

DISABILITY COMMISSION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Boston City Hall, Piemonte Room, 5th Floor

November 13, 2013

5:30-7:30 p.m.

AGENDA- REVISED

- Call to Order
- Introductions
- Approval of September & October Minutes
- Commissioner's Report – *Kristen McCosh*
- Chair's Report – *Ben Roux*
- Architectural Access Updates – *Kathryn Aldrich*
- Boston EITC Coalition – *Mimi Turchinetz*
- 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, November 13, 2013

5th 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 (RN) Raine Newman	(KMC) Kristen McCosh, Commissioner (KA) Kathryn Aldrich (JH) Jesse Holm
Not Present: (JW) John Winske (PH) Paulette Houston (TTH) Tee Thach-Hasan	
Guest: Mimi Turchinetz	

September Meeting Minutes: Minutes approved by board.

October meeting Minutes: Minutes approved by board.

Commissioner's Report: Kristen McCosh

KMC discussed Disability Mentoring Day (DMD), which was held in Boston City Hall on October 22nd, 2013. KMC discussed the general schedule for the day's mentees; they participated in job shadowing, interview preparation, and heard from City of Boston staff about the hiring process. The City of Boston departments that participated in this event were the Office of Civil Rights, Boston Transportation Department, Environment, the Department of Neighborhood Development, the Elderly Commission, Property Management, the Office of Neighborhood Services, and the Disability Commission. Past summer interns and mentees came and spoke at the event about their success, and certificates were handed out to 2013 summer interns and DMD mentees.

KMC discussed the Hackney division and Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs) with the Advisory Board. KMC mentioned the consultant report that was commissioned by Mayor Thomas M. Menino (TMM) last year that was recently released has elicited some immediate changes to WAV taxis. KMC reminded the Advisory Board that this summer (2013) KMC and KA inspected all the WAV taxi vehicles and found that there were many that were unusable to wheelchair users. Some changes that have generated from the WAV taxi vehicle assessments and the consultant's taxi report are that every new WAV taxi must be purchased with modifications up to federal specifications. Additionally, KA and KMC have written a WAV Assessment of Usability guide to assist wheelchair users in understanding the level of usability

for each WAV taxi vehicle. When this guide is completed, it will be posted online and distributed widely.

KMC updated the Commission on some changes coming soon with disabled parking. First, KMC stated that she has decided to change the name of the parking program from "Disabled Parking" to "Accessible Parking." KMC and JH are also working on a pilot program for PCA Consumers that will issue a temporary (6 months-1 year) permit to PCA Consumers to give out (during working hours only) to their PCAs so they are able to park in Residential Permit Parking only locations. The idea behind this pilot program is that if the travel and parking experience for a PCA is eased, the PCA Consumer will be better served and will have greater access to independent living.

Another pilot program that KMC and JH are working on is Van-Only Accessible Parking signs in residential neighborhoods for individuals who use modified vehicles. Five to ten individuals who currently have accessible parking signs in front of their home will be contacted to see if they would like to participate in this pilot program. The rationale for this program is that a designated sign in front of an individual's home that has a modified van can be vital to independent living, as oftentimes inclement weather and sidewalk/curbside barriers make travel for wheelchair users difficult.

KMC reminded the group that the Program and Policy Specialist position has now been posted to the City of Boston Career Center website. KMC asked to have the Commission spread the word and to encourage people with disabilities to apply. KMC also noted that there is a volunteer position open on the Advisory Board, and to spread the word about this position to the disability community as well. KMC will be interviewing for both positions as soon as possible.

Lastly, KMC noted that she has been working on a Transition report to submit to Mayor-Elect Marty Walsh. In this report, she is going to focus on ongoing projects that staff is working on, as well as accomplishments of the last few years. One accomplishment KMC will note is the reinstatement of the Disability Commission Advisory Board. KMC stressed that the Board is vital and provides great input and feedback to the work that Disability Commission staff do.

Chair's Report: Ben Roux

BR stated that he has noticed that there has been an issue with attendance at the Advisory Board meetings. BR noted that he believed Board members could only miss two or three meetings before being dismissed from the board. KMC stated that she believes the bylaws might say three meetings may be missed in one year, but she will have to check. KMC mentioned that she'd like to talk to BR about this issue over e-mail.

Architectural Access Update: Kathryn Aldrich

KA gave an update on the Beacon Hill Architectural Commission (BHAC), stating that there was not a Quorum for the October meeting, so the presentation by Public Works Department would be postponed. The next BHAC meeting will be November 21st, 2013 at 4:00 p.m. in Room 801

of City Hall. KA stated that she will let the Advisory Board know when the presentation is rescheduled for.

KA talked about the WAV recommendations she has been working on with KMC. KA stated that it's important to note that these recommendations are regarding usability, not compliance. The WAV taxis will be graded (A, B, C, D, F) and the hope is that there will be a sticker with the usability grade added to the medallion number of every WAV taxi that is currently on the road.

KMC stated that she is researching what wheelchair accessible vehicles should be approved for purchase as well as what factory modifications should be recommended as the standard. KMC also noted that she met with a representative from the taxi driver union, as well as Allegra Stout (AS) and KA regarding this issue and they said that they are supportive of factory modified vehicles, stating that it will be a lot easier for drivers to use and operate.

KMC noted that the ArchitectureBoston Expo (ABX) will be held November 19th through the 21st at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center. The expo itself is free, but if you wanted to attend any classes, you would have to pay for them. There are a number of classes that discuss disability and design.

Boston Earned Income Tax Credit Campaign: Mimi Turchinetz

MT presented on the Boston Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), stating that the Coalition provides free financial services to taxpayers throughout Boston as an anti-poverty strategy. MT stated that this strategy is extremely effective at bringing individuals out of poverty, and can bring an individual upwards of \$6,000. EITC offers credit advising and tax sites are fully accessible, with services available in eight languages.

MT discussed the three year grant that was issued to EITC by The Boston Foundation, stating that the grant is up in January. This grant allowed EITC to expand services for the disability community. A disability working group was established to try to assist in the expansion of services to the community, and as a result all tax sites but one location are accessible, volunteer tax preparers are trained in disability etiquette, etc. MT states that she is trying to reengage the disability working group at this time, and she is hoping to have a Town Meeting by the end of January as a wrap-up to the Boston Foundation Grant.

Standing Committees: Information Access

KMC let the Advisory Board know that she will be discussing a possible web audit with the Budget Analyst in January 2014.

KMC stated that she wants to work on video logs for the cityofboston.gov website so individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing can have access to important emergency preparedness information.

Standing Committees: Community Access

KA and KMC met last spring (2013) with Boston Main Streets Director and gave them information on readily achievable changes to make businesses more accessible for all patrons.

HW stated that it would be a good idea to get involved with Main Streets Coordinators. HW stated that Small Business Saturday is coming up and if there really is this push to buy local, you need to make storefronts accessible for all.

Old Business

No Updates.

New Business

CR mentioned that he met an architect in London that is working extensively on Universal Access – he will be coming to speak at the Statehouse on Tuesday November 19th. CR stated he will send out a flyer with information about this event.

CR requested that a MBTA representative who works on access come to a Commission meeting soon. KMC will send an e-mail to Laura Brelsford, the System-Wide Accessibility Coordinator, to see if she is available.

Public Input

Colin Killick (CK), Chair of the City of Somerville Commission for Persons with Disabilities, introduced himself to the Advisory Board. Colin stated that Betsy Allan is the ADA Coordinator for the City of Somerville, and if anyone from the Boston Advisory Board is interested in attending a Somerville Commission meeting, they meet the second Tuesday of each month at 167 Holland Street in Somerville, MA.

AS stated that she will send the date and time of the next Somerville meeting out to the board. AS stated that she plans to attend, and asked if anyone in the group would like to attend one of the meetings with her.

AS stated that Boston Center for Independent Living (BCIL) has their Annual meeting Tuesday, November 19th and that all are welcome to attend.

KMC reminded the Advisory Board that if they have updates about any piece of legislation that relates to the disability community, she'd like to request you reach out to staff. KMC noted that JH will be working on this as part of her role as Deputy Commissioner.

Adjourned at 7:28 p.m.