



City of Melrose Commission on Disability Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: May 8, 2023

Commissioners Present:

Garin Boyd
Karen Burke
David Hoff
Erin Heyneman
Margaret Sheets
Judy Bushee

Commissioners Absent:

None

1. Call to Order

Commission Chair Hoff called to order the regular meeting of the Commission on Disability at 6:02PM

2. Approval of minutes from last meeting

A motion to approve the minutes from the April 13, 2023 meeting was made by Commissioner Boyd and second by Commissioner Sheets. Passed unanimously.

3. Public Participation

- A parent of an out of district student in Melrose commented about the need to stop the building of the new Northeast Metro Tech Building in Wakefield due to upper and lower campus accessibility issues, and safety concerns.
- Another member of the community discussed the need for letters to the editor on the NEMT issue, and whether they would have impact. Recent article in the Boston Globe on the NEMT building issues was noted.

4. CODA/MOD/State issue update

Melrose did not attend this month's CODA meeting. Invites for July 19th and August 31st MA Office on Disability Events have been sent to all commissioners.

5. Special Education Parents Advisory Council (SEPAC) Update

- Noreen Donavan announced that the Interim School Superintendent is John Macero.
- Last SEPAC meeting, Noreen spoke about neurodiverse language and ableism etc., masking, ABA, depression in autistic community, high/low functioning language is not specific. Three or four special educators were there
- Transition out of high school issues: Noreen asked about talking with legislators about day programs. Need more programming and staffing for Adult Day programs for people with disabilities. Commissioner Sheets mentioned the Thrive Program with Easter Seals and the MGH Aspire Program.
- Final SEPAC meeting May 22nd in Learning Commons at the High School.

6. Follow Your Art Event – June 10, 2023

- We are still looking for storytellers. Reaching out to high school was suggested (Jen Chernisky, Special Education Coordinator). Need to reach out to CART MCDHH partners interpreting video remote interpreting
- Motion by Commissioner Boyd Seconded by Commissioner Sheets to offer \$600 as honorarium for event. Unanimous vote with Heyneman abstaining.

7. Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan Update

Meeting with city council first week of June and then follow-up presentation to the school committee.

8. Metro North YMCA Variance Requests Update

The YMCA is undertaking a massive renovation, with request for 14 variances. Commissioners Hoff and Boyd toured the facility with a follow-up email, requesting that the front entrance be made fully accessible rather than having the only accessible entrance in the rear (attached). Among the issues are accessibility of a restroom on the first floor. Need signage to the accessible bathroom. Will follow up with State Access Board and Jeff Dugan from Mass Office on Disability.

9. Community Health Inclusion Project

Ongoing activities on minigrant for several communities including Melrose. Meeting on Wednesday, May 15th. Commissioners Boyd and Heyneman can go.

10. Disability Commission Website Update

Request is in to Lily Martin to update names of Commissioners; old commissioners still listed. Also discussed making the website more accessible, adding content for our events, etc. Chair Hoff mentions the Disability Index, which services as a statewide resource on disability issues. Simplest solution on resources may be including a link to the Index.

11. City website

The accessibility of the city's website was discussed. Commissioner Hoff will ask about an accessibility review from the Institute for Human Centered Design, which will cost

approximately \$1,000. First step will be for Chair Hoff to check with a colleague who can do an initial review of the site's accessibility.

12. DPW Request Issues

Gary Hale, a community member, stated that he had to go through the mayor's office and DPW to get a curb cut installed, and it took 1.5 years. DPW response rate on these types of issues is an issue.

13. City ADA Coordinator

The city Building Inspector and HR Director have been appointed ADA Coordinators for the city. Efforts will be made to invite them to a future meeting. While the commission is pleased to see these appointments, the need to ensure they are properly trained on accessibility issues was discussed.

14. Social media Intern

Update on getting a social media intern from the high school Motion by Commissioner Boyd to approve language for Social Media Intern. Seconded by Commissioner Bushee. Passed unanimously.

15. Cefalo Building Issue Update

Commissioner Hoff spoke with resident last week about accessibility issues they are experiencing, and said we would come out and take pictures. MA Office on Disability could potentially provide information to assist.

16. Commission Calendar

Commissioner Sheets has created a calendar that we can all access.

17. Officer Functions

Streamlining of functions was discussed so that all business is not relegated to just one commissioner. Commissioners Boyd and Heyneman will have access to the email, in addition to Commission Chair Hoff

18. Other Business

- Commissioner Hoff will be absent on June 12th and Vice Chair Boyd will chair the meeting.
- Vocational School issues: Discussion of accessibility and also whose responsibility it is to advocate

19. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:09PM. Motion made by Commissioner Bushee, seconded by Commissioner Heyneman. Passed unanimously.

Meeting minutes submitted by Erin Heyneman, Commission Secretary.

From: Melrose Commission on Disability <commissionondisability@CityofMelrose.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 27, 2023 11:36 AM
To: Jen Hocherman, AIA, LEED AP <jen@svdesign.com>
Cc: Doucet, Stephen <sdoucet@CityofMelrose.org>; Talarico, Albert <atararico@cityofmelrose.org>; Bucciero, Patricia <pbucciero@cityofmelrose.org>; Kathleen Walsh <kwash@metronorthymca.org>; Katelyn Papadopoulos <Kpapadopoulos@metronorthymca.org>; Garin Boyd <garinb@hotmail.com>
Subject: Re: Variance Application 497 Main Street, Melrose

Hi Jen,

It was good to meet you yesterday, and thank you for the tour and discussion of the variances being requested for the Y renovations. After giving it some thought, Garin and I on behalf of the City of Melrose Commission on Disability are requesting that the feasibility of a ramp at the front entrance be explored. We recognize the challenges of parking on the street there for anyone using a wheelchair, and appreciate the expanded parking that will be available in the back. However, we feel it is important that the front entrance be fully accessible if at all possible for a few reasons: a) Someone may be arriving by wheelchair rather than parking a vehicle in front; b) It makes the entrance universally accessible; c) As a community resource, we feel it is important for the Y to be as accessible as possible, and if the front entrance is not made fully accessible during this period of extensive renovations, it will be a missed opportunity. While we aren't design experts, we feel that it appears to be potentially feasible to have a ramp there, as the building is only slightly above the height of the sidewalk. As a city commission, we would certainly be willing to help you work with the city on addressing the interface between the Y and the city-owned sidewalk.

Again thank you for the tour and discussion, and we look forward to hearing from you.

David Hoff
Chair - City of Melrose Commission on Disability
617-480-9230