



## Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Martin J. Walsh, Mayor

### **DISABILITY COMMISSION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

Boston City Hall, Piemonte Room, 5th Floor

**Wednesday November 12, 2014  
5:30-7:30 p.m.**

#### **AGENDA- REVISED**

- Call to Order
- Introductions
- Approval of July, September, and October Minutes
- Commissioner's Report – *Kristen McCosh*
- Chair's Report – *Heather Watkins*
- Architectural Access Update- *Kathryn Quigley*
- Standing Committees – Architectural Access, Information Access, Community Access, Legislative Advocacy & Education Committee, Executive Committee
- Old Business
- New Business
- Action Items
- Public Input
- Adjournment

Next meeting: December 10<sup>th</sup>, 5:30-7:30

## 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](mailto:kristen.mccosh@cityofboston.gov) or 617-635-3682 (voice) or 617-635-2541 (TTY).

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# Boston Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Minutes for Wednesday, November 12, 2014  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor Piemonte Room, Boston City Hall, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Present:	Staff Present:
(AS) Allegra Stout (BR) Ben Roux (CR) Carl Richardson (HW) Heather Watkins (JW) John Winkse (KR) Kyle Robidoux (ZA) Zary Amirhousseini	(KMC) Kristen McCosh, Commissioner (JH) Jesse Holm (JD) Jessica Doonan (KQ) Kathryn Quigley
<b>Not Present:</b> (TTH) Tee Thach-Hasan	

**July Meeting Minutes:** Motion to approve July minutes made by Carl Richardson (CR) and seconded by Kyle Robidoux (KR). Minutes approved by board.

**September Meeting Minutes:** Motion to approve September minutes made by Allegra Stout (AS) and seconded by Zary Amirhousseini (ZA). Minutes approved by board.

**October Meeting Minutes:** Motion to approve September minutes made by Ben Roux (BR) and seconded by Zary Amirhousseini (ZA). Minutes approved by board.

## Architecture Report: Kathryn Quigley

Kathryn Quigley (KQ) gave an update on MeWe and the Main Streets initiative. There was a meeting recently with Heather Watkins, the Chair of the Advisory Board and Roslindale Resident, Manik Suri (MS) from MeWe, Director of Roslindale Village Main Streets Christina DeLisio, Program Director of Boston Main Streets Stephen Gilman, and the Deputy Director of Department of Neighborhood Development Rafael Carbonell to discuss piloting the Access Main Streets program with active Roslindale Main Streets businesses. Next steps are being determined at this time, but Commissioner Kristen McCosh (KMC) emphasized to the Board that this program is simply encourage accessibility and small improvements to make more places accessible.

KQ also provided an update of the sidewalk café draft policy, a standardized plan for sidewalk cafes so that an accessible pedestrian route will be maintained in public rights of way. It will also help to streamline the approval process for restaurants seeking permits for outdoor seating. The policy is in draft form and will be reviewed at the next Public Improvement Commission (PIC) meeting. If they are approved at PIC, the policy will be presented at a public hearing. If there is no opposition the guidelines will be approved for the 2015 season. The policy, if adopted, will only apply to new sidewalk cafes or when a change in ownership occurs.

The planning has begun for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this July. KQ and Jesse Holm (JH) are on the logistics subcommittee, Commissioner Kristen McCosh (KMC) and Allegra Stout (AS) are on the Formal Content Subcommittee, and KMC and JH are on the Transportation Subcommittee. The Formal Content subcommittee is looking for suggestions for keynote speakers; some initial suggestions were Robert Cohen and Ari Ne'eman. Russell Pierce was suggested by Moses Mallard and Heather Watkins emphasized the need for diversity among the speakers for the event.

KQ also discussed the Sidewalk Accessibility Partnership Program, which is a pilot program with a number of representatives from City Departments that is focused on improving access throughout the Leather District. This pilot program aims to work with business owners block by block to determine sidewalk ownership and works towards repairing sidewalk conditions. With sidewalk ownership determined, this pilot program may facilitate sidewalk ownership to be transitioned to the City of Boston, so that future maintenance can be addressed by the Public Works Department (PWD). Additionally, KQ and KMC will be conducting an Accessibility Training for the PWD to explain specific details about access needs on public rights of way and why decisions such as the color of tactile warning strips are important to people with disabilities.

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

Commissioner Kristen McCosh (KMC) asked her staff to update the Board on the projects they have been involved with in the past month. Jessica Doonan (JD) spoke briefly about her involvement in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Tax Taskforce and the meeting that was held last week to try and pinpoint barriers to free tax preparation for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing community and action steps to try and break down those barriers. JD also mentioned she has attended a number of City Council Hearings regarding the closure of Radius Hospital in Roxbury. JD mentioned that there are a number of upcoming City Council Hearings that are of importance to the disability community, one regarding the Long Island Shelter bridge closure and another regarding language access for City services. The Advisory Board voted to draft a letter to the Mayor Walsh and his administration vocalizing their concerns for the individuals displaced by the bridge closure and their support for the Mayor as he and his team continues to work towards finding stability for the guests of the shelter.

Jesse Holm (JH) spoke about Disability Mentoring Day (DMD Day), held on October 30<sup>th</sup>, and its successes. JH Discussed some highlights of the day with the Board, stating that two summer interns came to speak to DMD Day Participants about finding employment in the City of Boston; these two interns successfully transitioned their volunteer work to full-time gainful employment. In addition to hosting twelve Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) participants, this year DMD Day was expanded to include three youth with disabilities from Boston Public Schools. Feedback from department mentors was largely positive. KMC noted that she is working with MRC to plan a hiring event in the spring that mirrors the disability hiring event hosted by Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs and MRC. JH also spoke about all of the hard work Chris Morawski (CM) has been doing with Facebook, Twitter, and noted that CM has started sending out a weekly newsletter to those that opt in to receive updates. CM will be in touch with the Board to see if they are interested in joining the weekly newsletter. Kyle Robidoux (KR) suggested that Mayor Martin J. Walsh could do a session on Twitter with a disability theme. AS volunteered to send JH materials that she received at a workshop in regards to social media.

KMC noted that she was at the funeral of former Mayor Thomas M. Menino (TMM) and that it was a very moving ceremony. She also pointed out that there was also a heartfelt reflection of TMM's relationship with the disability community in the Disability Policy Consortium newsletter this past week, written by Advisory Board member John Winske.

KMC stated that Beacon Hill ramp construction continues. KMC also updated the Board on a meeting she had with UBER representatives and Councilor Wu, noting that UBER seems receptive to adding accessibility features into their program; a follow up meeting will be scheduled for December. Carl Richardson pointed out that the National Federation of the Blind is suing UBER for a lack of access in

southern California. KMC also stated that the Access Advisory Committee (AACT) to the MBTA will be hosting their annual Summit on Transit Accessibility with a theme of “The Power of Advocacy” for the week of November 17<sup>th</sup>. KMC also stated that the office is looking into changing the language on Accessible Parking signs from “Handicap Parking” to “Accessible Parking”. KMC also noted that the City is hiring a consultant to map out all parking signs in Boston. This work may result in Accessible parking spaces being published so KMC is looking into possibly adding a residential requirement to the spaces; no changes have been made on this yet, though.

KMC touched upon a few different draft policies that have an impact on the community and are currently open for public comment. JD will send out the Boston Housing Authority Housing Proposal, the Mayor’s Thirty Year Housing Plan, as well as the Proposed Open Space Policy for 2015-2021. JD will also note the comment period for each proposed plan. AS noted that Boston Center for Independent Living (BCIL) has been working on increasing the Alternative Voucher Housing Program and has also discussed the BHA Proposed plan; AS and will let KMC know if BCIL plans to or does comment on the proposal.

Lastly, KMC explained that there will be a strategic planning meeting for the Board in either December or January to help the Advisory Board set their priorities for 2015. There are a few vacancies on the Advisory Board, as we have had some volunteers step down recently, so Commission staff will begin recruiting for these positions soon.

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

Heather Watkins asked for a moment of silence for former Mayor Thomas M. Menino.

#### **Standing Subcommittee: Architecture Access**

KQ has compiled priorities from Subcommittee members and will prepare them for discussion during the strategic planning meeting.

#### **Standing Subcommittee: Community Access**

HW reiterated that the meeting regarding Main Streets was a success.

#### **Standing Subcommittee: Information Access**

JD has compiled priorities from Subcommittee members and will prepare them for discussion during the strategic planning meeting.

#### **Standing Subcommittee: Legislative Advocacy & Education**

JH has compiled priorities from Subcommittee members and will prepare them for discussion during the strategic planning meeting.

#### **Standing Subcommittee: Executive**

KMC noted there will be a phone meeting prior to the strategic planning meeting to prepare the subcommittee.

#### **Old Business**

No updates.

#### **New Business**

AS noted that BCIL is holding their annual meeting Wednesday the 19<sup>th</sup> at the Boston Transportation Building from 6-8pm. Carl Richardson noted that there will be an announcement soon by Comcast regarding a technology that will allow the TV guide to have voice over.

**Action Items**

A request was made for a letter of support to be written and sent to the Mayor Walsh in regards to his work to support those displaced by the Long Island Shelter Bridge closure. An e-mail will also be sent out by KMC to the Advisory Board to set up a date for the strategic planning meeting.

**Public Input**

Marc (Moses) Mallard introduced himself and commended the Advisory Board on the progress that has been made to include mental health concerns in their work. He noted that he has many ideas that we would like to discuss with KMC and the Board around Advisory Board Priorities. KMC agreed to contact him after the meeting to discuss ways to work together.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.