

Boston Disability Commission Advisory Board

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Minutes for Monday, September 25th, 2017

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:
(CR) Carl Richardson (JB) Jerry Boyd (JW) John Winske (FB) Feleshia Battles-Byrdsong (DL) Dusya Lyubovskaya (ZA) Zary Amirhosseini (KR) Kyle Robidoux	(KMC) Kristen McCosh, Commissioner (JD) Jessica Doonan (PM) Patricia Mendez (CM) Chris Morawski (WP) Winston Pierre
Not Present: (EG) Eugene Gloss	
Guests: Eric Leguelaff, Chris Hart, & Judd Galloway MBTA Desi Forte, Easter Seals Youth Services Manager	

August Meeting Minutes: A motion was made to approve the August meeting minutes by Jerry Boyd (JB), then seconded by Zary Amirhosseini (ZA) and Kyle Robidoux (KR). They were then unanimously approved by all present.

MBTA Symphony Stop Presentation: Eric Leguelaff, Project Manager; Chris Hart, Technical Partner with the MBTA; Judd Galloway, Project Manager for Consultant Thornton Tomasetti

Eric Leguelaff (EL) gave a detailed overview of the Symphony Station Accessibility Improvements. He outlined their outreach plan and the various stakeholders they are connecting with, which include Berklee College of Music, Symphony Hall, Boyd Smith, Colliers International, Fenway Alliance, Huntington Theater, Marcus Partners (Horticulture Hall), New England Conservatory, Northeastern University, Symphony Plaza, State and City Elected Officials, City of Boston, MassDOT Highway Division, Utilities, and others. EL then discussed the scope of the project which includes four new elevators from the street level to the platform of the T, new emergency exit stairs, new accessible restrooms for staff, raising the platform 8 inches, replacing or improving existing stairs, evaluating new areas of rescue, improved emergency lighting and other station improvements and general cleanup. He then describes the existing conditions of the T station both at the street level and platform level, which consist of no elevators, low and inaccessible entrances and exits to platforms, no adequate emergency exits, and no functioning restrooms.

EL continued to give an overview of the Conceptual Design which focuses on meeting code and improving accessibility. He mentioned that the inbound elevators will be three stop and the outbound ones will be two stop. He then discussed the emergency egress and how they are trying to minimize disruption on the street due to the 82 foot distance in the code. The project benefits outlined include accessible public transportation, accessibility to this area in general, new code required emergency exit stairs, access to senior community complex, new restrooms (just for staff), new platforms (8 inches higher), improving lighting, fire alarms, renovating, improve public announcement system, station finishes, and improved station maintenance. EL displayed a picture of potential head houses.

Board members inquired about rescue areas and the timeline for the project. Chris Hart (CH) fielded most of the questions, including one about elevator backlit controls. They are hoping to have this project completed by 2020/2021 and stated that their goal is to make all stations 100% accessible.

Easter Seals of Massachusetts: Desi Forte, Youth Services Manager

Desi Forte (DF) spoke to the Board about the Youth Leadership Network, which is an opportunity for youth, ages 14-26, to socialize and practice advocacy and leadership. DF discussed an accessible Marshall Arts Program that was deemed successful in Worcester; they are hoping to replicate this in Boston. The purpose of the program is to learn self-defense and other skills. She is exploring options for space for this program. DF also detailed the one on one mentorship program for women with disabilities, which matches mentor and mentee based on location, disability type, and career interest. DF reported interest in making connections with Boston Public Schools and private institutions that serve youth in order to engage more youth with disabilities in their programs. Board members asked questions about getting involved in the program as well as questions about the number of youth with disabilities in Boston. DF provided information that the youth group meets one Saturday per month from 12-2, although this can vary based on scheduling. She provided the email address: youth@eastersealsma.org and the facebook page: facebook.com/eastersealsyouth. KMC noted that over 11,000 youth in BPS are on IEPs and other board members noted that even more are on 504 Plans. The Commission will explore how set up formal relationships between the Youth Leadership Network and BPS, SPED PAC, and private schools.

Chair's Report: Carl Richardson

Carl Richardson (CR) informed the Board that preliminary elections for Mayor and four City Council seats occur tomorrow, Tuesday, September 26th. On the same day (26th), there is a hearing at the State House in hearing rooms A1 and A2 regarding the Assisted Suicide Bill that Joan Kelly from Second Thought spoke about in July. CR also stated that the By-Laws were submitted today about elections. The Board discussed putting an agenda item on the October meeting regarding elections to expand the board to 13 members.

Commissioner's Report: Kristen McCosh

Kristen McCosh (KMC) began her report highlighting the successful Abilities Expo in September. She also discussed upcoming events which include Disability Mentoring Day in conjunction with Mass Rehab Commission on Thursday October 26th and Civic Engagement Day on Tuesday October 24th. KMC described both events and explained wanting to get more youth involved as well as doubling the number of participants from last year which was just under 100. KMC then discussed the search for 5 new board members and encouraged those interested to send a resume and letter of interest. She also emphasized the importance of diversity in terms of disability, neighborhood, and ethnic background.

She then provided updates regarding a grant to do ADA updates in City Hall from the MA Office on disability. KMC discussed the renovations being done in the City Councilor Chamber which should be completed by Civic Engagement Day. She informed the Board of the plan to put in an automatic door in the board room as well as the Piemonte room.

KMC also informed the Board of an Uber van with a lift that she saw JW responded and said that there are currently 11 of these vehicles. JW also described the importance of requesting this type of Uber so that they see the demand for more of these vehicles. KMC said she will research and contact a person at Uber to follow-up on this and potentially attend a Board meeting. ZA recommended having Uber connect with hospitals where they might be in high demand. KMC transitioned to discuss how she will be speaking to the Access Advisory Committee to MBTA (ACT Committee) on Wednesday about WAVES (Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Taxis) and working with them to improve from 50% to 100% ADA compliant.

A discussion occurred about the potential for the ramp at the library to become permanent. JB asked how someone can get involved with DMD and KMC said that they are working with MA Rehab Commission who prepares their clients beforehand as well as with Boston Public Schools. She concluded by saying they are open to suggestions for next year to increase engagement.

Winston Pierre (WP) discussed the Accessibility Priority Survey and the goal to reach over 250 people.

Architectural Access Update: Patricia Mendez

Patricia Mendez (PM) provided an update on two different cases. The first one involved a school group that was confused about the code on what is required for a playground. The Architectural Access Board explained that the woodchips were not compliant and how the instead need a stable, non-slip, permanent path such as concrete or poured rubber. PM then discussed another case related to opposing the Public Improvement Commission (PIC)'s project plan at 150 Seaport Boulevard which proposed granite accents in the sidewalk.

JW brought up Boston Properties and suggested that they lack a clear understanding of the ADA. He is going to follow-up on this.

Old Business

CR discussed the letter the Board signed today opposing the Assisted Suicide Bill which will go to the State Public Health Committee.

New Business

No new business at this time.

Action Item

The Commission will explore how to formalize a relationship between the Youth Leadership Network of Easter Seals of MA and BPS, SPED PAC, and other private institutions that serve youth with disabilities so that more youth are aware of, and get involved in, the free services discussed.

KMC will also research the vans with the lift that displayed an Uber sticker and if someone from Uber will attend the Board meeting next month. She will also look into WAVs and the RIDE.

Additionally, KMC will look into seeing if the temporary ramp at the library will stay. She will also contact David Viera to further discuss the possibility of a permanent ramp to access Boston Public Library. The Commission will work on this internally and bring it up at the next meeting. She will also look into the construction project that CR brought up on Commonwealth Ave where sidewalks are all torn up.

Public Input

David Viera from Hyde Park explained the importance of putting a permanent ramp on the McKin building to access Boston Public Library. He wants to formally meet with a Board Member, someone from Boston Public Library, and the Landmarks Commission in order to see progress.