

Boston Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, February 9, 2011 (for meeting rescheduled from January 26, 2011)

Present: Suzanne Leveille, Arnold Berry, John Kelly attended in person; Eileen Brewster, David Estrada, and Janice Ward conferenced in by phone. Commissioner Kristen McCosh and Lakeysa Smith attended from the City.

Absent: Heather Watkins, John Winske, and Carl Richardson.

The meeting was convened at 5:55.

John Kelly asked for a motion to accept the December minutes. Suzanne L. made a motion. This was seconded by Eileen B. Approval was unanimous.

Kristen M. gave the Commissioner's Report. She introduced her new temporary employee, Lakeysa S. who was hired in Juanita Mincey's absence. Kristen M. said she is organizing new conference space near her office on the 9th floor.

Kristen M. followed up her meeting with the BPD Hackney Division, saying the accessible taxicab program began in 1991 and the City currently has 100 WAV (Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles) cabs. There is no uniform standard in designing the dimensions of the vehicles so some are less accessible than others. However, Captain of the Hackney Division would be very interested in developing standards. Cabs have a vehicle life of 7 years, so there is strong potential to make the entire fleet accessible eventually. Eileen B. asked about the lack of ability to get an accessible cab. Dave E. offered to work with the BPD on this issue.

Kristen M. has been working on updating the website. The meeting agendas and minutes are now posted. The meetings and notices of accommodations are posted online and in the City Clerk's office. She is continually updating the website, including posting the Resident Handicap Parking Program policy and application. Residents can now fill out the form online and then print it and mail it in. John K. asked about uploading recordings of the meetings onto the Disability Commission Webpage. Suzanne L. asked about recording the meetings.

Kristen M. said she is also working with the new Cabinet Chief of Human Services, Daphne Griffin, about restructuring the Commission and revisiting its purpose. She will be meeting with the MCDHH Commissioner Heidi Reed next week, and sees sensory disabilities as an area that needs progress.

The accessible route onto City Hall Plaza was discussed. John K. and Kristen M. have both been in touch with Leo Murphy from the City who is working on the design and

implementation. They got the feeling the project may be put off to be worked into a longer-term access plan for the Plaza, but Leo M. said it is still on track to be completed by November. Kristen M. said there are currently three projects relating to the Plaza - the accessible route, the Greening design, which does not have funding, and the BRA /MBTA project to make the Government Center stop accessible. John K. mentioned the "mega-ramp" design. Suzanne said it was in the newspaper. That is proposed as part of the longer plan for access.

A drop off area for the Ride was also discussed. Kristen M. has raised this issue with Chief Galvin and it is being incorporated into the long range plans.

John K. gave the Chairperson's report. The big topic this month is obviously snow removal. The sidewalks have been really bad, and the curb cuts are impossible and really very dangerous. John K. took pictures to document how bad the sidewalks and curb cuts are. He asked about the City's responsibility. Kristen M. met with City leaders from DPW and ISD. ISD reports that they do not ticket anyone for lack of shoveling curb cuts. The ordinance is not clear. John K. asked Kristen M. to get a written statement from Leo Boucher at ISD about their non-ticketing policy.

Kristen M. has consulted the Legal Department about the ADA mandate of maintaining accessible features and for clarification of the ordinance. She is waiting to hear back from them. Kristen is compiling a list of urgent snow removal sites from the disability community.

John K. mentioned a mapping project to show who owns each street, and who must maintain access. Kristen has looked into this and found out it does not exist. John K. said maps exist that show buildings but not sidewalks. He has reached out to DCR and the MBTA. Apex curb cuts have become snow receptacles.

Many ideas were discussed. Members want to fight for mandated clearing. Also, John K. wants to outreach to community groups to take responsibility. Get businesses involved. Hold a Community snow meeting maybe? Eileen B. and Janice said they have been trapped by the lack of access.

Next meeting is on February 23. It will include a presentation by the Law Department on Commission members responsibility. Kristen M. will reschedule the ADA training that was postponed from January due to snow.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Minutes by Kristen M. and Lakeysha S.