Minutes of the Special Commission on Accessible Housing

Date: June 25, 2025

10:00 – 11:00 AM

Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities

100 Cambridge St. #300, Worcester Conference Room

Boston, MA 02114

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| **Members Present**Secretary Ed Augustus (Chair)William JoyceMatthew SteeleValerie FletcherDavid GillespieCatherine Boyle (Remote)Jeff Dougan (Remote)Michael Muehe (Remote) | **Absent**Representative Richard HaggertySenator Julian CyrDanna Mauch |

**EOHLC Staff Present**

Benjamin Bryant

Gina McLaughlin

Eric Shupin

John Burke

**Call to Order & Roll Call**

Secretary Ed Augustus (Chair) welcomed members and called the meeting to order at 10:05AM, and turned to Matt Walsh, who called the roll and named members participating remotely.

**Approval of Minutes**

The Chair noted that March, April, and May minutes were sent to members for their review, and that he would entertain a motion to approve those sets of minutes. David Gillespie moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Michael Muehe. Members voted unanimously (8-0) to approve all minutes.

**Prior Meeting Reflection**

The Chair opened the floor to members’ reflections on prior joint meetings. Members noted the presentations from 2Life Communities’ Amy Schechtman and AAB member Katie Denis were both helpful in understanding the level of accessibility and adaptability that can be achieved while minimizing, or defraying, marginal increases in development cost. Other members noted that while subsidized developments may have the resources to support these marginal cost increases, fully market driven developments cannot always support even these marginal cost escalations and further noted that accessible units may also provide reduced revenue. The Chair requested that members share any relevant reports providing the data discussed or related data.

**Process Overview**

The Chair and Gina McLaughlin gave a brief overview of the working group process proposed by EOHLC, detailed in slide 6 of the meeting presentation.

**Identified Challenges & Solutions**

The Chair turned to Matt Walsh for an overview of the challenges and solutions Commissioners identified in survey responses to EOHLC. A summary of these responses is available in slide 8 of the meeting presentation, with further details in the appendix on slides 12 – 19.

Members noted that design of accessible units should be a focus across multiple working groups, and that conversations on design should consider a wide variety of accessibility features, including for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and visual, auditory, communications and safety-related accessibility needs. Other members note that a universal design approach accounts for all of these needs, and benefits those without accessibility needs.

Members further noted that the Architectural Access Board (AAB) is in the midst of reviewing and updating regulations, and that legislation (HB2569/SB1733) has been filed to update adaptability requirements. AAB Executive Director William Joyce gave a brief overview of the AAB’s regulatory process and highlighted that public comments would soon be accepted on changes.

**Next Steps**

Gina McLaughlin gave a brief overview of next steps, outlined in slide 10 of the meeting presentation. Members expressed support for dedicating July to focused work in smaller working groups and reconvening as a full Commission in August.

**Adjourn**

Noting that the meeting agenda had concluded, the Chair noted that he would entertain a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by William Joyce and seconded by Valerie Fletcher. Members voted unanimously (8-0) to adjourn.