



**Montgomery County, MD**  
**Commission on People with Disabilities**  
**November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**Welcome and Approval of October, 2015 Meeting Summary Minutes:**

Seth Morgan, Chair, convened the meeting. A motion was made to approve the October, 2015 Meeting Summary Minutes. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken and the October, 2015 Meeting Summary Minutes were unanimously approved as written. Approved minutes are available online at [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd).

**Recreation Opportunities for Health & Wellness – Gabe Albornoz, Director, Montgomery County Department of Recreation**

Since 1954, the Department of Recreation (DR) has provided inclusive recreation programs and activities that serve the recreation and leisure needs of the Montgomery County community. The Department manages 37 facilities including community and neighborhood recreation centers, senior centers, and 4 indoor and 7 outdoor aquatic facilities. It provides thousands of programs such as out-of-school activities, aquatics, classes, youth and adult sports programs and leagues, senior programs, and therapeutic recreation that enhance the quality of life for participants of all ages, cultures, and abilities.

DR has a staff of approximately 3,000 people, of which 119 are full-time merit employees and the rest are part-time or seasonal employees such as camp counselors or lifeguards. Most of DR programs and services are carried out by contractors that sign formal memorandums of understanding. DR staff assist in facilitating those contractors. In the last five years DR has been more open to partnering with non-profits that serve the disability community.

The North Potomac Community Center, the County's sixth combined senior/community center, is slated to open in summer 2016.

The DR operating budget is unique in that approximately half of the budget (\$12.5M) is made up in revenue. Programs are offered on a sliding scale.

DR offers over 6,000 classes: <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec/thingstodo/classes/index.html>.

Gabe discussed two facilities of which he is particularly proud of:

- The Washington Nationals Miracle League Baseball Field, located in South Germantown Park, incorporates a cushioned synthetic turf that accommodates people who use wheelchairs and other walking assistance devices, while helping prevent injuries. DR is looking to expand the current program.
- The Potomac Community Recreation Center recently repurposed an inline skating rink into a synthetic material like the Miracle Field. DR has been approached by a number of organizations that would like to offer TR programs using the new accessible rink.

Sharon Norcio, Recreation Supervisor, Therapeutic Recreation (TR), noted that TR has a staff of four that program classes year round and community wide. TR provides accessible leisure, educational and personal development activities for individuals with disabilities through inclusion (mainstreaming) and adaptive programs. Not every program can be held in every part of the County, though those programs that are popular are replicated as best as possible. Discounts are not available for seniors or people with disabilities, but a financial assistance program is available, which begins in January of every year. The financial aid is deposited into the person's account and they decide which classes to take.

TR offers a full continuum of services. For example, if an individual starts in the adaptive karate program, which is smaller in class size and offers specialized instruction, they can go into the community as they graduate into higher belt exams or they can stay in the adaptive program.

In response to an issue that was discussed at the Commission's Steering Committee meeting in September, TR has adjusted the minimum participants required for aquatic classes. DR has also looked extensively into pool temperature issues. It is a challenge to raise or lower the pool temperatures due to scheduling of swim meets, but DR will begin posting pool temperatures and will notify the public when swim meets are going to occur so they can plan accordingly. Gabe reported that DR has a new manager in aquatics, Melanie Sasse, who has been very creative in finding solutions to time challenges for programs.

The floor was opened to questions.

There have been some registration issues with the new ActiveMontgomery system, which streamlines that process for DR, Montgomery Parks, and Community Use of Public Facilities. Registration is not done over the phone, but can be completed in person at all recreation facilities and recreation headquarters. Front desk staff do have limited access, though, and may not be able to tell you specific information regarding the financial status of your account. You will need to call or e-mail if your question is of a more sensitive nature.

Carl Prather, Commissioner, asked how DR contacts non-profits to partner with them. Gabe noted that Charlie Butler, Therapeutic Recreation, coordinates roundtables that are held twice a year at various recreation centers. The meetings are open to any who would like to attend. Oftentimes a parent will suggest an organization or TR will connect with non-profits at resource fairs.

#### **Chair and Vice-Chair Report:**

Seth Morgan, Chair, reported that he attended Recreation's ADA 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration on Sunday, November 8<sup>th</sup> and it was great. The event was co-sponsored by the Montgomery County Department of Recreation, the City of Takoma Park, the City of Rockville, and Montgomery Parks.

Seth also attended the Maryland Transportation Summit in Baltimore held in October.

The County will be holding a press conference on Tuesday, November 24<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m. at Public Safety Headquarters, 100 Edison Park Drive, Gaithersburg. Montgomery County Police Chief Tom Manger and Fire Chief Scott Goldstein will provide important holiday pedestrian and driver safety information as well as reminding drivers about Respect the Space and designated disability parking spaces. Commissioner Carl Prather will represent the Commission at this event.

The first meeting of the Montgomery County Shelter Review Committee was held at White Oak Community Center. The group will be reviewing various locations they use as shelters looking specifically at access issues for people with disabilities. Seth and Betsy Luecking, Staff, attended the review of White Oak. The group will also be reviewing public health centers.

Respect the Space had a meeting earlier in the month. At this juncture the group is trying to resolve the issue of which County agencies are responsible for enforcing the ADA parking lot laws and creating legislation to give them the enforcement authority. Once that is established the group will move forward with reviewing the parking lots. Seth will be asking Commissioners to volunteer their time to evaluate parking lots and will be holding refresher courses on how to identify violations. If you see a car that does not have a disability placard or license plate parked in a disability parking space you can call the police non-emergency number (301-279-8000). The issue of disability placard abuse was discussed and Betsy noted that the County police department does plan to have an enhanced enforcement program in high use areas to issue citations to all persons who are illegally using a disability placard and unable to prove that their placard is theirs. It was asked how to report snow that has been plowed into disability parking spots at retail locations. Betsy will ask the County Attorney and let the Commission know of his response.

Seth reported that the County Council Government Operations and Fiscal Policy (GO) Committee will meet on Monday, November 30<sup>th</sup> to discuss Bill 37-15: Boards, Committees, Commissions-Advocacy. Seth asked Commissioners to send an email of support for the bill to the County Executive and to George Leventhal, County Council President.

Marcie Povitsky, Vice-Chair, reported that she toured the Disability Resource Center at the Rockville Memorial Library with the Library Advisory Board. The DRC is located on the first floor of the library and has a lot of great resources and information.

**Ex-Officio Updates:**

Nancy Greene, ADA Compliance Manager, reported that ADA improvements, primarily restrooms, are being completed at Bauer Drive Community Recreation Center and Potomac Community Recreation Center. The ramp issue at Bauer Drive is being remediated. A number of ADA improvements will be made at the Black Rock Center for the Arts in Germantown. A ramp will be installed at the Noyes Library in Kensington. Anil Saini, ADA Compliance, has been working to install video remote interpreting services at a number of Health and Human Services facilities and is working to install assistive listening systems at a number of County facilities. Nancy has also been working on a quick guide on how to assist people with disabilities that will be given to front line County staff. Nancy reported that if you have a complaint regarding the condition of sidewalks or curb cuts to call 311 and file a formal complaint, which will be tracked and routed to the appropriate department. Betsy Luecking, Staff, added that any ADA complaints including pedestrian signals should also be reported to 311.

Charlie Butler, Department of Recreation, distributed the [recreation winter guide](#). The Friends of Recreation is a tax-exempt organization that obtains funding from private donors that helps to fund programs, services and facilities.

Faisal Khan, Department of Transportation, reported that they are continuing to do outreach for the Call-n-Ride program. He shared a brochure about the program with Commissioners: [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT-Transit/Resources/Files/seniors/CallNRidebrochure-201503.pdf](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT-Transit/Resources/Files/seniors/CallNRidebrochure-201503.pdf).

Betsy reported that Rita Gale from Montgomery County Public Libraries will be replacing Francie Gilman, as she has retired.

Angela Washington, Office of Human Resources, reported that the new Deputy Director, Darryl Gorman, is handling employee ADA requests very quickly.

Betsy Luecking, Staff, reported that the County can serve up to 500 individuals for Coordination of Community Services (formerly Resource Coordination). The County currently serves 221 people. Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) is requiring that County residents who wish to switch providers must mail their request to the DDA office. In all other counties these requests can be made via e-mail. The DD Advisory Committee will be asking the DDA Director at their next meeting about the possibility of Montgomery County being able to make transfer requests via e-mail. The Committee is continuing to work on services for transitioning youth and older adults.

**Roundtable:**

Ric Kienzle, Commissioner, suggested inviting Councilmember Hans Riemer to the December meeting to discuss snow removal.

Marybeth Dugan, Coordinator, Program Access Services (PAS), Montgomery County Department of Parks, noted that PAS was launched in February. The first task is to educate and train staff on the ADA and program access. PAS will be presenting before the Commission in January or February. There are 5 staff within PAS that work on the ADA in regards to architectural, attitudinal and program barriers. Marybeth also suggested viewing the website [www.DisabilityScoop.com](http://www.DisabilityScoop.com), which is a news organization that focuses on people with developmental disabilities.

**Public Comments:** None.

**Next Full Commission Meeting:** Wednesday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015 – Executive Office Building, 101 Monroe Street, Lobby Level Auditorium, Rockville, MD 20850 – 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

**Steering Committee Meeting:** Wednesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015 – Health & Human Services, 401 Hungerford Drive, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor 1D Conference Room, Rockville, MD 20850 – 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Submitted by: Carly Clem, Administrative Specialist I  
Betsy Luecking, Community Outreach Manager