

**BOSTON COMMISSION FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
AGENDA JUNE 22, 2011, 5:30 PM- 7:30 PM
Piemonte Room – 5th Floor**

5:30 PM-6 PM, Abbreviated Meeting

Introductions

Approval of May 25 Minutes

Commissioner's Report: Kristen McCosh

Chair's Report: John Kelly

Announcements

Public Input

Old Business

New Business

6 PM-6:45 PM COB sidewalk resurfacing policy, with PWD Chief Engineer Bill Egan and Director of Neighborhood Services, Jay Walsh.

6:45 PM-7:30 PM City Hall Plaza access route, with project manager Leo Murphy.

Next meeting: Tuesday July 26, 2011 will be the 21st anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act. There will be a ceremonial groundbreaking of the City Hall Plaza accessible route project at 12 PM.

**Boston Commission for Persons with Disabilities
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday June 22, 2011**

Board Members Present: Arnold Berry, Eileen Brewster, John Kelly, Carl Richardson, Janice Ward, Heather Watkins, John Winske. Absent were Dave Estrada and Suzanne Leveille.

Commission Staff Present: Kristen McCosh, Lakeysha Smith, Juanita Mincey, Gabriel Holbrow (summer intern through Tufts University fellowship with the BUMP program – Boston Urban Mechanics Program).

Guests: Bill Egan, Chief Engineer for Boston PWD; Emily Shea, Commissioner for the Elderly Commission; Leo Murphy, Boston Public Facilities Department and project leader for the City Hall access route; Gary Hilderbrand of the design company Utile, which is leading the greening of the plaza, and David Biancavilla of BSC, along with Chris Hart, Institute for Human Centered Design.

The Meeting was convened at 5:40.

Motion to accept May Minutes: John Winske; seconded by Eileen Brewster. Carl R. inquired as to whether a quorum was present. There was a quorum as 5 Board members were present.

Commissioner Report: Kristen introduced a summer fellowship student, Gabriel Holbrow, who is working with the BUMP (Boston Urban Mechanics Program) on an accessibility / mapping project. Gabriel is working to draft an app which will include information on curb cuts, materials used on sidewalks, and accessible paths of travel. He is currently surveying the data that exists in the city that would be helpful to this project. He will be working on this project for 8 weeks. Kristen said the Commission is expecting an additional intern from BCIL who will begin training on June 24. The Commission will become its own department as of July 1, 2011, and have control over its budget. A new position will be posted on the City of Boston website for a new staff member in the role of Architectural Access Specialist.

Kristen will be reviewing a new draft of the City's Emergency Preparedness Plan with the Office of Emergency Preparedness. She will be reporting recommendations throughout the summer. The Commission is looking into hosting a cable show on disability issues with Boston Neighborhood Network.

Inclusion of multicultural neighborhoods is a necessity. The Commissioner stated that she is going to have a meeting with new Director of Multicultural Center for Independent Living.

The meeting was paused at 6:00 for presentations by two City of Boston departments.

Meeting on City of Boston Sidewalk Policy

Bill E. reported on the City's new draft of sidewalk construction / reconstruction. The current policy is "no net new brick." Concrete is the preferred material by PWD. Wire-cut brick pavers only will be used in historical areas. Commission members inquired about the economic equity of this plan, stating it appears that socio-economic factors determine where brick will remain. The cost of brick is three times more than concrete. Kristen asked whether the City has ever asked property owners who want brick to pay for it. Bill replied no, they have not looked into that.

Other sidewalk issues include slopes and cross-slopes, tactile warning strips, and reciprocal curb cuts.

Chris Hart from IHCD said that Beacon Hill and Back Bay sidewalks are in very poor condition, while property owners in the South End and Beacon Hill have requested to have the sidewalks remain brick on individual properties. What was built during the 70's has now become additional maintenance.

Presentation on City Hall Accessible Route

Leo M introduced the design team headed by Gary Hilderbrand of Utile, the firm that is developing the access route on City Hall Plaza, along with David Biancavilla of BSC. They reported the following:

The section of City Hall Plaza where the access route will go is relatively flat. The design team was unanimous that only brick pavers could meet the conditions of the plaza. Only brick pavers can supply the strength necessary within the depth available (3"-3.5") to withstand the pounding of heavy trucks and the weather. Concrete requires 4 inches or more of depth. Either concrete or asphalt would have to be bonded to the concrete deck, which supports MBTA tunnels and a parking garage. Any repairs would require jackhammering. Asphalt would also become soft under pressure from the heavy trucks which drive across the plaza.

After consulting with those responsible for maintaining the plaza, designers are looking at wire-cut, "micro-bevelled" brick in order to prevent snowplows from popping them out. In order to minimize vibration, the pavers would be set down on a bias to the path of travel.

The current ramp to City Hall will be resurfaced with concrete as part of the project. The idea for a "mega-ramp", which would replace an entire set of stairs, has been shelved because the MBTA will be re-grading the

plaza in its coming reconstruction of Government Center station. The MBTA will provide an accessible route from the station entrance to the ramp.

John W. raised questions about the claim that only brick pavers would work in this situation. John K. asked where the funding would be coming from, Leo said that it would come from his department, Public Facilities. Members also asked about cost-effectiveness vs. maintenance.

Chairperson Report: John Kelly. John attended the MBTA update meeting with Judge King, who discussed the class action settlement from BCIL. The judge raised many ongoing problems, such as retraining bus drivers who do not follow access regulations.

The Massachusetts Architectural Access Board ruled against the petition by Jerry Remy's waterfront restaurant to provide access solely with a wheelchair lift. Both Kristen and John, along with other advocates, testified against the application.

John reported that the MBTA does indeed have an exemption from the jurisdiction of the South End Landmarks Commission, and can specify its own material for the sidewalk in front of the Mass Ave. station. (The Landmarks Commission had ruled earlier that the sidewalk be reconstructed with brick).

BCIL will be holding a meeting in September regarding the brick versus concrete issue.

John requested that the monthly commission meeting be moved from the fourth to the third Wednesday of the month. He also proposed a monthly program to provide education and outreach on disability topics for board members and community residents. Kristen M. agreed to the idea.

Other Business: John W. reported on a meeting he had with the citizen advocacy organization Common Cause, which supports our initiative under the state open meeting law to participate fully in commission meetings remotely. The problem, as Carl said, is that there is resistance to quorum to formed remotely -- for example, if there are not enough people physically present, telephone participation can not now count towards a quorum.

Carl also requested materials and information from a meeting with Valerie Fletcher to be e-mailed directly to him for review.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:35

Commission meeting: Wednesday, July 20, 2011 5:30 PM-7:30 PM, BRA conference room, ninth floor City Hall

ADA celebration, Tuesday, July 26, 2011 12 PM noon on City Hall Plaza

Minutes written by Juanita M., Lakeysha S., and Kristen M, with additions by John K.