



Boston Disability Commission Advisory Board

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Minutes for Monday, January 22nd, 2018
 9th Floor BRA Board Room 900, Boston City Hall, 5:30 – 7:30 PM

KRISTEN MCCOSH
 Commissioner

Commission Members

- Zary Amirhosseini
- Feleshia Battles-Byrdsong
- Jerry Boyd
- Eugene Gloss
- Dusya Lyubovskaya
- Carl Richardson
- Kyle Robidoux
- John Winske

Present:	Staff Present:
(ZA) Zary Amirhosseini (FB) Feleshia Battles-Byrdsong (JB) Jerry Boyd (DL) Dusya Lyubovskaya Phone: (EG) Eugene Gloss (KR) Kyle Robidoux Not Present: (CR) Carl Richardson (JW) John Winske	(KMC) Kristen McCosh, Commissioner (PM) Patricia Mendez (WP) Winston Pierre (SL) Sarah Leung (JC) Jaymi Cohen
Guests: Kathleen MacNeil, Millennium Partners Boston; Libby Farley, Handel Architects; Stephen Matkovitz, Handel Architects; Troy Depeiza, DREAM collaborative, LLC; Shauna Gillies-Smith, Ground, Inc Christine Poff, Community Preservation Act Maggie Austen, Institute for Human Centered Design	

Councilor Flynn of District 2 gave remarks about his commitment to disability issues and to working with the disability advisory board moving forward.

December Meeting Minutes: A motion was made to approve the December meeting minutes by Feleshia Battles-Byrdsong (FB) then seconded by Dusya Lyubovskaya (DL). They were then unanimously approved by all present.

Millennium Partners Boston: 115 Winthrop Square

Kathleen MacNeil (KN) gave an overview of the project at 115 Winthrop Square. She began by describing the location of the project, which is located in the heart of the financial district, between Devonshire St and Federal St. The project will be 664 feet tall per the Boston Zoning Code. It will be a mix of residential units, office spaces, retail and restaurants, the Great Hall (public space), and below grade parking. KN informed the board that the project strives to be LEED Platinum Certifiable, which is a leader in energy conservation. The project will also provide for 115 affordable housing units offsite in Parcel 12 in Chinatown.

Libby Farley (LF) from Handel Architects gave an overview of the building's entrance accessibility. Because of the grade change, there will be passenger elevators to access the public space. The hope is that this space will host a variety of public events, including state of the city uses, educational based community groups, galas, voting, Ted Talk, etc. Rather than having fixed seating, the Great Hall will have scaffolding, consisting of a series of predetermined seats to facilitate certain uses but day to day it will have non-fixed seating.

The substantial grade change that happens is 5.5 feet. There is one elevator just for getting from the Devonshire elevation to the Federal elevation. There are two elevators to get from the lower part of Great Hall up to the mezzanine and 2nd floor which also have public amenities. FB asked about affordable housing and KN replied saying all affordable housing will be off site.

Shauna Gillies-Smith (SG) from Ground, Inc gave an overview of the intentions for Winthrop Square itself and the current conditions. Currently, various trees are causing heaving within the brick. There are also non-compliant cross slopes on the square itself. They are seeing this square in two ways, both as a pedestrian crossroad and a destination in itself. The hope is to have a better transit route between Downtown Crossing and the Financial District.

KMC said the Commission will work with the team to ensure that the materials on the sidewalks are acceptable for the city. DL asked about retail in the Great Hall and KN said there will be food and coffee for the neighborhood and office users but that it will be pushed aside for civic events for up to 350 people. They want the space to be usable for people who are not immediately downtown. DL asked about grocery shopping and KN said that Roche Brothers is down the street. KN also said they are increasing the width of the downtown sidewalks and they will be made of concrete.

Elizabeth Dean-Clower (ED) asked about the accessibility of the kitchens in the residential units and Troy Depiza (TD) spoke about the requirements in the Fair Housing Act and nonstructural renovations. ED also asked to clarify the accessibility in regards to medical evacuation. KN said the units are distributed equally throughout the building and divided among number of bedrooms. The building will be fully accessible as far as all of the public areas and there will be life safety systems. FB asked about the elevators and KN said there are generators for the elevators and the building will be staffed 24/7 with security and concierge on site.

Community Preservation Act: Christine Poff

Christina Poff (CP) introduced herself as the new Community Preservation Director for the City of Boston. She gave an overview of the CPA, which has \$20 million per year raised through a surcharge on property and commercial property taxes. In the past, the money has been spent for affordable housing, parks and open space, and historic preservation. Other cities and towns use this pot of money for accessibility issues and she hopes to do the same in Boston. For example, several historical organizations and other projects have contacted her to incorporate accessibility features.

FB asked if CP has been working with smaller disability groups in neighborhoods, and CP said that she has not yet but she's hoping for the Commission to share a list of potential partners and groups to work with. CP mentioned how she has worked with multiple groups who have collaborated on a project that meets more than one requirement for the money. She also talked about a conversation she had with David Viera (DV) from Hyde Park regarding the Boston Public Library ramp. CP hopes to receive more proposals and feedback from the disability community to review with the Community Preservation Committee. KMC said they will work with CP closely moving forward on accessibility issues.

Chair's Report: Carl Richardson

No new business at this time.

Commissioner's Report: Kristen McCosh

KMC provided a few updates to the board. She began her report addressing the snow the city has received. She reminded everyone of the requirements in shoveling snow, such as shoveling all 42 inches of the sidewalk and shoveling out curb cuts for property owners that live near a corner. The office received a lot of complaints and KMC reminded everyone that the city focuses on plowing the streets. KMC discussed the Mayor's SPARK program, which consists of the recruitment of millennium aged volunteers to shovel out curb cuts. She mentioned how it's difficult for the city to get involved in matching people with specific residents because of the vulnerability of certain residents.

ZA asked about other programs to help shovel out sidewalks and curb cuts and KMC mentioned the new Snow Angels program in South Boston. FB talked about AmeriCorps and ABCD volunteers that work with businesses to shovel sidewalks. KMC said the Board can take this on as a project.

KMC also updated the board about a new project on the second floor of City Hall which will consist of one of the ticket counters being lowered. KMC is also meeting with the WAV Taxi Owners on Friday, January 26th to have them learn about options to potentially increase their business by partnering with Uber and the MBTA's RIDE program for accessible transportation. KMC is also working with Metro Planning Organization of Boston to have a round table discussion about

transportation options for people with disabilities.

The Board then discussed the RIDE pilot program with Uber and the accessibility of the vehicles. There are about 50 ADA compliant WAV vehicles and 11 Uber accessible vehicles. Eugene Gloss (EG) said that any questions about Uber can be directed his way. DV clarified the cost of Uber and Lyft and stated that if the cost of the trip is beyond a certain amount you have to pay out of pocket. He also asked why the temporary ramp was removed at Boston Public Library and KMC said she will follow-up to find out. She also mentioned that neither the library nor the Commission were awarded the ADA funding grants. Elizabeth Dean-Clower (ED) said it is possible to exceed the \$40 limit in the Uber pilot program and she stated her concerns about the scarcity of accessible vehicles for the program.

Maggie Austen (MA), from the Institute for the Human Centered Design (IHCD), gave an overview of the User Expert Lab. IHCD is a Boston-based non-profit that believes that design has the power to influence our confidence, comfort, and control as well as variation and ability is ordinary. They do consulting and design services, training and technical assistance, education and training, and research in the lab through the lived experiences of people in contextual inquiry framework. She defined the user experts, which include primary experts who live with a functional limitation, and secondary experts, who have spent a significant amount of time with a primary expert. IHCD works with companies, universities, municipalities, and websites. Maggie hopes to diversify the user expert pool, including people on the far ends of the spectrum. KMC asked if IHCD works with developers and MA said they do, although the opportunity is limited, and they try to bring user experts into specific contexts to give feedback. IHCD is hoping to develop a guide for the MBTA that includes best practices and principles of universal design from bringing user experts onto the T. Concluding, MA gave a few updates about previous and current projects they are working on. MA encouraged people to visit their website at: www.humancentereddesign.org

Architectural Access Update: Patricia Mendez

Patricia Mendez (PM) began her update in speaking about the Architectural Access Board and the re-write of the 521 CMR which is going into the face of the public meetings. She then spoke about the Commission on Disabilities Alliance, which is a group of greater Boston disabilities commissions and the other municipalities are helping us with the accessibility survey. They are also planning a training on how to review variance applications to be held in City Hall in May. The audience for this training will be Commissions from all other municipalities.

PM also shared information about lobby upgrades at 160 Federal St which will consist of a "Food Hall" and they asked for accessibility guidance. The other project they are involved in is the Developmental Parcel 9 at Blackstone Street Haymarket regarding sidewalks improvements, curb cuts, and pedestrian crossing. Lastly, they are working with BPDA regarding Request for Proposal (RFP) in Highland Park in Roxbury.

Old Business

No old business at this time.

New Business

No new business at this time.

Action Item

No new action items at this time.

Public Input

Ellice Paterson from Abilities Dance discussed her work in welcoming adults of all physical and mental abilities to create dance pieces that they rehearse and perform around Boston. She is looking for new dancers of all abilities as well as board members. There is no cost to participate other than transportation to rehearsal and performance venues. They are located between a few different rental studios. They are hosting a fundraising event in February and having a show in June which will take place in Hibernian Hall in Madison Park.

Ethan Linsky, the youth program specialist at EPIC, Empowering People for Inclusive Communities, extended their outreach and explained Service Warriors. Service Warriors is a competitive program where young people commit to one year of service coupled with leadership development. They are accepting applicants of people with disabilities, aged 16-23, up until January 31st. There is a \$200 one-time fee in order to pay for clothing and food for all events.

Adjournment

FB made a motion to adjourn and DL seconded. All Board members agreed to adjourn.

Next meeting: Monday, February 26th, 2018 5:30-7:30 pm