

BOSTON DISABILITY COMMISSION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

September 18, 2024

5:30-7:30pm

Please watch video from meeting [here](#)

AGENDA

Meeting Called to Order

- 5:32pm

Introductions

Attended:

1. Olivia Richard
2. Paul Caron
3. Richard Glovsky
4. Paulette Durrett
5. Carl Richardson
6. Jerry Boyd

7. Wes Ireland
8. Tara Southard
9. Elizabeth Dean-Clower
10. Zary Amirhosseini
11. Juan Carlos Ramírez-Tapia
12. Charlie Kim

Absent:

1. Duysa Lyubovskaya

Approval of Minutes

- Jerry Boyd made a motion to approve the minutes, Paul Caron seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

New Board Member Introduction - Tara Southard

Tara introduced herself

Chair's Report - *Wesley Ireland*

- Make a plan to vote. Election season is upon us.
- Estate Recovery legislation has been signed into law. Good news for people with disabilities, however the Boston Globe said Masshealth would comply with federal guidelines on the topic. This is a win on the state level but proves we have more work to do nationally.

- Luis Guerrero was added to the Red Sox active roster. He has a hidden disability. His right knee works differently and resulted in a limp.
- The Red Sox hosted Deaf Awareness Day during a recent home game. Another player Garrett Whitlock knows ASL and interpreted the opening ceremony at the event.
- BPS has shared that they are using a new school bus tracking app, called ZUM, to inform families about transportation pickup and drop off times. Commissioner McCosh should be getting data from the app in the coming months.
- BPS is in its 3rd and final year of a state improvement plan. BPS has increased the number of 3 and 4 year old inclusive classrooms seats. They also added more inclusive classrooms in more than 20 BPS classrooms.
- My oldest child is now a PreK student in BPS!

Questions from the Board

- Elizabeth Dean-Clower asked are there any next steps the Advisory Board can take about the Estate Recovery news? Should we explore how to push this with the federal government?
 - Yes we could consider writing a letter to the US Congress.
- Andrea Patton added that the Commission gets 3 reports a year on hiring goals and on-time percentage for BPS transportation. We don't have that information today, but today the Mayor and Superintendent did a press availability about BPS today.
- Charlie Kim - Has there been any update about getting aggravated data for students with disabilities for on-time percentages?
 - Andrea Patton responded that with the new app we may get that data, but the data we get is a look back so we may not have that aggravated data for the next report

Commissioner's Report: Kristen McCosh, Disability Commissioner & ADA Title II Coordinator

- Equity & Inclusion Cabinet
 - Disability and accessibility are central values in the City's work on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)
 - The [E & I Academy](#) has moved from a pilot to a permanent program. It provided a series of equity learning experiences provided for City of Boston Staff to build trust across lines of difference

- E & I has hired its first of several “Equity Managers” who will be embedded in various cabinets to move DEI work forward systemically through all City of Boston Departments
- ADA Transition Plan Update
 - When the ADA was passed in 1990, it required all municipalities to create a transition plan that would show how they were going to become compliant with the new accessibility regulations
 - The City of Boston completed its ADA transition plan in 1993. It gave a broad overview of the accessibility status of major buildings that were owned and operated by the City Of Boston
 - We have recently hired a consultant to update the City’s Transition Plan by bringing all the information departments have on accessibility onto a central platform that can be used by the public
- Civic Engagement Day for People with Disabilities
 - Tuesday, September 24th, in-person event, Boston City Hall
 - 5th floor - City Council Chamber, City Council offices, Piemonte Room, Hallway
 - New this year - 2 Sessions!
 - 10 am to 12 noon - focus on youth, students, and young adults
 - 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm - focus on working-age adults
 - Program & Schedule
 - There will be information tables staffed by various departments that work on civic activities, a speaking program in the City Council Chamber and a mock polling station in the Piemonte Room
 - Advisory Board Participation
 - Board members are welcome to come to both sessions! But we’d prioritize attending the evening session if possible, to speak with adults who may be interested in joining the Board!
 - National Disability Employment Awareness Month
 - Wednesday Webinars
 - 10/09 - Pathways to Employment with the City of Boston
 - 10/16 - Financial Empowerment & Economic Mobility
 - 10/23 - Finding Affordable, Available, Accessible Housing
 - 10/30 - Employees - Know Your Rights
 - In-Person Hiring Event
 - 11/4 - Interview Day in Boston City Hall

- Participants who have applied for a job and meet the minimum qualifications will be guaranteed a first round interview
- [Important Dates](#)
 - October 26th - Voter Registration Deadline
 - November 5th - National & State Election
 - October 19th to November 1st - Early Voting at various locations throughout the city
- Voting Access for Residents with Disabilities
 - All [polling locations](#) are accessible to voters with disabilities, including [early voting](#)
 - Every polling site has an [AutoMark](#) machine for voters who need assistance marking their ballots
 - [Accessible Electronic Voting](#) for voters who are unable to independently read, write, hold, or physically manipulate or mark ballots
 - [Absentee Voting](#) is an option for residents who cannot vote in person
- Other Important Information
 - To find out which District City Council race you are voting for, [search this map for your address](#)
 - City Poll Workers are needed, a part-time paid position - fill out this [application](#) today!
 - Be sure you fill out the [Annual Resident Listing](#) to maintain your [voter registration status](#)
- History of Boston Disability Commission Advisory Board
 - Disability Commission Advisory Board
 - Established in 1971 as an 8 member board, “the Commission on Handicapped Affairs.”
 - In 2009, the City formally adopted MGL Chapter 40, Section 8J, which established a 9 member Disability Commission Advisory Board in the City of Boston. This Board acts in an advisory role to the City’s Disability Commissioner.
 - Disability Commission Department
 - In 1979, the “Commission on Handicapped Affairs” was provided with staff and funding.
 - In 1987, a [City of Boston Ordinance](#) created the Commission for Persons with Disabilities department “to facilitate full and equal participation in all aspects of life by all persons with disabilities” by reducing the architectural, procedural,

attitudinal, and communication barriers which affect persons with disabilities.

Questions from the Board

- Charlie Kim - Thank you for the comprehensive update, the office is doing a lot of good work. Is there data being collected for all programs, especially new ones? Also how can we amplify the webinars?
 - Please send information about our NDEAM Wednesday Webinars by sharing info on our website. Our staff keep records on all programs and we evaluate all our initiatives and programs with that information.
- Elizabeth Dean-Clower asked Commissioner McCosh to share more about the summer leadership institute she attended.
 - KMC shared more about the program she attended at Harvard as Mayor Wu's representative and shared that it was a powerful experience.
- Zary Amirhosseini - Thank you for this very comprehensive overview of the office. How can we be more active? What do you suggest?
 - Goal setting as an Advisory Board is important for getting things done. Commissioner McCosh also shared that her office will be more intentional about making sure the Advisory Board is aware of community engagement opportunities for feedback from the public.

Announcements

- Olivia Richard -Please keep in mind that anyone with a print or physical disability you can get accessible voting materials from Perkins Library for free. They can send that information in any format needed (Braille, etc)

Old Business

- none

New Business

- Reviewed Board Goal Setting Survey results ([link to survey](#))
 - Carl Richardson suggested Advisory Board members commit to attending a certain number of other City of Boston boards or commissions and report back.
 - Chair Wes Ireland reminded members that one of the goals mentioned in the survey was for Advisory Board members to attend and report

back about other City boards/commissions and some voted to do that.

- Charlie Kim - Thanks for the survey. I saw a lot of commonalities on the survey. I appreciate seeing a lot of thought put into it. I think the bucket of community outreach is where most of our goals fall. I want to choose goals we have the resources to achieve
- Richard Glovsky - Suggested the Advisory Board create a business plan. He suggested the plan be created with a big picture lens rather than just activities. A plan will allow the Commission to look more at the big picture and be more comprehensive.
- Zary - Will there be an opportunity for board members to learn what tools you use to measure success?
 - Yes. The process is often using metrics. Just one example would be how many accessible parking applications were processed. Another example would be how often we provide technical assistance. However please keep ideas/thoughts about measuring success to the work of the Advisory Board, not the office. An idea might be to review the bylaws for the Advisory Board. Keep in mind there are certain things you can do as an advisory board that the city department office can not.
- Chair Wes Ireland asked if the survey results be sent to the board?
 - Yes.
- Charlie Kim appreciated the overview that describes the difference between the office and the board. He asked Commissioner McCosh to explain the crossover for the goals of the department with the Advisory Board, because we should be working together.
 - Commissioner McCosh responded that the city department office will bring information from other city departments to the Board, the office will make sure the Board has access to all City of Boston departments. For all development projects the City reviews a comprehensive checklist of disability accessibility items. Each development project will have public hearings and if the Advisory Board wants copies of those accessibility checklists the Disability Commission Office can send them to you. That could be one example of how we work together. We also want to learn from the Advisory Board about community/neighborhood activities.

- Update Bylaws update to match state standard
 - Chair Wes Ireland shared that the Advisory Board bylaws say that one board member *may* be a representative of a family member. The state law about municipal disability commissions/advisory boards say that a family member *shall* be a member of the board. Do we want to change that requirement? To make it required that one board member be a family member of a person with a disability shall be a family, instead of saying that may be a family member? Any questions?
 - Carl Richardson asked if changing the word from may to shall can be a friendly amendment instead of a formal motion?
 - This is something that needs more research. Disability Commission staff can find out if it can be a consensus motion without a vote.
- Richard Glovsky asked if there was only one change being proposed? Also can a redlined version of the bylaws with the proposed change be sent to the board for us to review?
 - Yes to both questions
- Paulette Durrett asked, when was the last time the bylaws were revised?
 - They were last updated in 2013
- Charlie Kim shared that he believes a non-disabled parent should be on the board, because that perspective is important. I appreciate being on this board and have gained a lot of perspective on disability and how to advocate for my daughter. I look forward to reading the redlined bylaws.

Public Input

- None

Adjournment

- Carl Richardson made a motion to adjourn, Paulette Durrett seconded, motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:29pm