



City of Melrose Commission on Disability Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: October 16, 2023

Commissioners Present:

Garin Boyd
Alaine Breen
David Hoff
Erin Heyneman
Margaret Sheets

Commissioners Absent:

Judy Bushee

1. **Call to Order**

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

2. **Approval of minutes from September 9th meeting**

A motion to approve the minutes from the September 9th meeting was made by Commissioner Sheets and seconded by Commissioner Heyneman.

discussion: None.

Vote to accept September 9th meeting minutes:

David Hoff-Yes
Maggie Sheets-Yes
Garin Boyd-Yes
Alaine Breen-Yes
Erin Heyneman-Yes

3. **Public Participation**

- A member of the public expressed dissatisfaction with the way the North East Metro Tech school is being constructed as it is not accessible for students with disabilities and would be dangerous to evacuated in emergency situations.

4. **Paul W. Spooner Generational Leadership Summit Update**

- Commissioner Heyneman and Commissioner Sheets described how they attended the Paul W. Spooner Generational Leadership Summit last month and how they made many connections with other disability advocates.
- Commissioner Heyneman described how she spoke at the Summit about the Commission on Disability's work in Melrose.

5. Special Education Parents Advisory Council (SEPAC) Update

- SEPAC will have their next monthly meeting on 10/23 at 7PM and will include a virtual presentation from the Federation for Children with Special Needs.
- A search committee for the next school superintendent has been formed with a person from METCO and a representative from a social justice committee.
- SEPAC is working to help develop support groups for parents of kids with autism.
- SEPAC is working to partner with other groups and community organizations to do events and classes such as employment training. The Commission on Disability will work with SEPAC on these initiatives, possibly with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission's help.

6. Social Media Intern Update

- Commissioners Breen, Heyneman and Boyd described how they met with 3 high school students as potential interns over Zoom.
- It was felt that the Commission should have 2 interns: 1 is a junior and another is a senior in high school. Commissioners Boyd, Breen and Heyneman will meet with them again on 10/18 and on 10/25.
- Interns will be supervised by Commissioner Heyneman
- Potential projects for the interns would be to create social media posts that would be vetted by the Commission and posted on the Commission's social media.
- The interns might also help with event planning.
- The interns will be invited to the Commission on Disability's November meeting.
- The interns will work with the Commission on a volunteer basis.

7. MOD Grant Update

- The application for the MOD grant has been submitted to help make the Milano Center more accessible. The grant awardees should be announced in November.

8. Senior Resource Fair 2024

- Commissioner Boyd will represent the Commission on Disability at the Senior Resource Fair in Melrose on 10/17/23 and will distribute the Commission's flyers there.
- The possibility of having a tablecloth and additional signage beyond the current banner, for Commissioners to use at events was discussed.

9. Community Health Inclusion Project Update

- Commissioner Hoff reported that another application for an \$18,000 grant is being submitted for the Community Health Inclusion Project from the MA Department of Public Health. This application was submitted for a similar pool of funding that the City of Melrose was awarded in 2022 in conjunction with 3 surrounding towns. The Commission on Disability sent a letter of support for the grant application (see attached).
- This will be further discussed at the Commission's November meeting with the Melrose Prevention and Wellness Coordinator, Kara Showers.

10. Arts organization

- Michelle Ramadan described how Follow Your Art is hosting a Visual Descriptions on 10/27 from 7-8:30PM. Ten spots will be available for visually impaired people to view artwork at Follow Your Art's facility in Melrose.
- The Commission on Disability will publicize the event.
- The event might be recorded on Melrose's local TV channel. Commissioner Boyd will follow up about this.

11. Other Business

- *ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan:* There are no updates on the approved ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan. After the election, the Commission on Disability plans to have a discussion with the new mayor about plans for implementation of the Transition Plan, and filling the open city position on the commission.
- *Meeting with ADA Coordinators:* Commissioner Hoff, Commissioner Boyd and Commissioner Breen plan to meet with Melrose's two new ADA Coordinators about working collaboratively with the Commission on Disability. Having at least one of Melrose's ADA Coordinators regularly attend the Commission's meetings was discussed.
- *Accessible Playground Dedication:* Commissioner Hoff described how a dedication ceremony is being planned for the recently built accessible playground in Melrose. Commissioners discussed having an opening ceremony involving kids there in November. SEPAC may be able to help with an accessible playground ceremony. It will be discussed at their next meeting.
- *Vo-Tech school construction:* Commissioners have spoken out verbally and in written letters against the way the school is being constructed and remain very concerned about the new building in terms of accessibility. However, it is unclear at this point what else the Commission can do regarding this issue
- *Melrose Community Coalition:* Melrose Community Coalition is meeting this Wednesday (10/18) and Commissioner Hoff will represent the Disability Commission there to increase the Commission's collaborative presence in the Melrose community.
- *Cornhole Tournament:* Commissioner Boyd and Commissioner Sheets attended the cornhole tournament in Melrose on 10/14 to raise money for a local disability-related charity.

12. Adjournment

This meeting was adjourned at 7:08 PM. The motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Boyd and seconded by Commissioner Hyneman. Vote to adjourn the meeting:

David Hoff-Yes
Maggie Sheets-Yes
Garin Boyd-Yes
Alaine Breen-Yes
Erin Heyneman-Yes

Meeting minutes submitted by Maggie Sheets, Commissioner.