



# Boston Disability Commission Advisory Board

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Minutes for Monday July 17th, 2017  
9<sup>th</sup> Floor BRA Board Room 900, Boston City Hall, 5:30 – 7:30 PM

KRISTEN MCCOSH  
*Commissioner*

## Commission Members

Zary Amirhosseini

Felishia Battles-Byrdsong

Jerry Boyd

Eugene Gloss

Dusya Lyubovskaya

Carl Richardson

Kyle Robidoux

John Winske

Present:	Staff Present:
(CR) Carl Richardson (JW) John Winske (JB) Jerry Boyd (DL) Dusya Lyubovskaya (EG) Eugene Gloss (FB) Feleshia Battles-Byrdsong (ZA) Zary Amirhosseini  Not Present: (KR) Kyle Robidoux	(KMC) Kristen McCosh, Commissioner (LI) Leah Igdalsky, Rappaport Fellow (JD) Jessica Doonan, Chief of Staff (PM) Patricia Mendez
Guests: Tim Davis, Boston Planning & Development Agency John Kelly, Second Thoughts	

**May & June Meeting Minutes:** A motion was made to approve the May 2017 and June 2017 minutes by Zary Amirhosseini (ZA), then seconded by Jerry Boyd (JB). They were then unanimously approved by all present.

### **Disability Housing Task Force Presentation: Tim Davis, Boston Planning & Development Agency**

Tim Davis (TD), the Housing Policy Manager at the Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA), introduced the project which is looking to increase access and to make the process easier to find units that are suitable to people's needs. Members of the commission have already received the final draft of the Disability Housing Task Force Report which is planned to be released on Wednesday, July 19, 2017. TD continued to discuss the accomplishments made to ensure the integrity of this program such as developing an accessibility checklist and working with the Commission to assist with confirming eligibility for unit preferences. Overall, the BPDA, Department of Neighborhood Development, the Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities, the Office of Fair Housing and Equity, and the Office of Housing Stability are all working together to coordinate their services in order to provide housing for veterans, the homeless, and for persons with disabilities within Boston. A Q&A session with Tim followed the presentation.

### **Second Thoughts Presentation: John Kelly, Second Thoughts**

John Kelly (JK), Director of Second Thoughts, explained to the Advisory Board the impact that the assisted suicide bill would have on persons with disabilities. The reasons for opposition of the bill includes those such as millions of people being misdiagnosed as terminally ill, the lack of government aid to cover prescribed treatments, and abuse whether it be financial, emotional, or physical. JK reports that nationally, every disability rights group is against assisted suicide in order to prevent innocent lives lost. JK requests for a letter to be written to the Public Health Committee and for the advisory board to continue their opposition against assisted suicide. The bill is scheduled to be heard on September 26, 2017 before the Public Health Committee. A brief question and answer session with John followed the presentation.

### **Interim Chair's Report: Carl Richardson**

Carl Richardson (CR) thanked those who sent in the top three ideas they would like the Commission to take on. He also noted the upcoming election for officers in the fall. Available positions are Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. In addition to the upcoming election for officers, positions for the nominating committee are also available.

### **Commissioner's Report: Kristen McCosh**

Kristen McCosh (KMC) noted some upcoming events that the general public is welcomed to attend to such as the Summer Block Parties, the announcement of the housing policies, the screening of Finding Dory, and the Annual ADA Day Celebration. In addition to these upcoming events, she notes the two (2) open positions within her office and the three (3) interns that are working in the office this summer. One of the interns at the Commission is a fellow who is currently working on an accessibility survey. The purpose of this survey is to determine the best approach to better serve persons with disabilities. It is to be either launched or announced on ADA day.

At the announcement of the Disability Housing Task Force Report on July 19<sup>th</sup>, a guide containing all the city departments and what they do in regards to housing will be provided. The intent of this guide is to help people navigate the city's offices. Additionally, a database of available housing units in Boston is being made. There is no specific focus on affordability but an impact can be made using survey data if needed.

### **Architectural Access Update: Patricia Mendez**

Architectural Access Specialist, Patricia Mendez (PM), opened her report by discussing the MBTA hearing on capital accessibility projects which include bus stop, train station, and commuter rail upgrades.

Regarding the Architectural Access Board, PM will participate at a hearing for bill number H2498 on Wednesday, July 19, at the State House in support of the bill. This bill will improve job opportunities for persons with disabilities and will help compliance for designers and developers for accessible parking spaces. In addition to that, this bill will update the language of the law and will replace the term "physically handicapped" with "persons with disabilities". Lastly, it will improve housing opportunities for persons with disabilities by eliminating one of the loopholes that exists in the law.

Lastly, PM noted that the Commission is working with the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, the Boston Transportation Department, and National Grid to improve sidewalk accessibility at the intersection of Tremont and Boylston,. A complaint about the sidewalk at Back Bay station was also made and the Commission has been working with MassDOT and other agencies to find a solution. A brief question and answer session with Patricia followed the update.

### **Old Action Items**

No Old Action Items

### **New Action Item**

John Winske (JW) made a motion to support Second Thoughts which received one opposition. By majority vote, a letter will be written to support Second Thoughts.

JW made a motion to support bill H2498 which was seconded by JB and Feleshia Battles-Byrdsong (FB). This motion was unanimously approved.

### **Public Input**

No public input

JW made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by FB and approved by all present.