

DISABILITY COMMISSION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Boston City Hall, Piemonte Room, 5th Floor

September 11, 2013

5:30-7:30 p.m.

AGENDA- REVISED

- Call to Order
- Introductions
- Approval of August Minutes
- Commissioner's Report – *Kristen McCosh*
- Chair's Report – *Ben Roux*
- Architectural Access Updates – *Kathryn Aldrich*
- Survey for Mayoral Candidates – *Carl Richardson & Ben Roux*
- Standing Committees – Information Access, Community Access
- Old Business
- New Business
- Public Input
- Adjournment

Boston Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Minutes for Wednesday, September 11, 2013

5th Floor Piemonte Room, Boston City Hall, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

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

August Meeting Minutes: Minutes approved by board.

Commissioner's Report: Kristen McCosh

KMC discussed the Open Meeting Law, stating that she has done research on the law and found out that people can call in to an Advisory Board meeting and participate, but they cannot count towards a physical quorum.

KMC asked if Advisory Board members thought that room 801 in City Hall or the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) Boardroom on the 9th floor might be a better location for the Advisory Board meetings. KMC asked for individuals to e-mail her to weigh in on this.

KMC mentioned that the Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities is working on setting up their own conference call line that can be utilized at each Advisory Board meeting. JH will send out details about this conference call line once they are ironed out.

KMC stated that she is finishing up her Accessible Taxi Cab recommendations. KMC said that she and Kathryn Aldrich (KA) designed a rating scale for each cab based on the accessibility checklist that was utilized for measurements of each taxi cab this summer. The tentative rating system is: "A" for usability- this rating is the best case situation. "B" represents that it is likely useable by individuals with disabilities. "C" is that the vehicle is not likely useable to individuals with disabilities. Lastly, "D" represents a "fail" or unusable to individuals with disabilities. KMC stated she will suggest for the cabs to be labeled with their accessibility rating. KMC also stated that she will suggest that there is a dedicated phone line to call a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV).

As an aside, KMC stated that the MV-1 is back in production.

JW suggested that, when rating the Taxi Cabs, that the "A" rating is left off for now, as there are no WAVs on the road currently that are fully ADA Compliant. JW suggested that the rating system start with a "B" and that "A" should not be used until there are actually vehicles that are fully accessible.

KMC also stated that she will make a recommendation that modifications only be done in auto body shops that are fully aware and able to replicate modifications that are compliant.

She will also suggest that the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) standard be ADA compliant.

KMC stated that she will also suggest that training is required for WAV operators as well as for standard taxi cab operators and that all drivers will be periodically retrained. She will send out a draft of her recommendations to the advisory board for review.

KMC mentioned that Closed Captioning will be coming soon to City Council meetings. Director Mike Lynch in the Mayor's Office of Cable Communications is hoping to implement this change very soon.

AS stated that if the Advisory Board will be providing conference call information for public meetings, will we also look into online closed captioning for individuals who are Deaf and/or hard of hearing? KMC stated that she will look into this.

KMC is working with the Elderly Commission and Boston EMS on a plan for situations where individuals with power wheelchairs become stranded because their wheelchair chair stops working. KMC mentioned that some ideas they had were possibly having a "chair car" which could transport one or two wheelchairs and hold emergency repair equipment is a potential idea.

KMC discussed the Functional Needs Registry with the Advisory Board. This registry is a volunteer sign up where the City of Boston will keep specific information about the functional needs of City of Boston residents. Some examples are if a resident needs American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate, if they use a power wheelchair, etc.

KMC talked about the transition into the next administration. An initiative that she is working on is the self-guided Disability History Walking Tour. She is hoping to hire a consultant to work on this project, and would like to work with Laurie Block from the Disability History Museum on this project.

KMC discussed the Abilities Expo, which will be coming at the end of September (20th-22nd) to Boston. At the Expo, the 'Disability Reframed' Film Series will be showing "The Sessions" for

free. More information on the film screening will be e-mailed to Advisory Board members once details are figured out.

Mayor Thomas M. Menino will be honored tomorrow night at the Disability Law Center. On October 3rd, Mayor Menino will also be honored by the Disability Policy Consortium for his continued advocacy and support for the disability community.

Chair's Report: Ben Roux

BR stated that since he was unable to be at the presentation for the Copley Place Redevelopment project, he wanted to know the reactions of the Advisory Board.

CR stated that he was present for the original presentation as well, and he believes there is a big improvement between the two plans. CR said that the current plan is not as big and grand as it was with the first plan, the path of travel does not exclude anyone, and there are more elevators than before.

KA stated that this presentation did reflect some changes that came from the comments that Advisory Board members made. KA stated that the flow of traffic is now the same for everyone.

KMC stated that she has two concerns with the proposed plan; one is the continued lack of access to Back Bay Station and there is still only one single elevator.

JW agreed, stating that elevators are heavily used and the preference would be to have two elevators.

KMC also stated that during the first presentation she had asked Simon Property Group to look into hiring a consultant and she suggested that they contact the Institute for Human Centered Design (IHCD) in Boston. KMC was disappointed to find out that they ended up hiring a consulting firm in Virginia.

Architectural Access Update: Kathryn Aldrich

KA discussed the Freedom Trail Assessment that the Public Works Department (PWD) conducting in conjunction with a consultant. KA stated that the bases of the consultation focused on cross slope. KA stated that the Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities is requested that PWD goes back and gathers information on the Freedom Trail in terms of usability.

KA discussed "Fresh Trucks." Owner Josh Trautwein is trying to reach the disability community. KA asked that you contact her with location recommendations for Fresh Trucks; Josh Trautwein really wants to make sure he reaches the disability community.

KA stated that the public meeting to discuss Beacon Hill access will be held on October 17th at 4:00 p.m. in room 801 at Boston City Hall. KA encouraged Advisory Board members to attend.

Survey of Mayoral Candidates: Carl Richardson

BR expressed that he felt badly that the deadline for the Mayoral Candidate survey made it impossible to collect all of the Mayoral responses. BR stated that he reviewed the survey and had some thoughts about the questions; BR thought perhaps the questions too in-depth. BR stated that he'd like to brainstorm a "Plan B" if all responses were not collected; can Advisory Board wait until after the primary?

KMC asked if Advisory Board members had seen candidate surveys on other topics, such as public health; KMC stated she did not think it was unfair to ask complex questions.

JW stated that the questionnaire may have been too complicated; maybe there should have been one or two questions under each category.

BR stated that he would speak with Heather about making another round of phone calls to candidates to try and collect responses. BR reminded the Advisory Board that all responses need to go to him.

Standing Committees: Information Access

KMC stated that the Department of Innovation & Technology (DoIt) is looking into a web compliance assessment for the City and more information will be available on this in the coming months.

CR requested that the Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities add a line item in the budget for a web audit next year.

Standing Committees: Community Access

No updates.

Old Business

No updates.

New Business

KMC stated that she is working with Ryan Fitzgerald from Boston Center for Youth and Families (BCYF) as well as Joe Walsh from Adaptive Sports New England on beginning to integrate students with disabilities into sports. Spring track is the first sport they will be working on.

KMC mentioned that the Third annual Disability Mentoring Day (DMD) will be held on October 22nd, 2013. Ten adults with disabilities will job-shadow staff in City of Boston departments for a day and learn about how to apply for jobs in the City of Boston.

KMC stated that she and JH will have a meeting with Boston Transportation Department (BTD) Commissioner Thomas Tinlin soon. KMC stated that she will be discussing a few issues in this meeting, including parking in residential neighborhoods for Personal Care Attendants (PCAs) and will also discuss possibly initiating a Van-Only HP Sign program on City of Boston public ways.

Public Input

None.

Adjourned at 7:27 p.m.