



Boston Disability Commission Advisory Board

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Minutes for Thursday, March 26th, 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:
(JB) Jerry Boyd (DL) Dusya Lyubovskaya Phone: (EG) Eugene Gloss (ZA) Zary Amirhosseini (FB) Feleshia Battles-Byrdsong (KR) Kyle Robidoux Not Present: (JW) John Winske (CR) Carl Richardson	(KMC) Kristen McCosh, Commissioner (PM) Patricia Mendez (WP) Winston Pierre (JC) Jaymi Cohen (JD) Jessica Doonan (CM) Chris Morawksi (SL) Sarah Leung
Guests: Ky'ron Owens and Huy Ngo, Boston Elections Commission; Pat Hoey, Boston Transportation Department; Jennifer Conley, WSP; Alex DeFronzo, Piers Park Sailing Center	

February Meeting Minutes:

The board did not vote to approve the February minutes due to lack of quorum.

Absentee Voting and the Census Presentation: *Ky'ron Owens and Huy Ngo, Boston Elections Commission*

Ky'ron Owens (KO) and Huy Ngo (HN) started their presentation regarding the absentee voting process. HN stated that this process is available to all voters who meet one of three criteria: absence from the city, a disability, and religious reasons. Voters who have physical disabilities that prevent them from attending the polls on election days can provide a physician's letter in order to be added to a list to use this process. KO encouraged all constituents to get out to the polls on Election Day. He described the automark voting machine, which translates into 4 languages and provides privacy for voters. Once you receive your ballot, you insert it into the automark machine and it will present it on the screen. The screen can read the ballot out loud and it makes it accessible for voters no matter what challenges they might face when it comes to voting. He then demonstrated how the automark machine works. KO highlighted the ability to alter contrast on the screen, zoom in on the text, and use the read aloud function. Commissioner McCosh (KMC) asked if there is staff trained at the polling sites to assist people with the automarks. KO said they hold 40-50 trainings each election cycle and they go over the automark very thoroughly. KMC asked about volume and KO said voters can control the volume themselves. Jerry Boyd (JB) said he used the automark machine and it was a benefit to him. JB asked if every machine comes with the speakers and KO said they all do and there is an insert for anyone who has a sip puff tube. Zary (ZA) asked if people can vote off site with this machine, such as at hospitals. HN said if they are off site they would vote through the absentee process. Dusya (DL) asked what the absentee ballot application process entails, and HN said a letter of request or the standard application suffice. The permanent list of absentee voting would require an application and a physician's letter. One can find the application at Boston.gov/absentee or 617-635-3767. Patricia Mendez (PM) asked if there are specific instructions to test out the machine, and KO said if anyone wants to test it out or become familiar with it anyone can reach out to their office. Jessica Doonan (JD) asked KO to discuss the partnership between the Elections and Disabilities Commission. KO thanked the Disabilities Commission for their ongoing support. The Commissions teamed up to create a video about servicing persons with disabilities when they enter the polling locations. KMC discussed, Civic Engagement Day, an event that both Commissions host for people with disabilities to meet their

elected officials and learn about accessibility in voting. JB asked about upcoming events and KO said there will be primary voting on April 3rd which only impacts 60-70 precincts in Boston. The state elections will happen later in the year, on September 4th. Early voting for the state elections will occur October 22nd - November 2nd and the state election will happen on November 6th. The absentee voting election deadline is 12 pm the day before the election. Elizabeth Dean-Clover (ED) asked how they handle any technology problems with the automark machine, and KO said they have technicians throughout the city that can address the problem and provide assistance. All election related information can be found on Boston.gov/elections.

Dudley Square Project: *Pat Hoey, Boston Transportation Department; Jennifer Conley, WSP*

Jennifer Conley (JC) discussed the roadway improvement project that aims to ensure that vehicles can be accommodated through a complete streets approach. The area includes the triangle of Dudley Street, Washington Street, and Warren Street, which includes Dudley Station. The focus on the alternative they are developing is improving the pedestrian experience and utilizing the wide right of way available along Dudley Street to provide wider sidewalks and shorter crossing distances. A few major focuses of the development include a wider sidewalk that bumps out, the eastbound right turn being under traffic signal control, as well as vehicle and bicycle accommodations.

Another improvement that the MBTA is contemplating consists of creating a more efficient bus routing by limiting the number of left turns on a bus route. The modified changes proposed include a left onto Washington St to head east into the station itself rather than doing the double loop. JB asked about the timeframe for the project and JC said the Dudley library is being re-done which has its grand opening in September 2019. The construction of this corner should be started by then and completed by Summer 2020. PM asked JC to talk about signal upgrades. JC spoke about the leading pedestrian interval which will assist pedestrians in areas where traffic is occurring at the same time. She does not have any more specifics because they are still in a conceptual phase for the project.

Piers Park Sailing Center: *Alex DeFronzo, Executive Director*

Alex DeFronzo (AD) shared information about the various Piers Park Sailing Center. Piers Park is located in East Boston, a few minutes away from the Maverick Stop on the Blue Line. They have been giving sailing lessons to community members since 1988. The harbor has a big tide cycle, but this dock is the only one that has been ADA compliant with dual ramps. AD discussed how they provide services for youth starting at age 6 and they also have adaptive programs for youth and adults with physical and cognitive disabilities.

The program serves people from all backgrounds and all abilities. In 2017, the program served 303 youth who identified having a physical or cognitive disability, and the program is 100% inclusive. The programs run throughout the course of the year. AD described the various programs they have, including the Harbor Explorers, Future Leaders, Science of Sailing, Ocean Science After School. They have about 20 different seats for their boats and AD described the different chairs they use to accommodate various physical disabilities. For example, someone can puff or sip to steer the boat. Wheelchair users can leave their wheelchairs on the dock.

Piers Park Sailing partners with Spaulding and various schools, and they have a program called Heal on the Water for Disabled Veterans. Their first event is April 28th, which is their opening day, and they host free events for Eastie Week, ICA Play Date, and Eastie Pride Day. KMC asked which months they are open and AD answered May 1st – October 31st. AD also said they can always go out on the water unless the wind is 30 MPH or if there is lightening.

JB said that he has used the program before and asked who would assist someone that wanted to come and learn about sailing. AD said they have a companion sailing program and you can go online and match up to join someone. AD said they also have equipment to help people with visual impairments. DL asked if anyone can just show up or if someone must bring any medical documentation. AD said someone can self-identify in the enrollment process; however, if someone wants a scholarship, they need to fill out the application and provide some more information.

Contact information

617-561-6677

Chair's Report: Carl Richardson

No new business at this time.

Commissioner's Report: Kristen McCosh

KMC began her report by stating that the Disabilities Commission kicked off their schedule of community events this week. The Reelabilities film festival, which is a national initiative of films by and about people with disabilities, took place all over Boston. She also said that tomorrow the Commission is partnering to host a Summit on Accessible Transportation at the Boston Public Library in Copley Square from 2-4 pm. This summit gives people with disabilities a chance to talk about barriers they face in transportation regarding sidewalks, bicycles, the MBTA, and more.

KMC discussed another initiative which is the Aira technology company that matches people who are blind with a live, sighted guide through phone or wearing glasses. This guide can help you read a piece of paper or navigate your way down the street. This initiative is taking place throughout the country, and specifically in Boston, there will be free service for marathon weekend along the marathon route. The app is free to use and anyone can log in to use it all weekend.

KMC also mentioned the training that PM organized regarding how to read Variance applications which will take place in May. In addition, the Community Forum will take place on May 23rd at the Boston Public Library from 2-4 pm and ADA Day will take place on July 24th from 12-2 pm on City Hall Plaza. She is also working with the Human Resources department on a hiring toolkit to start identifying and tracking numbers of people with disabilities who apply for jobs with the city and how many people are hired.

The Commission is working to put together a map of accessible parking spaces in commercial areas downtown. They are also working on a Disability History Project which will hopefully be an online museum. They are hoping to come up with a project that will lead to a walking tour in Boston where significant events happened, such as at Perkins School for the Blind. KMC will be holding several trainings for offices in City Hall around interacting with people with disabilities and involving them with programming. She will be conducting a training for Health and Human Services this week. Lastly, KMC said she is working with the Mayor Walsh to appoint 5 new board members to the advisory board. She stated it has been a logistical challenge for spacing trying to fit 13 people into one space. She is hoping to have this figured out in the next few weeks so that the new members will be appointed by the April meeting.

Architectural Access Update: Patricia Mendez

PM gave an overview of the meetings and projects that the architectural access team has been working on this past month. First, she mentioned that she met with proponents for a development in West Roxbury, which will be a residential development consisting of 29 individual homes. The development will be under review for Article 80, since it includes construction for the whole street. One of the homes is going to be part of the inclusionary program (IDP), another will be affordable housing, and that same one will be accessible.

The architectural access team also met with Housing and Aging in Place with the Elderly Commission. They are partnering and coming up with new guidelines that will be part of the BPDA process review which will be a usable resource for developers. Lastly, she reiterated the variance training that will occur on May 18th. She will be sending out invitations this week.

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**Adjournment**

DL made a motion to adjourn the meeting and PM seconded.

Next meeting: Monday, April 23rd, 2018 5:30-7:30 pm