

**BOSTON COMMISSION FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
AGENDA**

**SEPTEMBER 21, 2011
5:30 PM- 7:30 PM**

Boston City Hall, BRA Board Room, 9th floor

Introductions

Approval of June 22 Minutes

Commission meeting dates

Commissioner's report: Kristen McCosh

Chair's Report: John Kelly

City Hall Plaza Access Route

Roslindale Main Street project -- Heather Watkins

Remote Participation

Working groups

Announcements

Public Input

Old Business

New Business

Next Meeting: October 12, 2011

Boston Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Minutes for Wednesday, September 21, 2011

Present: Suzanne Leveille, Heather Watkins, John Winske, and John Kelly, Chair.

Absent: Carl Richardson, Vice-chair; Janice Ward, Arnold Berry, Eileen Brewster, David Estrada.

Staff Present: Kristen McCosh, Commissioner

Guests: Joe Mullen and Leo Murphy, Boston Public Facilities Department; Gary Hilderbrand of Utile; David Biancavilla of BSC.

Since only four members of the commission were present, a quorum was not reached.

John Kelly convened the meeting at 5:40.

He announced that future commission meetings would be on the second Wednesday of every month, from 5:30 PM-7:30 PM. He also proposed a regular time for a second meeting, at which members can explore plans and issues in depth. Meetings will be in the afternoon, 3 PM-5 PM on the first or third Monday of the month.

The first few meetings will include Peter Gori of the BRA to discuss projects in process. For example, Peter came on September 19 to discuss plans for the Boston Massacre site and State Street area near City Hall.

Commissioners Report: Kristen said the law department told her that the commission may not lower the number necessary to reach a quorum. It looks like an appeal must be made to the attorney general, if the commission is to be able to have a remote participant count towards a quorum.

John Winske said that he testified at the hearing regarding remote participation, and will prepare a draft letter, to be circulated to John Kelly and Kristen. John Kelly reported that he and Carl wrote a letter to the Atty. Gen. in April. John Winske said he would have a draft in two weeks.

Kristen gave an update on the South End sidewalks. She described the agreement reached between Public Works and South End Landmarks Commission. Ramps will be of concrete on the run and the flares, and the tactile strip will be colored yellow. Members were enthusiastic about the use of yellow for the strips. Landings will be made out of concrete, except in those cases (about one half) in which there is not 4 feet of depth of brick sidewalk between the landing and the building. In that case, the landing will be concrete.

Kristen said that curb cuts would be done in the Back Bay in the spring.

Kristen reported that the snow ordinance will be clarified, specifying that businesses must clear out abutting curb cuts. Her office will be coordinating a pilot project to identify a list of curb cuts and sidewalks that will be plowed out by volunteers. It will be a small program, as outreach funds are not available. Heather asked whether the updating of sidewalks could be tied in with the Main Streets program, and John Winske asked whether there might be a tax incentive.

Kristen reported that work at Maverick Station is 75% complete, and that she and John Kelly were asked to do a site visit.

John Kelly discussed the problems of the different city agencies not taking responsibility, and shifting jurisdictional responsibility. For example, Eileen Brewster must call Boston Housing Authority every single winter in order to get her site shoveled out. To clear all its sidewalks, for example the Emerald night was visitor center couldn't even get its sidewalks cleared for an open house.

Kristen said that she has a map of jurisdictions, and will set up a meeting with DCR to determine jurisdictional boundaries. She announced the technology event at the Hynes Convention Center on September 23. The commission's cable show will start on October 12. She said the first show would highlight employment issues, and she was looking for volunteers for future shows. Along with the show comes the opportunity to do 2-3 public service announcements per year. Possible ideas for those include snow removal, handicapped parking, and educational shorts such as on bricks.

October is National Disability Employment Month.

Tom Hopkins from the Architectural Access Board wants a letter of support from the Chair regarding the commission's support for a time extension on the City Hall access route. John agreed to send a letter to Kristen.

Chair's Report. John Kelly reported on meetings he attended.

- Meeting with MBTA experts along with John Winske and Kristen McCosh. Message was that concrete could be used on City Hall Plaza without any problem.
- July commission meeting also lacked a quorum.
- Special meeting, September 19, had quorum.
- On July 25, John joined Janice and Kristen at meeting with DPH Commissioner Auerbach, who agreed to produce a letter reminding apartment building owners that the heating season did not prevent use of air conditioning during that time.
- On August 12, John joined John Winske, Dave Estrada, and Arnold Berry at a site visit on Shawmut Avenue near Massachusetts Avenue. Chief engineer Bill Egan along with some state engineers showed a delineation strip between the path of travel and the sloped

portion of the sidewalk close to the curb. John Kelly showed the engineers the lack of compliance within the path of travel itself, and Bill Egan agreed to a major inspection of the entire project.

- On August 19, John went to the Architectural Access Board annual awards for design excellence. One of the winners was the Matthews Arena, and he suggested a site visit.
- He also met twice with DCR engineer Mark McClain about the proposed accessible sidewalk for the Charlesgate West ramp, enabling access between the East Fens and Kenmore Square. Kristen joined officials from the Transportation Department for the first meeting, and AAB Compliance Officer Mark Dempsey came to the second one. Mark prepared a couple of versions, one with a straight slope of about 6% or 7%, and another version with 1-3 level landings. Installation of the landings would increase the slopes in between.
- Kristen joined John and Fenway Garden Society president Mike Mennonno out at the Accessible Garden, which is undergoing work in the Back Bay Fens. We discussed solutions for the garden path, which is now concrete cobblestones that are neither safe nor accessible.

Heather Watkins reported that she had made a presentation to Roslindale Main streets about the importance of creating access to local businesses. She told the businesses about the tax credits and the matching grant from the city under the façade improvement program, which includes access work.

City Hall Plaza Access Route Presentation. Joe Mullen, Leo Murphy, Gary Hilderbrand and David B. presented their latest plan for the route. It will be constructed out of asphalt, colored red, and will stretch from the Washington Mall to the steps for City Hall, and then loop around towards the access ramp. The ramp will be reconstructed out of concrete. The path will be as narrow as 5 feet in places, larger in other places to avoid sharp angle turns. The design team looks at the project as an experiment in materials, as they plan to also install asphalt and brick pavers in the area where the route from the mall turns at the City Hall steps. Along the steps, the route will follow an array of light poles, so will not be directly adjacent to the steps themselves. Because of the long time it took to come up with a design acceptable to the commission, there is no time to construct the project this year. The team would like an extension until 2012.

John Winske told Joe Mullen that concrete could be used on the Plaza, as we learned at the meeting with the MBTA. Joe said that concrete would not work in this case, and that it was a matter of expert opinion.

John Winske expressed concern about the contrast between the asphalt and the brick, both of which are red. John Kelly asked about the possibility of a contrasting brick color alongside the asphalt. The colored asphalt will cost three times as much as regular asphalt.

Meeting notes were taken by John Kelly's assistant, Mona Elliott, and written up by John.