

City of Melrose Commission on Disability Meeting Minutes



Meeting Date: July 17, 2023

Commissioners Present:

Garin Boyd
Judy Bushee
David Hoff
Judy Bushee
Erin Heyneman

Commissioners Absent:

Margaret Sheets

1. Call to Order

Commission Chair Hoff called to order the regular meeting of the Commission on Disability at 6:05 PM.

2. Approval of minutes

The June 12, 2023 minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Public Participation

A member of the public noted that there was a new bill on public access, sponsored by Senator Lewis, with a hearing on July 26th.

4. Special Education Parents Advisory Council (SEPAC) Update

SEPAC representative Noreen Donovan provided an update.

- a) The new co-directors of the SEPAC are trying to get a meeting with the new superintendent.
- b) The first meeting of the SEPAC will on 9/18/23 at 7:00 PM. The meeting will be held remotely.
- c) In terms of the budget, the SEPAC continues to be concerned about the cost of out of district placements, which are above the state average, as well as the impact on students and families. As part of the need to look at overall costs in the school budget, there is a need for stronger oversight of special education costs.

5. Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan

The ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan was presented to the City Council on July 13th. The reception and support for plan was very positive. Disability Commission members noted the importance of celebrating the changes as the plan is implemented. Also noted was the importance of meeting with the new Mayor when they take office in January, to discuss the plan, and how ongoing progress will be monitored.

6. Northeast Metro Tech New Building Update

Megan McDonough, who has been working on the issues with plans for the new Northeast Regional Vocational School in Wakefield, reported that the Wakefield Conversation Commission had deemed the

construction too environmentally sensitive. The school has appealed the decision to the Department of Environmental Protection.

7. Community Health Inclusion Project

No current updates. Vice Chair Boyd will check with the City's Prevention and Wellness Coordinator Kara Showers regarding the status.

8. MOD Grant

The MA Office on Disability has another round of funding available, with applications due September 15th. With the completion of the Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan, Melrose can apply for capital improvement projects to improve accessibility. Commission members discussed looking at the Transition Plan spreadsheet to determine priorities. Commission Chair Hoff will check with the mayor's office regarding submitting an application.

9. MOD Webinar

There is webinar on July 18th on emergency preparedness for people with disabilities, being presented by the MA Office on Disability. Commission members were urged to attend if possible.

10. Victorian Fair

Plans for the Victorian Fair on September 10th were discussed. Vice Chair Boyd will coordinate the schedule of volunteers and plans for the commission's booth.

11. Communications Intern Update

Commissioner Breen has sent the job description for the social media intern to the special education coordinator at the high school, who will work on disseminating it.

12. Cefalo Building Issue

After discussions with the building management at the Cefalo building, it appears the accessibility issues that a resident has been experiencing have been addressed. Commission Chair Hoff sent an email to the building management endorsing the resolution of the issues.

13. Melrose Y Variance Request Update

The Architectural Access Board has approved the variances requested by the Melrose Y for its renovations. It isn't clear whether the front entrance will be fully accessible, and this needs to be followed up on.

14. Sidewalk Issue

An inquiry was received from the Institute for Human Centered Design, regarding issues with accessibility of a sidewalk in the city. The commission will follow up.

15. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 7:05. Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes submitted by Commission Chair David Hoff