



## Commission on People with Disabilities

December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017

### **Welcome and Approval of November 2017 Meeting Summary Minutes:**

Seth Morgan, Chair, convened the meeting. A motion was made to approve the November 2017 Meeting Summary Minutes. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken and the November 2017 Meeting Summary Minutes were unanimously approved as written. Approved minutes are available online at [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd).

### **Strengthening Communities to Support Neighbors Living at Home – Pazit Aviv, Villages Coordinator, Aging and Disability Services; and Miriam Kelty, President of the Washington Area Villages Exchange and President of Bannockburn Neighbors Helping Neighbors**

**Website:** [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/village](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/village)

Villages are a local, volunteer-led, grassroots organizations that aim to support community members who choose to age-in-place. The need to connect is shared universally by everybody. Oftentimes, people stress sadness over not knowing their neighbors. Villages provide this connectedness as well as the neighbors helping neighbors support. They foster social connections through activities and events and coordinate volunteer help at home using neighbor helping neighbor model. There are close to 200 villages in the nation and around fifty in the DC metro region. Each village is unique and reflects the character, interests and needs of the community that creates it. The village leadership decides what it would offer and how it would operate. Some villages choose an intergenerational model that serves all members of the community. Examples of such villages are the [Bannockburn NAN](#), [Village of Takoma Park](#) and [Wyngate NHN](#). Some villages have paid staff in addition to volunteers and charge a membership fee, while other villages are all volunteer and have no fee.

Villages offer volunteers help to their members. Volunteers offer transportation to medical appointments, services, groceries and more. Volunteers may also help with simple tasks at home. Examples include small repairs, changing light bulbs, providing cooked meals to a sick neighbor and laundry help for someone just out of the hospital. If a volunteer is not available, some villages have relationships with vendors.

Villages focus on building social connections. They organize events, large and small, that are of interest to their community. Villages may organize book clubs, walking groups, knitting clubs, guest speaker events, group outings and so much more. Many Village events can take place at a neighbor's home; others can take place at a local church, synagogue, mosque, library or community recreation center. Villages often partner and connect with other local organizations and develop programs together.

There are 23 active villages in Montgomery County. The Villages website offers a list of online villages as well as an interactive map that an individual can look up their address and find out if there is a village in their neighborhood.

**In the Bannockburn Neighbors Assisting Neighbors village - who are the village volunteers and what is their background? Is there any interest in making villages inclusive to all ages?** There are a wide range of volunteers. A simple survey was sent to residents asking if they needed help or would like to give help. As is typical nationally, very few respondents needed help and a very large number offered to give help. The most common service requests are for transportation, social visiting, social educational programs, and household chores. Volunteers who are drive are largely people who are retired, but no exclusively. Volunteers are of all ages. Participation is totally voluntary. The Bannockburn Village was originally started to support seniors who want to stay in their own homes, but they are an inter-generational village. There is no age restriction to request or receive services. Their mission statement is to support the needs of Bannockburn's seniors and enhances quality of life for all Bannockburn residents. Bannockburn has a system of Block Coordinators who volunteer to be the eyes and ears of their block (about 15 to 20 homes). Block Coordinators are also the first point of contact for those who need assistance. Miriam noted that the neighboring community is interested in merging

with Bannockburn, which would make the total community about 2,000 households. She also noted that there are a variety of social educational sessions and programs, with the best attended having nothing to do with aging or with disabilities. Programs include digital photography, backyard birds, and book talks. Although, they have had sessions on issues pertaining to sensory, mobility, cognitive, and degenerative disorders.

**How are requests managed?** Requests are typically sent via a list-service and are responded to directly by community members. Many villages also have a phone line and multiple coordinators respond to the calls.

**How do you handle difficult neighbors?** You have to take the time to listen to what the person is saying and respond as objectively as possible. If the neighbor wants to join the Village as a board member or volunteer, it may be wise to invite them to several meetings first to get to know the person and become familiar with their style.

**What are the barriers to creating more villages?** For a village to succeed, you need people, places to gather and plentifulness. They need strong leadership. It is also important to build the community first before providing services. Pazit has a development matrix that she will share with the Commission.

**Are villages more successful if they are started within single family or townhome communities?** Most villages have started in single family communities, but there has been tremendous growth in Silver Spring and Friendship Heights with high-rises. Camp Mill is starting a village. Some villages are committees of Homeowners Associations (HOAs), some are organizations, and some are independent.

Pazit encouraged Commissioners to review the online [Vital Living Networker](#) guide to learn more about resources in the County for employment, volunteerism, recreation and fitness, educational opportunities, and more. The [Montgomery County Volunteer Center](#) is also a great site to find out about volunteer opportunities that meet all needs, abilities and interests.

Pazit noted that Habitat for Humanity and Rebuilding Together have approached her regarding the issue of isolation for homeowners. While these two non-profits are able to assist homeowners in providing accessibility renovations to allow them to age in place, there is a need to stay connected with the individual once the repairs or renovations are complete. Two villages, Silver Spring and Takoma Park, are using Design for Life parameters to make sure homes are renovated properly and safely as well as staying in touch with the person.

**Chair Report:** Seth reported that there will be no Steering Committee meeting next week.

#### **Ex-Officio and Member Updates:**

Anil Saini, ADA Title II Compliance Office, Department of General Services (DGS), reported that consultants have been reviewing the new aquatic and recreation center at Elizabeth House. They are also in final reviews of the Bethesda Police Station – District 2 which will open in January. Dennis Pillsbury, Architect, DGS, is currently reviewing plans for the proposed purple line station.

Charlie Butler, Department of Recreation (DR), reported that the Therapeutic Recreation & Inclusion Services Winter 2018 Program for Individuals with Disabilities is now available.

Denise Isreal, Department of Transportation (DOT), reported in 2015 the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation regulating Transportation Network Companies, including Uber and Lyft, and as a result Montgomery County imposed a 25-cent surcharge on TNCs for each trip originating in the County. The surcharge fees were put into a Transportation Services Improvement Fund that is maintained by DOT. From this fund, accessible taxi cab drivers can receive up to \$15,000 from the fund disbursed over a five-year period to retrofit or purchase accessible vehicles. Drivers also receive a \$10 free for every accessible pick-up as well as 10-cents per mile to help defray their operating costs. Since July 2017, there have been 824 wheelchair accessible trips with an average of 165 trips per month and an average of 6.43 miles per trip. The TSIF has paid \$23,000 to drivers for services rendered. Reimbursements are handled by DOT. Denise also reported that the Abilities-Ride program is awaiting a software update that would enable Call-n-Ride users to swipe their Call-n-Ride cards for the program. DOT has asked Regency to develop an Abilities Ride brochure to be given out to the community. The Abilities Ride program differs from MetroAccess in that it is a curb-to-curb service versus a door-to-door

service. DOT is working to get taxi cab drivers trained through JCA to provide with door-to-door service. Any issues regarding the Abilities-Ride program can be sent to Denise.

Susan Smith, Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC), reported that HOC distributed between 400 and 500 new vouchers between the end of July and October. Individuals who received vouchers are currently working to finish their paperwork and sign a lease. HOC is currently behind in completely inspections. HOC has a new inspection contractor starting in January. HOC is will launching a new call center in January. The number is 240-627-9400. Susan also reported that gave the Call Center Staff a revised Disability Awareness Sensitivity Training. This training along with a Fair Housing / Reasonable Accommodation Training will be mandatory in 2018 for all staff.

Rita Gale, Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL), reported that the Quince Orchard Library will reopen on Saturday. ADA compliance modifications at Quince Orchard Library include the parking lot and front door access. The Bethesda Library is scheduled to reopen in the Spring. The accessible parking spaces at Bethesda Library have been moved from Arlington Road to the front center of the lot near the entrance. White Oak Library has had a ramp installed at the entrance. Rita also reported that the Accessibility Advisory Committee received an award by the Library Board for their advocacy efforts on behalf of people with disabilities.

Larry Bram, Co-Chair of Developmental Disability Advisory Committee (DDAC), reported that Patricia Sastoque, Deputy Director of Programs, Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), gave a presentation about Person-Centered Planning and the Community Practice of Supporting Families. Councilmember George Leventhal also presented to the Committee his resolution to create a [Montgomery County Council Work Group on Meeting the Needs of Residents with Developmental Differences](#). The resolution was unanimously passed on Tuesday. The Commission on People with Disabilities can appoint as many as 10 people to this workgroup. The workgroup will meet short-term and must provide an interim report to the Council by July 18, 2018 and a final report by October 16, 2018.

Kathy Mann Koepke, Liaison to the Commission on Health (COH), reported that in November COH heard a presentation by Marcia Pruzan, Senior Fellow, about [Age-Friendly Montgomery County](#). Age-Friendly Montgomery County is an initiative to enhance the County as a wonderfully diverse Community for a Lifetime -- a place where all residents can age, thrive to their full potential, and contribute as a powerful resource in making our County a better, stronger, more inclusive community for everyone. Kathy explained the Design for Life tax incentive program that can assist residents with aging in place.

#### **Announcements:**

Tom Liniak, Commissioner, reported that JSSA will be co-sponsoring a free Maryland ABLE Information Session on January 3<sup>rd</sup> from 6:30pm to 8:00pm. The session will be held at Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, 6101 Executive Boulevard, North Bethesda, MD.

Trish Gallalee, Commissioner, reported that she attended the Disabilities Expo.

**Next Full Commission Meeting:** Wednesday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018 – 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, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018 – Health & Human Service, 401 Hungerford Drive, Conference Rooms 1A/1B, Rockville, MD 20850

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

