

**DISABILITY COMMISSION  
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

**June 15, 2022  
5:30pm-7:30pm**

**Attended:**

Olivia Richard  
Carl Richardson  
Paul Caron  
Wes Ireland  
Duysa Lyubovskaya  
Elizabeth Dean-Clower  
Jerry Boyd  
Juan Carlos Ramírez Tapia

**Absent:**

Yardley Sanchez  
Zary Amirhosseini  
Alice Fisher

**MEETING AGENDA**

**Meeting Called to Order**

- 5:34pm

**Approval of April and May Minutes**

- Chair Wesley Ireland made a motion to approve April meeting minutes , Member Jerry Boyd seconded, motion carried unanimously
- Member Carl Richardson made motion to approve the May 2022 minutes, Member Paul Caron seconded, motion carried unanimously

**Presentation: Local Adaptive Sports - Jim Wice**

The Boston Self Help Center offers adaptive sport programs that focus on sports that can be played by people who have upper and lower body disabilities.

- Power Soccer
  - 4 on 4 play indoor court with large ball and power wheelchairs
  - Supports teams the Breakers and Falcons
  - Been holding this sport for 9 years

- Going to the championship in Fort Wayne, Indiana from June 23-26!
- Volt hockey
  - 3 on 3 play on indoor court with special power wheelchairs made of wood
  - New sport to USA. First started in Boston
    - Grant from Northeastern to do three demonstrations for this sport (done at Tobin, one at the Boston Home, and one more TBD)
  - Invited to Sweden World cup Sept 16-18 2022
- Boston Self Help Center has also offered other sport programs including bocce, and bowling in the past
- There are many volunteer opportunities with Boston Self Help Center!
  - Please get involved. We need fans to come to games - hope to see you there.
- Boston Self Help Adaptive Sports Programs recently covered by GBH: <https://www.wgbh.org/news/local-news/2022/05/20/a-boston-nonprofit-brings-volt-hockey-to-us-a-perfect-sport-for-people-with-physical-disabilities>
- For more information on Boston Center Help Center: <https://www.facebook.com/Boston-Self-Help-Center-BSHC-102117675519610>

#### Questions from the Board:

Member Elizabeth Dean-Clower asked:

1. What are some other local adaptive sports offerings?
  - a. Northeastern University capstone students have worked on putting together guides on this topic. Maybe the Commission can post info from those guides?
    - i. Commissioner McCosh responded that there are many programs in the area and that the Commission on Disabilities can share more information
2. Are there teams for women or are they mixed gender?
  - a. It is mixed but volt hockey leans heavy on women

Chair Wes Ireland asked:

1. Do you have to use a wheelchair to join these sports?
  - a. Yes, We are a small nonprofit and would like to be more cross disability adaptive sports especially for vision and hearing disabilities but right now we don't have that. Jim added that the group wants to find outdoor play space, so they can be in the open air, but they do not have that option right now.
2. How many people are involved in the adaptive sports program?
  - a. There are five players on the Breakers team, and five players on the Falcons team, both teams play power soccer. There are about 22 people interested in playing Volt Hockey

Member Jerry Boyd made a comment: DCR puts out a newsletter with information about DCR adaptive sport programs. There are many DCR adaptive sport opportunities including sailing, kayaking, and more <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/universal-access-program>

Comments that we need to pull resources about adaptive sports and recreation programs together so that the public is better informed.

## Presentation: Boston Public Schools Assistant Superintendent for Special Education Ethan d'Ablemont Burnes

- Reviewed disability incidence in BPS. There are 10,167 disabled students in BPS
- Noted that given their goal of inclusive education, too many students have been served in separate classrooms
  - He also noted that in particular, too many black boy students are separated
- Full inclusion of students with disabilities has risen by 11 percentage points

Member Juan Carlos Ramírez Tapia asked:

1. Has this list been compared with social determinants of health and health disparities?
  - a. No but that is interesting and we will look into making that analysis

Member Lyubovskaya asked:

1. Is there a chart to show how many SPED students are English native speakers? And what are the next steps with these statistics?
  - a. All students who are not English Language Learners (ELL) we assume English was their native/first language. As for next steps that is on the next slide

Member Elizabeth Dean Clower asked:

1. Issues of disproportionality how is that dealt with?
2. Those questions will be answered in the next few slides

Chair Ireland asked:

1. How is the least restrictive environment determined? Is it BPS who determines that?
  - a. It varies.

Chair Ireland also asked:

1. I saw the note that the Horace Mann charter schools are excluded; does that include the Horace Mann School for the Deaf?
  - a. No, Horace Mann Charter Schools are a specific subset of charter schools. The Horace Mann School for the Deaf is not one of those schools, and as such is included in these data.

Member Olivia Richard asked:

1. How are out of district placements decided? Who is more responsible for separating students is it more DESE or it is the district?
  - a. It varies

## Chair's Report: *Wesley Ireland*

- Thank you for covering for me in my absence Duysa
- Google has an initiative called Project Relate that is seeking volunteers to understand speech patterns and this will benefit people with speech disabilities. Compensation in a form of a gift card will be given to volunteers
  - Question from Jerry: is Project Relate like Dragon? Wes no it is different. It is a tool for people with speech disabilities
- IHCD is now actively seeking volunteers to give feedback on MBTA call boxes. To get involved you need to be an MBTA user, live in Boston, and have a disability. Go to website to learn more or get involved. Gifts cards will be given to volunteers [humancentereddesign.org/callbox](http://humancentereddesign.org/callbox)
- Next month's agenda item will include an open agenda item. It will be so we can share feedback with each other on how we can improve our contributions as board members.

## Advisory Board Member Spotlight: Jerry Boyd

- West Roxbury I lived in that city for 10 years. I enjoy the green space in West Roxbury and going to the Arboretum in JP when I can. I have been on the Disability Commission for about 8 years, a lifelong disability advocate. Most of my career has been in the public sector. I am about to celebrate my 13th year as a federal employee. Prior to that I worked for the State of MA in a similar capacity to what I do now. Before that I worked at BCIL. I serve on the BCIL board and the R-Tag Executive board. I do what I can to better the lives of people with disabilities. I first met Michelle Wu while commuting from Forest Hills. When she talks about transportation equity she really means it and she wants accessibility to public transportation for all. He has a teenage son. He has a yorkie "Mr Captain" he cares for with his girlfriend.

## Commissioner's Report: *Kristen McCosh*

- Plans to attend Special Education Prom
- Andrea Patton visited the STRIVE employment program at Wentworth Institute for Technology
- Boston Public Schools \$2 billion dollar Green New Deal improvement project will be something our office makes sure includes inclusion/accessibility

Questions/comments from the Board:

- Jerry suggested it may be helpful for the Advisory Board to send recommendations as a group on the bus network redesign plan

## Architectural Access Update: *Patricia Mendez*

- Continues to serve on the AAB committee.
- We meet monthly. The next meeting is June 22, 2022. These are public meetings.
- Boston will host the 2nd part of MOD's CAM training to be held in the month of August.
- We continue to work on the outdoor dining program. If you go out to outdoor dining establishments you will see signs saying temporary portable ramps are available upon request. If you don't, let us know.
- We are assisting the BTM with a public meeting about the Cummins Highway project - Patricia presented on what the City of Boston Commission for Persons with Disabilities does and how it impacts the Cummins Highway Project.
  - Next public meeting on Cummins HWY is June 21, 2022
- Staff did a site visit in Fenway. There is development work in that neighborhood. Our staff reviewed accessibility expectations, especially regarding temporary sidewalk access. We also discussed parking during Red Sox game

### Questions from the Board

1. Member Boyd asked if BTM shared the video he worked on about the different accessibility improvements BTM is doing.
  - a. Yes it was shared and helpful

- Announcements

None

- Old Business
  - Outdoor Dining Advocacy Letter
    - Chair Wes Ireland outlined priorities for a permanent outdoor dining program. Can we streamline these priorities if outdoor dining becomes permanent? For example there are at least two restaurants in the North End that made very nice smooth platform patios that are great examples of what we want to see as standards.
      - Olivia: It would be good to have more bridge plates (not ramps) like Ajeen Restaurant, which is a good example of this.
    - Carl: are there any plans to explore the possibilities of making outdoor permanent I want to make sure we spend our time wisely
      - Commissioner McCosh- the city is planning for that but it is a multiple department effort with many details.
    - Elizabeth Dean-Clower: I haven't done outdoor dining personally. But I read that Michale Muehe reported many outdoor dining tables were inaccessible and I think that it would be very important to make sure tables are actually accessible if outdoor dining became permanent.

- Commissioner McCosh- accessible tables are a priority and part of the outdoor dining application is to indicate they are using accessible tables. A letter from the advisory board will help our work to ensure access in outdoor dining
- Carl: are there requirement for the blind community
  - Patricia Mendez: yes the outdoor dining area must be white cane detectable. This is another important note to include in the letter
- Wes asked who will take the lead on the draft for this letter?
  - Andrea Patton will get notes out from this meeting soon, so advisory board members can use bullet points to write the first draft. Carl volunteered to take the lead on the first draft. Draft due before the July meeting. Jerry offered to help Carl with the draft. Wes invited members to email him with any ideas for a draft and he will forward it to Carl and Jerry.
- New Business
  - none
- Public Input
  - none
- Adjournment
  - Carl made a motion to adjourn at 7:31pm, Paul seconded, motion passed unanimously.

**Next meeting: July 13, 2022**