOD if you need accommodations. KMC will forward information about this event to commission members soon. KMC stated that if you would like to coordinate transportation to the meeting, Commission members should coordinate offline.

KMC stated that there is a date for the next film in the 'Disability Reframed' Series; Saturday, June 8th. The film that will be shown is *What's Eating Gilbert Grape* – the venue is to be determined.

AS said that same day (June 8th) there is the Pride parade in downtown Boston and BCIL will be marching – the parade should start around 12 p.m. AS will send out further information about this event.

KMC stated the MRC Annual Consumer Conference is June 20th and 21st. Registration has closed, but you may still be able to register online. KMC will send out information about this conference to commission members soon.

KMC talked about ADA Day, stating that it is Thursday, July 25th this year. The celebration takes place on the City hall Plaza and there will be free food and t-shirts. KMC stated that there will be an advocacy and education component to the event this year. KMC said that in the brainstorming session, it was decided that the advocacy piece would be in the morning as an "early registration" before the day begins; the advocacy component may mean constituents meet their City Councilors, or they learn about how city government works...that has not been finalized yet.

KMC mentioned that the film to be shown in Cambridge on July 27th as part of the 'Disability Reframed' film series is "The Music Within," a feature film about the history of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

KMC discussed Abilities Expo, happening September 20-22nd; the Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CPWD) will have a table set up both days of the event and the CPWD might look into having a film shown during the event as part of the 'Disability Reframed' series. KMC said she hopes to also get parking passes to give out to attendees.

KMC discussed the Main Streets meeting that she and Kathryn Aldrich (KA) attended in late April. KMC and KA spoke with Directors of the Main Streets Initiative and discussed their interest in working with neighborhood businesses on ways to improve access so that businesses are readily achievable. KMC stated that the meeting was very positive, and that there seems to be a great interest in working together to improve access. KMC and KA mentioned they may work on a checklist for businesses that detail simple, easy ways to review and improve access.

Lastly, KMC stated that interviews for the CPWD Deputy Commissioner position are finishing up this week in mid-May. KMC is hoping to have a final decision soon.

Chair's Report: Ben Roux

BR discussed a project regarding healthcare record keeping and disability that he would like the support of the Commission on. BR explained some of the details of the proposed study, and distributed a supplemental handout for Commission members to review on their own. BR discussed the purpose of the proposed study as identifying best practices in healthcare

organizations and to collect and share patient disability information to support patient-centered care and assist in compliance with ADA access requirements.

BR asked for support from Commission members in this; CR suggested BR write a letter of support and the Commission will review, make suggestions, and sign the letter in support of this project.

Architectural Access Update: Kathryn Aldrich

KA stated that she attended a walkthrough of the city streets around Boston Medical Center (BMC) with the Public Works Department (PWD), Boston Center for Independent Living (BCIL) and Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS) to review street access. PWD is working on upgrades to City of Boston (COB) owned streets around BMC.

KA attended the “Fit City Boston” Summit, which discussed how the built environment impacts health. KA stated that Valerie Fletcher from the Institute of Human Centered Design (IHCD) spoke about accessibility.

KA discussed Fresh Trucks, which could act as a model for accessibility. KA explained Fresh Trucks as a mobile grocery store; KMC and KA are working with Josh Trautwein (JT) on access to the inside and outside of the truck for people with disabilities. JT also spoke to the Architectural Access Board (AAB) regarding access regulations. JT is working to implement a wide aisle inside the truck, have food drawers and tables that are low to the ground.

KA mentioned she is working with Faulkner Hospital on improving their parking and site access.

KA stated she will send out a few variances for the Commission members to review as soon as possible.

Public Health Issue with the MBTA: Raine Newman

RN discussed unsanitary health conditions in the MBTA elevators, stating that there is always urine in spaces that people with disabilities need to access to utilize public transportation.

JW suggested for these types of issues it is very helpful to call 222-3200 and notify station personnel, in addition to telling the Access Advisory Committee at the MBTA. JW also stated that an individual can use twitter and take a picture of an issue as it is seen and tweet @MBTA.

CR suggested that RN write a letter detailing these health concerns for the Commission to review next month.

Standing Committees – Information Access, Community Access

KMC mentioned that the company Everbridge, which is contracted with the COB to send emergency information out to COB residents, is working with a CPWD staff member who is visually impaired to improve access to their software for people with visual disabilities.

Old Business/New Business

KMC stated she will work on setting up Commission members to be re-sworn in to the board. KMC stated she is also working on editing and added short biographies of each Commission member to the CPWD webpage.

CR asked for an update on online distance education. CR briefly updated new Commission members on this issue; he stated that the program name is "EZX" and it is not accessible for people with disabilities. CR stated that the COB should not use this program unless it is fully accessible and that the COB should ask Harvard and MIT (where the software is currently being used) to make it accessible to all.

CR requested that on the June agenda, the Commission discuss what the positions of the Mayoral Candidates are regarding issues/concerns of the disability community. CR proposed a survey for candidates; CR wanted other Commission member's thoughts on this.

JW suggested that the Commission work with the Multi-Cultural Independent Living Center of Boston (MICLB), Boston Center for Independent Living (BCIL), and the Disability Policy Consortium (DPC) on developing a survey for mayoral candidates. JW stressed that it is important to conduct a survey with mayoral candidates on disability issues, as they will be held accountable for the statements and promises they make once they are elected.

HW asked for an update on the victims of the Boston Marathon bombing.

KMC stated that she put together resources for the victims; information about driving and car modifications, medical equipment, etc. KMC reminded the Commission that Marathon victims might not identify themselves with people with disabilities, or simply may not want to be involved in the community. KMC stated that the CPWD is doing what we can to help but is taking a back seat right now.

JW offered to bring together some advocates to meet with victims if they have any questions. JW stated that individuals may not want to or may not feel ready to talk but it is still important to offer help.

RN asked about two issues with City Hall. RN stated that often The Ride is made to wait on the street outside of City Hall; RN stated that City Hall Security will not let the vehicle pull into the parking garage to pick him up. RN also mentioned that there is not easy access to the second door on the first floor entrance to City Hall. KMC stated that she will look into these issues.

Public Input

Kevin Heaton (KH) wanted to bring to issues to the Commission's attention. The first is the lack of announcing stops clearly on the MBTA and the second is the issue of people with disabilities who use guide dogs being refused pickup by taxi cab drivers.

KMC thanked KH for attending the meeting and sharing his concerns. KMC stated that the

CPWD is working with cab companies and the Boston Transportation Department (BTD) and KMC will be attending a driver training for Wheelchair Accessible Van (WAV) cabs. KMC mentioned that she knows that one point that is stressed during WAV training is that, as a driver, you must pick up individuals with guide dogs. However, KMC noted that she is aware that this disability training is only for WAV drivers, not other cab drivers. KMC and KA will also be inspecting WAV vehicles in June for accessibility.

Adjourned at 7:24 P.M.