

Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the Special Commissions on Accessible, Extremely Low-Income, and Senior Housing

Date: April 18, 2025

1:00 – 2:30 PM

John W. McCormack Building

One Ashburton Place, 21st Floor, Conference Rooms 1 & 2

Boston, MA 02108

Note: attendance for the 4/18/25 Joint Meeting of the Special Commissions on Accessible, Extremely Low-Income, and Senior Housing is hybrid.

Members Present

Sec. Ed Augustus
Aaron Gornstein
Alma Balonon-Rosen
Amy Schectman
Andrew DeFranza
Bill Grogan
Brian Bickford
Carolyn Villers
Chris Norris
David Gillespie
Emily Cooper
Emily Haber
Jeffrey Sacks
Jennifer Maynard
John Yazwinski
Libby Hayes
Megan Mulcahy
Michael Muehe
Rachel Heller
Roberta Rubin
William Joyce
Sen. Pat Jehlen
Rep. Adrienne Ramos (virtual)
Ann Jochnick (virtual)
Betsy Connell (virtual)
Catherine Boyle (virtual)
Elissa Sherman (virtual)
Gretchen Van Ness (virtual)
James Fuccione (virtual)
Jeff Dougan (virtual)
Matthew Steele (virtual)
Sen. Peter Durant (virtual)
Rep. Richard Haggerty (virtual)
Ryan Berard (virtual)

Members Present (cont.)

Rep. Thomas Stanley (virtual)
Danna Mauch (virtual)

Members Absent

Sen. Julian Cyr
Rep. Brad Jones
Moddie Turay
Valerie Fletcher
Bran Shim
Kim Brooks
Betsey Crimmins

EOHLC Staff Present

Gina McLaughlin
Tim Reardon
Josh Cuddy
Ben Bryant
Eric Shupin
Matt Walsh
Jack Burke

Others Present

Emily Levine

Call to Order

Secretary Ed Augustus (Chair) called the meeting to order at 1:06. Matt Walsh called the roll, and the Chair read the names of members participating remotely.

Data Brief

The Chair turned to Gina McLaughlin to provide a framing of the data brief. Gina explained that a briefing on relevant data was requested by multiple members of the three Commissions, and that EOHLC hoped the briefing would establish a shared foundation for the Commissions' work. Gina then introduced Tim Reardon.

Tim gave an overview of the statewide housing plan's projected demand and projected production needs before presenting more specific demographic information on housing needs for the older adult population, with regional breakdowns. Tim then gave overviews of data related to extremely low-income households and households with disabilities. He noted that disability is self-reported and that limited data is available on the availability of accessible housing. Tim then noted the significant overlap between older adults, people with disabilities and extremely low-income households, highlighting the potential for synergy in the Commissions' work.

Members asked if projections were available on the future demand for services among these populations. Tim responded that no data is available, but EOHLC is interested in exploring the question further. Members offered potential ways to measure prevalence of certain disabilities, including data from schools or Continuums of Care (CoCs). Members expressed interest in setting specific production goals for each population served by these Commissions within the broader statewide goal of producing 222,000 units of housing by 2035. Members noted that rest homes should also be considered as housing stock, to which Emily Cooper responded that there is simultaneously an assisted living residence commission being administered by EOHHS to address challenges with these facilities.

Expert Panel

Gina McLaughlin introduced panelists Jennifer Molinsky of the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University; Dan Emmanuel of the National Low-Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), and Katie Denis of Kessler, McGuinness and Associates (KMA). Gina then turned to Matt to ask panelists to give an overview of their work.

Jennifer noted that housing for older adults needs to consider supports and services, and that there is a gap between eligibility for many safety net programs and the incomes of many older adults. She suggested improved alignment of eligibility for services and subsidized housing to reach moderate income households and highlighted the importance of aging in place.

Dan noted that Massachusetts does more work on Extremely Low-Income Housing than many other states and praised the Commonwealth for establishing the Extremely Low-Income Housing Commission. He noted that supporting extremely low-income populations is primarily achieved through subsidy, and that the needs of this population are particularly acute.

Katie noted that when considering accessibility, it is important to remember that any person can gain a disability at any time. She gave an overview of current federal and state accessibility

requirements, and noted that more supply of accessible housing is needed. Katie noted that some communities require that higher percentages of development be fully accessible, and that informal cost surveys suggest a limited cost differential between adaptable and fully accessible units.

Members noted the need for a comprehensive resource outlining all the various accessibility requirements at the state and federal levels. Members further noted that help navigating public benefits was essential for the populations on which these Commissions' work focuses, and that

Panelists discussed the need for greater verification of units' accessibility, given that many units labeled as accessible are not actually accessible in practice.

Members noted that zoning was a challenge and suggested a focus on legislation to allow by-right development on lands owned by religious institutions.

Adjourn

The Chair noted that the meeting's agenda had concluded and that he would entertain a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by John Yazwinski and seconded by David Gillespie. The motion was unanimously approved (35-0) and the meeting was adjourned.