



Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Martin J. Walsh, Mayor

DISABILITY COMMISSION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Boston City Hall, Piemonte Room, 5th Floor

Wednesday September 10, 2014

5:30-7:30 p.m.

AGENDA- REVISED

- Call to Order
- Introductions
- Approval of July Minutes
- Commissioner's Report – *Kristen McCosh*
- Chair's Report – *Heather Watkins*
- Architecture Access Update- *Kristen McCosh*
- Access Main Streets Presentation – *Manik Suri*
- Standing Committees – Architectural Access, Information Access, Community Access, Legislative Advocacy & Education Committee, Executive Committee
- Old Business
- New Business
- Public Input
- Adjournment

Next meeting: October 8th, 5:30-7:30

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MEETING ACCOMMODATION NOTICE

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Boston Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Minutes for Wednesday, September 10, 2014
5th Floor Piemonte Room, Boston City Hall, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

<p>Present:</p> <p>(AS) Allegra Stout (HW) Heather Watkins (TTH) Tee Thach-Hasan (KR) Kyle Robidoux</p> <p>Not Present:</p> <p>(CR) Carl Richardson (ZA) Zary Amirhousseini (JW) John Winkse (BR) Ben Roux (DW) D'amore West</p>	<p>Staff Present:</p> <p>(KMC) Kristen McCosh, Commissioner (JH) Jesse Holm (JD) Jessica Doonan</p>
<p>Guest: Manik Suri, Co-Founder MeWe</p>	

July Meeting Minutes: The July meeting minutes were tabled due to no quorum.

Main Streets Presentation: Manik Suri

Manik Suri (MS) spoke briefly about the company MeWe and the pilot program he and his team are developing to determine small improvements local businesses can make to increase accessibility for persons with disabilities. The questionnaire is simplified for users who may not be familiar with the technical ADA Guidelines. The questionnaire is predicted to take about 25 minutes. Carl Richardson asked if the app was compatible with screen reader software and offered to work with MS ensure web accessibility.

The pilot program would consist be a few users who go into the community and follow the simple questions for general accessibility of businesses; MS would like to then sit down with those users and get feedback on the usability of the application itself as well as their understanding of the accessibility questions. KMC asked the Board to review the questions and e-mail any feedback they have to her in the next few days and noted that she will be meeting with the Department of Neighborhood Development (DND) regarding this pilot program in the next week to discuss a potential collaboration with Boston Main Streets.

Commissioner's Report: Kristen McCosh

Commissioner Kristen McCosh (KMC) discussed events and updates for summer 2014. KMC noted that ADA Day had over 300 people in attendance and next year it will be even bigger sine it is the 25th anniversary. ADA Day 2015 will be held on Boston Commons in July 22nd. This past weekend (September 5th-7th) was the Abilities Expo which featured The ADA Legacy Tour Bus, which is touring the country for the year educating people about the ADA and the disability rights movement in preparation for the 25th anniversary. The Abilities Expo has been confirmed for next year in mid to late September – when specific dates have been confirmed, KMC will let the board know. KMC also thanked all board members who volunteered with the Legacy Tour – it was a big help. KMC also briefly discussed Disability Mentoring Day, which is confirmed for Thursday, October 30th in Boston City Hall.

KMC noted that Mayor Martin J. Walsh commissioned a housing report to be written by the City and KMC noted that she discussed her concerns about the lack of mention for disability-related housing concerns in the drafted report. Sheila Dillon, Director and Chief of Housing for the City of Boston, agreed and committed to incorporating disability-related housing concerns into the finalized version of the report. KMC also noted that she met with representatives from the Boston Public School Office of Special Education & Student Services to discuss transition issues for children ages 14 to 22. KMC stated that she believes this meeting is the start of a new, strong partnership between the Commission and BPS and will hopefully generate new ideas for collaboration. Tee Thach Hasan noted that making sure that making sure that parents get all the information they need for their students' transition is very important, especially for parents who do not speak English.

Chair's Report: Heather Watkins

Heather Watkins (HW) thanked everyone for coming to ADA Day and making it such a success.

Standing Subcommittees: Architecture Access, Community Access, Information Access, Legislative Advocacy & Education, Executive

KMC noted that, with such a busy summer, the Commission staff were unable to make a lot of progress on the facilitating of the subcommittees. KMC stated that this is a priority, though, and she and her staff will begin planning immediately. KMC stated she will begin by making sure each subcommittee has a leader and goals are established. An e-mail will be sent out in the next week to get the ball rolling.

Old Business

No Updates.

New Business

Allegra Stout (AS) discussed a number of pending pieces of legislation that the Disability Policy Consortium is trying to prioritize. The first bill is an Act to increase the Commonwealth's compliance with federal law meeting requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (2013-14: HB136). This requires the state to develop standards, including a commitment to hiring people with disabilities for all multi-year vendors and grantees. The second one is Protect the Fundamental Rights of People Confined in Psychiatric Facilities and Residences (2013-14:HB1806, SB911) which adds the right to Fresh Air and provision for redress if an individual's rights are violated. The third is An act relative to the Architectural Access Board (2013-14:SB1869) which would require the Architectural Access Board adopt rules and regulations designed consistent with the 2010 Americans with Disabilities Act Standards for Accessible Design.

KMC stated that the Commission received a grant from the Institute of Human Centered Design (IHCD) to conduct an Accessibility Audit of Boston City Hall on October 1st. Thirty staff members from a variety of City of Boston departments will take part in the all-day audit and training.

AS briefly spoke about the Beacon Hill curb cut celebration that occurred on September 4th. There were roughly fifty people in attendance and so far has been covered by the Metro and WBZ Channel 4.

Public Input

Joe Toledo from Deaf Inc. introduced himself and talked about his desire to create partnerships with students of varying disabilities.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.