

**DISABILITY COMMISSION
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

Meeting ID: meet.google.com/qqv-xuwx-abw

Call in Number: 1 401-646-2456 PIN: 969 909139#

Wednesday June 16th 2021
5:30-7:30 p.m.

Meeting Agenda

- Call to Order
- Introductions
- Approval of April and May minutes
- City Department Presentation-William Morales, BCYF
- Development Presentation: Sarah Rodrigo, Arts & Culture
- Chair's Report -olivia Richard
- Commissioner's Report - *Kristen McCosh*
- *Architectural Access Report - Patricia Mendez*
- Old Business -
- Old Action Items
- New Business
- New Action Items
- Public Input
- Adjournment

Meeting Minutes

Attending:

Jerry Boyd

Zary Amirhosseini
Wesley Ireland
Paul Caron
Olivia Richard
Carl Richardson
Elizabeth Dean-Clower
Dusya Lyubovskaya
Alice

Absent:

Yardley Sanchez
Kyle Robidoux
Juan Carlos Ramirez-Tapia

Meeting called to order:

5:40

April Meeting Minutes:

Motion to approve April meeting minutes by Zary, seconded by Jerry. Motion carried.

May Meeting Minutes:

Motion to approve May meeting minutes by Jerry, seconded by Carl. Motion carried.

Votes Taken

- The Board voted to authorize members to participate remotely at any future meeting and still be counted toward a quorum, per the provision of the Open Meeting Law which offers this capability to Disabilities Commissions. The motion was made by Zary, seconded by Carl. The motion passed.

Other Decisions Made

- The Board wants to meet in-person as soon as possible, while ensuring that we have the technological capability to allow members of the public to attend and participate remotely.
- Discussion of the letter welcoming Mayor Janey included the suggestion that City Hall Plaza be included as one of the priorities. That amendment will be made and the final draft presented next month.

- Discussion of the letter regarding COVID-19 vaccination for people with disabilities included a request from Board member Elizabeth that she make some edits and present a final draft next month.

Issues Discussed

City Department Presentation: William Morales, BCYF-

- We are working on reopening our facilities, bringing back our programs, including reintroducing our work with partners. All BCYF centers have been fully open since May 29th, but some virtual programming has continued.
- Hiring lifeguards has been more challenging than ever. Are asking residents to pre-register for lanes in the pools.
- Super Teens program is open, and 50% of that program is already registered. The program is specially tailored to young people 12 to 14 years of age, for those who have aged out of traditional “summer camps” but are too young for youth jobs programs.
 - In response to a question asked about accessibility in all modes (e.g. not just physical but ASL, etc.) Commissioner Morales said that they will make accommodations as necessary so that no one is turned away.
- Camp Joy is fully enrolled, within a week we were 50% enrolled. There were a lot of returning and new participants. We are excited to have a program for kids with disabilities. There is door to door transportation, nurses and attending full time.
- Snapshot program for teens, where the young people find joy in the image they capture.
- Commissioner McCosh asked the Advisory Board to spread the word about these opportunities so that people with disabilities know that they can take advantage of the great programming.

Second City Department Presentation: Sarah Rodrigo, Arts & Culture

- The Public Art team in the Arts and Culture department commissions, reviews, and cares for all public art. Have been working with the Commission for Persons with Disabilities' architectural access team (Sarah and Patricia) to improve access to public art and rethink people's interactions with installations.
- For example, in 2019 the office released the first call for proposals from artists in the Transformational Art program.
- The same year the office Commissioned seven projects all of which are considered traditional public art, that is artwork in a specific place even if only temporarily and require viewers.
- The realities of the COVID-19 pandemic pushed the public art team to embrace more creative definitions of public art as not only including objects in a public space. Have broadened their concept of both art and the public.
- They received feedback from colleagues asking how they defined public art and these definitions confirmed our perception that public art is not specifically objects in a place but Art made for the public created through a public process. Art made for a community or place and any artwork that the public can engage with for free. The department created new opportunities for artists who do not create work in traditional media, may not have access to equipment or the ability to paint large scale murals or make physical sculptures.
- In response to questions about the Transformative Art Program call for projects, Sarah confirmed that decision notifications would go out within the month of July.

- Sarah and Board member Dusya engaged in a discussion about how important art is for putting people's voices out in the public realm, and inviting the public into their creativity.
- Board member Carl mentioned an organization called Open Doors that works with children with disabilities to engage them in art projects (the organization was formerly known as Very Special Arts). The Commissioner offered to follow up with Sarah to connect her with Open Doors and others.

Third City Department Presentation - Lynn Dann, Office of Financial

Empowerment

- Lynn reminded the Board of the goals of the Office including - offering those seeking financial security and wealth generation access to capital, financial education, and tailored financial services.
- Specifically, the Boston Tax Help Coalition provides free tax preparation sites allowing Bostonians to keep more of their earned income tax time by avoiding predatory fees.
- The rest of the presentation was focused on summarizing new and modified programs introduced in the American Rescue Plan recently passed by the US Congress. First, there were additional direct stimulus payments, the creation of an Advance Child Tax Credit program, and some changes made to the Earned Income Tax Credit.
 - Taxpayers who filed taxes in 2019 or 2020 that would have made them eligible for the annual Child Tax Credit program will begin receiving monthly payments of that credit (an advance payment) in July. If you did not file for taxes, or if you do not wish to receive the payments on a monthly basis, you have to use the newly created portal. People do not need a bank account or a permanent address in order to receive

the payments. The money can be used for any kind of child care, except for free care provided by a spouse, a dependent, or a free state-subsidized program.

- Resources for help navigating these programs include findyourfunds.org, eitcoutreach.org, finnav.org/boston, and Lynn (email lynnambassador@gmail.com).

Chair's Report: Olivia Richard

- The new way to get vaccinated, there is a partnership between the commuter rail and CIC health which has been running the Mass vaccination clinic at other locations throughout the city. They're going to be running a vaccination train that will stop in Boston. It runs from the 16th to 20th.

Commissioner's Report: Kristen McCosh

- The state of the emergency ended June 15th. This morning the Governor signed into law legislation that included extension of some COVID-19 emergency orders. These include outdoor dining, the eviction moratorium, and they also extend remote participation in meetings until April 2022.
- The City is still not allowing in-person meetings on City property until further notice.
- Therefore, we intend to continue holding Advisory Board meetings fully remotely, as we have during the pandemic, for the foreseeable future.
- There is a provision of the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law that allows Disability Commissions to allow for remote participation by committee members. As background, the Open Meeting Law does not count members participating remotely (whether through calling in, video conference, etc.) towards a quorum. Establishing a quorum is a prerequisite for a variety of provisions in the law including taking votes etc. However, Disability

Commissions can count remote participation toward a quorum - only if the body votes to enact such a provision. They can vote to authorize remote participation to count toward a quorum for a single meeting or for all future meetings. The Chair (or a designee) must still be in person to run the meeting.

- In response to questions and general discussion it was clarified that this would not require remote participation, or bar in person participation, but rather would allow members to call in to a meeting and be a full voting participant, regardless of COVID emergency orders being extended or not.
- Discussion of the issue included a general sentiment from the Board that they look forward to returning in person as soon as possible. In addition, there was a commitment by the Board to ensure the technological capability for members of the public to both attend and participate in meetings going forward.
- Vote was held.
- Voting by mail and early voting was not included in this bill. The House passed a provision that would make voting by mail permanent in the state.
- Reminder that ADA Day 2021 is scheduled for July 29th, and social media outreach has begun.
- The office is continuing to work on pedestrian safety videos. Proposed topics include floating bus stops, changing use of curbs, accessible parking and potentially snow removal. Are there any others the Board would like to add?
 - Board member Wesley suggested producing messaging that Stop signs / lights etc. apply to bikes too, even if they aren't the "bike light."
- Captioning ordinance is still planned to be announced on ADA Day.
- City Hall plaza update: Chief Dion Irish is very supportive of a written agreement in which the City commits to giving this Board a tour of the plaza

upon completion and one year after to monitor how well materials etc. are holding up. He also suggested a site visit while construction is still underway, once some of the accessibility features are underway. A draft letter will be presented at the July meeting.

Architectural Access Report – Patricia Mendez

- Been monitoring the restaurants and the outdoor seating. The office has been responding to complaints.
- The Massachusetts Architectural Board for the use of accessible ramps has extended it until the end of December 2021.
- The office participated in a meeting with the Freedom Trail Foundation to discuss collaboration on improving accessibility of the Foundation's services and information as well as accessibility at the various sites along the Trail. That conversation re-connected the Commission to work going on in the Boston Common.

Public Input:

No public input

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Carl, seconded by Jerry, and the motion was carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:40pm.