

**Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities
Agenda**

**OCTOBER 12, 2011
5:30-7:30 PM**

Piemonte Room, 5th Floor, Boston City Hall

Introductions

Approval of June 22 Minutes, September 19 minutes, September 21 minutes

Commissioner's Report: Kristen McCosh

Chair's Report: John Kelly

Letter to Atty. Gen. regarding remote participation

Additional projects with AAB fine abatement money

Letter for DPH to send regarding air conditioning

Copley Place Expansion Project

Public Input

Old Business

New Business

Special Meeting: Monday, October 17, 3 PM-5 PM, 9th Floor, Room 900. Peter Gori from the BRA joins us.

Next Commission Meeting: November 9, 2011

Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Minutes for Wednesday, October 12, 2011

Present: Arnold Berry, Carl Richardson, Vice-chair; Eileen Brewster, Janice Ward, Suzanne Leveille, John Winske, and John Kelly, Chair.

Absent: Heather Watkins, David Estrada.

Staff Present: Kristen McCosh, Commissioner, Lakeysha Smith

John Kelly convened the meeting at 5:40.

Minutes were approved for June 22, and September 21 with one change in wording.

John Kelly recapped the special meeting held with Peter Gori of the BRA on September 19. At the meeting, Peter updated the commission on the sidewalk work in the State Street area and the marker for the Boston Massacre. We also began discussing the Copley Place expansion project, and a motion was passed to invite the BRA back to discuss the expansion project with the commission.

Kristen said that bricks had not yet been approved for Copley Place, although that is the design being proposed by the developer. Kristen described "Legacy Projects", projects fully designed and contracted without input from the access community.

Commissioner's Report -- Kristen reported that she testified at the City Council hearing considering changes to the snow ordinance. It is now official that abutters are legally responsible for curb cuts nearby. Outreach will be done through the city program known as "Know Snow", and a public service announcement is possible. The penalty for not shoveling is \$100 for businesses. Kristen is working through her e-mail list to help compile priorities for snow removal. Prison work release details will be available one day per week.

John Kelly noted the problem that the city does not ticket itself.

Kristen said that there was hope for an MOU (memorandum of understanding) with DCR and other entities. Some departments and agencies lack an ADA coordinator related to access enforcement. For example, the BRA needs a ADA coordinator .

The MBTA has committed to shoveling bus stops, beginning with key routes. The city has also renegotiated its contract with DeCaux, who manages the fancy bus stops with advertising.

The company has assumed responsibility for clearing snow from around bus stops and maintaining an accessible path. The company must also list its phone number at the station.

Kristen said that a pilot program will be launched, called "Snow Buddies." The program will match volunteers with people in need. Limited to fifty people. She has also spoken with Commissioner Goode of ISD, who is committed but has only sixteen enforcement officers.

John Kelly noted that quality control is needed with these officers, since they will sometimes not write a ticket despite looking at the violation. The cleared path must be 42 inches wide.

Eileen asked about snow at trolley stops, which has not been addressed. Kristen asked whether the MBTA has a snow removal plan on its website.

John Kelly reported problems with small sidewalk plows leaving sidewalks , going around light poles and out into the surrounding mud.

Carl asked whether a look had been taken at other cities. Kristen said that New York City does snow melting.

Kristen reported that based on a murder in a city housing development, the BHA director is trying to get the ratio of disabled to elderly reduced. That ratio is now 70% elderly to 30% people with disabilities.

Kristen said that a hearing would be scheduled for Thursday, October 20 [a meeting that would be rescheduled twice, now permanently on hold]

Kristen emphasized that the mayor is supportive of people with disabilities in this matter, and that he had talked to the director.

John Kelly said that the comments constituted blaming a group for the action of one person. Janice said it was insulting, and that we have to stand up for our community.

John Winske said that the Disability Policy Consortium plans to call for the director's removal. Suzanne emphasized that seniors approach the matter as a security issue, and that their concerns must be addressed. Emphasis needs to be put on security for everyone. Violent people are a threat to all residents, both disabled and elderly. Seniors are a vulnerable group and must feel secure.

Carl said that almost all seniors are disabled.

John said that he will write a statement on the matter for the commission, and Suzanne agreed to edit and review.

Kristen said that Wednesday, October 26 would be disability mentor day, with workshops and job shadowing for job seekers with disabilities.

John Winske suggested that it would be a good photo opportunity to shadow the mayor.

Kristen said that she will be doing a cable show on BNN, airing on the fourth Wednesday, and that it will show on channel 23. That as part of the show, the commission gets to make three PSAs per year, such as snow removal, Access, etc.

Carl asked whether he would be captioned, and Kristen said that she would investigate.

Kristen then talked about how the RIDE is planning on requiring eligibility to be determined by in-person assessments. The assessments would be done by therapists and mobility specialists.

Lakeysha said that the MBTA is looking to hire people with disabilities to do RIDE assessments.

Chair's Report - John gave an update regarding Occupy Boston. He said that he and Michael Muehe, Cambridge Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, had approached organizers with accessibility concerns but without much success. The main walkways at the encampment are completely inaccessible -- gravel and grass pavers. John announced the Architectural Access Board hearing scheduled for October 17, regarding housing at 40 Temple St. in Beacon Hill. John Winske said that he would attend.

John Winske said that he was not ready with the draftable letter to be sent to the attorney general regarding remote participation.

As time was running short, John Kelly briefly described the need to develop priorities for the rest of the fine abatement monies (from the Huntington Avenue case), and that one possibility would be working on accessible routes to City Hall from MBTA stations. For example, from Haymarket station to City Hall. He said that if the MBTA wants to increase use of the RIDE, it needs to let us get to the T. stop! Suzanne liked this idea.

The supplemental meeting is scheduled for October 17 with Peter Gori of the BRA. Janice announced a meeting at Tent City on October 18 to discuss the Copley Place expansion project.