

Boston Disability Commission Advisory Board

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Minutes for Monday April 24, 2017
9th Floor BRA Board Room 900, Boston City Hall, 5:30 – 7:30 PM

Present:	Staff Present:
(CR) Carl Richardson (JW) John Winske (MM) Marc (Moses) Mallard On Phone: (ZA) Zary Amirhosseini (KR) Kyle Robidoux Not Present: (KC) Kimyatta Campbell	(KMC) Kristen McCosh, Commissioner (JD) Jessica Doonan (PM) Patricia Mendez
Guests: Charles Washburn, VSA Massachusetts Lenny Somervell, Disability Policy Consortium	

March meeting minutes: John Winske (JW) made a motion to approve the March 2017 minutes which was seconded by Moses Mallard (MM) and approved by all.

Interim Chair Report: Carl Richardson

Carl Richardson noted that he participated in a video put together by the Disability Commission and the Elections Department to train poll workers on how to interact with people with disabilities at the polls.

Commissioner's Report: Kristen McCosh

Kristen McCosh (KMC) recapped the work the Disability housing Task Force has done over the last two years. The focus is to make acquiring and keeping housing for people with disabilities easier. One recommendation is to increase the number of built-out units in City funded housing projects from 5% to 10%, 8% of which will be built out for physical accessibility and 2% will be for auditory disabilities. It will also be required that half of these units be affordable. A press conference will occur and a report will issued in the coming months.

Renovations have been happening in Boston City Hall, with work being done to increase accessibility in the City Council Chambers and the 3rd floor lobby. Restrooms on the first floor are being brought up to ADA compliance as well as possible additional renovations as the result of a Municipal ADA grant the City is applying for. WAV Taxi spring inspections happening in May. There are 44 ADA compliant cabs currently but that number will be updated soon. KMC will also be working with Uber and Lyft to get the WAV taxis into their systems and in the MBTA pilot program.

Interviews for new Board members have commenced and the goal is to have the new Board in place in the next month or two. The annual spring Community Forum will take place on Wednesday May 10th 2-4pm at Suffolk Law School. Board members are encouraged to attend. 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. The annual ADA Day Celebration will take place on Tuesday July 25th from 12-2pm on City Hall Plaza. Looking a bit farther ahead the Abilities Expo will be happening September 8-10th at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center.

Related to staffing, the Commission will soon post a job opening for a Constituent Engagement Specialist. The listing will be sent around to the Board once it goes live. An additional job opening will be posted in the next month or two. This summer the Commission will have an intern, Leah Igdalsky, from the Harvard Rapaport Fellowship Program. Her primary task over her ten weeks will be to



KRISTEN MCCOSH
Commissioner

Commission Members

John Winske
Secretary

Marc (Moses) Mallard
Treasurer

Zary Amirhosseini

Kimyatta Campbell

Carl Richardson

Kyle Robidoux

create, distribute, and collect data on an accessibility needs survey.

Architecture Report: Patricia Mendez

Patricia Mendez (PM) opened her report noting that the New York City Access Guidelines report can be purchased online and that the Commission office will buy one. Additionally the issues with Commonwealth Ave discussed last month have been reported to MBTA and they will look into it.

PM Then provided quick updates on the following projects that have been worked on over the last month are: Boston University Castle building accessibility improvements, 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.

John Winske asked questions regarding a specific crosswalk in the Emerald Necklace and KMC remarked that the crosswalk is most likely City of Brookline property or State Department of Conservation and Recreation but that she will look into it.

Arts and Disability: Charles Washburn, VSA Massachusetts

Charles Washburn (CW) briefly introduced Julia Ryan, Artist Resource Manager in the Mayo's Office of Arts and Culture and then explained to the Board the history of the Boston Creates Plan and his desire to get the disability community more involved in the overarching arts scene in Boston. Goal 3 within the Boston Creates Plan provides an opportunity for the arts to be more accessible than it had been in the past. CW encourages the Board to share their thoughts on the arts in Boston, barriers, and how best to serve artists with disabilities. KMC inquired as to the outreach that has been done to the disability community, Zary Amirhosseini asked about art that could be accessible to those with visual impairments, and MM voiced his concern about reaching out to non-traditional artists. KMC suggested a possible partnership between VSA and the Commission related to creating art about what the ADA means to the community. CW noted that ideally he would like to see an ongoing dialogue and partnership between the Disability Commission and the Office of Arts and Culture.

Alternative Housing Voucher Program: Lenny Somervell, Disability Policy Consortium

Lenny Somerville (LS) spoke briefly about the importance of the Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP) and the request to increase funding to this program at the State level. The State will be debating an amendment 298 filed by Representative Decker of Cambridge that will increase the funding to its original funding. LS asked the Board to reach out to their representatives in support of this amendment.

Old Business

Prompted by CR report that there will be no cut to the MBTA RIDE program, JW made a motion to write a letter to the Fiscal Control Management Board at the MBTA and the Governor thanking them for not cutting RIDE service but also encouraging the expansion of programs in which people with disabilities are able to use the same transportation as their peers and reiterate Boston commitment to getting more accessible vehicles on the road. ZA seconded this motion and it was unanimously approved by all. MM encouraged looking at alternative transportation options as well. Stephen from Dorchester asked about if the pilot program through the MBTA has wheelchair accessible vehicles and KMC and JW noted that improvements will be happening in the next few months in regards to this issue.

Old Action Items

Jessica Doonan noted that the letter to the appropriate housing committee in regards to the AHVP will be sent in the coming week. As encouraged by JW, the Commission will look into the possibility of calling the Boston representatives on the Housing Committee in the morning.

Public Input

Melissa Garside asked the Advisory Board who to call regarding broken audible pedestrian signals and unshoveled sidewalks and Richard Welch voice concerns regarding unshoveled areas at the intersection of Boylston and Washington St. outside the Chinatown Station to which KMC encouraged them to contact 311 and the Commission, specifically Patricia Mendez. PM and KMC will also look into the audible pedestrian signals at Washington, Steward and Kneeland. Richard Walch's name will also be modified in the March minutes to reflect the correct last name.

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