

Boston Disability Commission Advisory Board

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Minutes for Monday March 27, 2017

9th Floor BRA Board Room 900, Boston City Hall, 5:30 – 7:30 PM

KRISTEN MCCOSH
Commissioner

Commission Members

John Winske
Secretary

Marc (Moses) Mallard
Treasurer

Zary Amirhosseini

Kimyatta Campbell

Carl Richardson

Kyle Robidoux

Present:	Staff Present:
(CR) Carl Richardson (KC) Kimyatta Campbell (KR) Kyle Robidoux (MM) Marc (Moses) Mallard	(KMC) Kristen McCosh, Commissioner (JD) Jessica Doonan (PM) Patricia Mendez (CM) Chris Morawski
On Phone: (ZA) Zary Amirhosseini	
Not Present: (JW) John Winske	
Guests: Ben Schutzman, Director of Transportation Innovation, MBTA	

March meeting minutes: Kyle Robidoux (KR) made a motion to approve the February 2017 minutes which was seconded by Kimyatta Campbell (KC) and approved by all.

Interim Chair Report: Carl Richardson

Carl Richardson noted that he attended the MBTA hearing earlier in the day regarding cuts to the RIDE premium service. Many disability and elderly advocates were in attendance and no final decision was made at this time till April 10th.

Commissioner's Report: Kristen McCosh

Kristen McCosh (KMC) informed the Board of some upcoming events. Youth Summer Jobs Program registration ends at the end of March and sign ups can be done on the City of Boston website. ReelAbilities opens this week and will run during the month of April. The annual spring Community Forum will take place on Wednesday May 10th 2-4pm at Suffolk Law School. KMC added that on May 10th 11-4 there will be a Diversity Job Fair at the Wyndham in Beacon Hill that she will give opening remarks at with Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. Finally, the annual ADA Day Celebration will take place on Tuesday July 25th from 12-2pm.

Architecture Report: Patricia Mendez

Patricia Mendez (PM) opened her report asking the Board their opinions and/or experience with the signage that the City installs with yellow flashing lights and an audio component that are used to encourage cars to slow down. At the request of the Board, PM will be sending examples of the equipment referenced. PM then invited Board members to the Regional Commission Meeting hosted by Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) which will take place on Tuesday April 25th from 11-1:30pm at Brookline Town Hall, 333 Washington St, Brookline MA. All RSVPs should be provided to Jeff Dugan at MOD.

PM then spoke about a few proposed updates to the Architectural Access Board code and that the Architectural Access Board be moved into the Massachusetts Licensure Department instead of Public Safety. Because of the complexity of these changes information will be sent out to the Board members summarizing the issues before any vote on occurs.

A few projects that have been worked on over the last month are: Clipper Ship Wharf in East Boston which is a new mixed use residential building, Hyde Square in Jamaica Plain which is getting wider sidewalks and a redesigned rotary, and North Square reconstruction in the North End which is getting improved pedestrian access.

Updates on the Ride: Ben Schutzman

Ben Schutzman (BS) provided a quick update on how the Uber and Lyft RIDE paratransit pilot program came to be and reported that on average an hour is saved in travel time per round trip ride. On the MBTA side, there has been a 70% decrease on a per trip basis. Now that the six month trial period is done the program will be renewed for another six months and all those who had been on the waitlist are now in the program to bring the total to about 750 participants. The call center will also be more centralized to allow for ease of access. BS explained that the number of rides that people are given a month through this program have been based off of how many rides participants took through the RIDE on average prior to the pilot. He also noted that Uber and Lyft now have a few wheelchair accessible vehicles.

BS also announced a new pilot with taxi services. It will be similar to the Lyft and Uber pilot however taxi vehicles will be the vehicles being used. The benefit of this pilot is that there will be more wheelchair accessible vehicles than the Lyft and Uber pilot. BS did not have an official launch date for the taxi pilot and is working on final vendor negotiations. The participants will be able to see the grade of taxis when they request the Taxis either by phone or by the app. All pilots are limited to existing RIDE participants. For more information on the pilot programs people can go to:

www.mbta.com/paratransitpilot

A concern was brought by the public related to the reduction in trips through the pilot over the last few months. BS explained that as part of the pilot program the number of trips was originally 20 across the board and then were reduced based on the history of RIDE use. BS also talked through the process of filling concerns and issues with Uber and Lyft.

Related to transportation, KMC also informed the board that this spring the City will have 44 A-Rated wheelchair accessible vehicles in the cab fleet up from one four years ago.

Alternative Housing Voucher Program: Jessica Doonan

Jessica Doonan (JD) read written remarks from Shaya French at Boston Center for Independent Living regarding supporting additional funding for the Alternative Housing Voucher Program. KR made a motion to have the Commission added to the general letter of support and a specific letter of support from the Board made a motion and Zary Amirhosseini (ZA) seconded the motion which was then unanimously approved by all present.

Old Business

No old business

Old Action Items

JD provided an update that the letter written to Boston Properties to encourage accessible and affordable units on site will be sent to them tomorrow, March 28th.

New Business

ZA noted that the month of April is autism awareness month in case anyone is aware of events going on. CR noted that April 10th is Autism Advocacy Day at State House. DeafBlind Day occurs on March 30th and Friday March 31st is the House Ways and Means hearing at the State House at 10am in Hearing room A1 and A2

New Action Item:

MM brought to the attention of the Board the challenges of crossing the MBTA train tracks on Commonwealth Ave and Harvard Ave. PM requested that he touch base with her so that she can look into it.

Public Input

Richard Wells asked for clarification on the flashing lights and advocated for the audible portion. -

Moses Mallard made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Kimyatta Campbell and approved by all present.