



**Commission on People with Disabilities**  
February 8th, 2017

**Welcome and Approval of January 2017 Meeting Summary Minutes:**

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

**Update from Montgomery Parks – Alex Girr-Borraro, Public Outreach Specialist, and Rachel Newhouse, Landscape Architect / Urban Park Planner, Montgomery Parks - [www.montgomeryparks.org](http://www.montgomeryparks.org)**

**PowerPoint:** [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%20D%20Docs/CPWD/ParksRecCPWDFeb2017.pdf](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%20D%20Docs/CPWD/ParksRecCPWDFeb2017.pdf)

**Survey:** [www.montgomeryparks.org/projects/public-input/?pd\\_url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.peakdemocracy.com%2Fportals%2F260%2FIssue\\_4211#peak\\_democracy](http://www.montgomeryparks.org/projects/public-input/?pd_url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.peakdemocracy.com%2Fportals%2F260%2FIssue_4211#peak_democracy)

Montgomery Parks (MP) oversees 34,000 acres of land and has been tasked with creating more accessible programs and resources. MP is coordinating with the Recreation Department on three major initiatives: the 2017 Park, Recreation and Open Space Update (PROS), the Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan (EPS FMP), and the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP). MP is conducting County-wide outreach to engage the public about what they want in regards to parks and recreation.

It was asked if outreach has been done to neighborhoods that surround parks. MP has used a listserve database from the Planning Department that had approximately 2,000 homeowners and condo associations and other representatives to assist in distributing the survey out to their members. They are also asking advisory boards, commissions and committees to assist in distributing the survey. A contractor will be going out to churches, community groups, and grocery stores to engage with the public in natural settings.

There are multiple tiers of outreach including signage in different languages posted in different target areas; social media such as Facebook and Twitter; electronic notifications and announcements to listserve groups who are signed up through the Planning Board; and direct surveys with people in public settings.

It was asked how outreach will be provided to older adults and those who do not use social media or have access to computers. Surveys will be provided via paper, verbally, and electronically. It was suggested that information be advertised in the Senior Beacon or other forms of print media that older adults read. MP is looking to advertise in the Spanish and Asian language newspapers that are sold in the County. Surveys are available in the top seven languages in the County: Vietnamese, Chinese, Mandarin, Japanese, French, Spanish and Amaharic. Online surveys are able to be translated into many languages via the Google translate feature. There was a discussion of using a tablet when in public settings to obtain survey answers. There was a question regarding providing accessible surveys to individuals who are Deaf. There may be a possibility of using Video Relay Services if the survey is provided via tablet. If a public event is being held than a sign language interpreter can be provided at those events. MP is also working to ensure their website is accessible for those who are Blind or have low vision as well as simplifying language so it is understandable to the general public. They are looking to reach out to special interest groups. Last October, MP went to an Autism Speaks Convention as a pilot program to identify tweaks that needed to be made to the outreach communications plan.

It was suggested that MP work with Montgomery County Public Libraries to increase their outreach through their facilities and to possibly use their venues for public meetings. It was also suggested that they connect with local colleges and universities, such as Montgomery College and the Universities of Shady Grove.

There is a public meeting being held on February 28th at the Montgomery Regional Office (8787 Georgia Avenue Silver Spring, MD 20910) to educate residents about the EPS FMP. This plan will help improve parks in mixed-use and higher density residential areas. The plan will also better identify needs, anticipate trends, and promote important goals. Areas of review include health and social equity. Staff will present preliminary findings, listen to questions and hear ideas to help MP.

MP is looking for partnerships outside of County Government to identify spaces that can be used.

Master plans typically identify new parks and spaces. A pilot study area has been identified in Silver Spring as the city has not had a master plan completed since the 1990s. They are using geographic information system (GIS) and demographics-based data to measure and compare spaces that do not have a park or public space. This is a way to prioritize areas, identify accessibility needs, and determine funding. Public input is sought and then a public hearing will be held before the Planning Board. At the end of the process they submit a summary of all input and submit with their plan to County Council. they hope to have a funding mechanism approved by the County Council to either acquire or create better access ways to these spaces and make them more open to the public. MP would like to have a funding mechanism in place by Fall/Winter of 2018.

Access to parks and spaces is a critical issue. The GIS system includes a new analytical tool for creating walkability maps. With the Silver Spring project, they are able to identify where buses, sidewalks and crossroads are located in relation to the park or space and whether or not additional walkways should be added or bus stops moved closer.

Rachel noted that the older adult population is the highest growing population in the country. MP is working to make sure parks and facilities meet the needs of those individuals. Seth added that the prevalence of a disability increases as one ages and as such a large percentage of the disabled community is older. He suggested keeping this information in mind when planning programming and designing and developing parks, spaces and facilities.

Avner Shapiro, Commissioner, asked about accessibility features being included when parks and spaces are being developed. Each park project goes to the Park Development Division where they create a facility plan. Plans are presented to the public for input. Also, Bob Greene, Senior ADA Compliance Project Manager, MP, reviews all plans for ADA compliance. Seth added that Commissioners are available to do accessibility site visits to parks and facilities.

Kathy Mann Koepke noted that many older adults and persons with significant disabilities use parks as a place of quiet respite and inquired if such spaces will be included in planning. Rachel reported that one of the initiatives is to include areas of serenity, which can provide physical health and social benefits.

Karen Maricheau noted that she has heard feedback from older residents wanting a quiet space in the park as well as an active area for older adults where they will not be disrupted by younger individuals. Rachel said there was a recent community meeting held at Battery Lane Park in Bethesda and the residents there voiced the same recommendation. There are new units being built in that area for assisted living and older adults. Karen suggested partnering with those developers to obtain funding for new parks and facilities.

**Easter Seals – Larry Bram – Senior Vice-President, Innovation & Program Development**  
[www.easterseals.com/DCMDVA](http://www.easterseals.com/DCMDVA)

**PowerPoint:** [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CPWD/EasterSealsMCCPWDRRevised.pdf](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CPWD/EasterSealsMCCPWDRRevised.pdf)

**YouTube Video:** [www.youtube.com/watch?v=K9XAe6yyia8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K9XAe6yyia8)

Larry Bram gave an overview of services and programs offered by Easter Seals serving DC, MD, and VA, which is a regional affiliate of a national organization. There are six facilities in the region – Hagerstown, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Falls Church/Northern Virginia, Silver Spring, and College Park.

Child development centers serve children with and without disabilities. The monthly weekend respite program for children with disabilities is offered once a month in Silver Spring and is open to siblings. The in-home respite care

program for Navy and Air Force provides 250 families of active duty service members who have a child with a severe disability with 40 hours a month of in-home respite.

The Early Learning Supports for Autism (ELSA) program serves as a model of intensive early intervention nationwide. It is the first fully inclusive, center-based program to serve children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) as young as 18 months. The program provides 30 hours per week of Applied Behavior Analysis for each child within a classroom environment. ELSA also helps close the school preparedness gap between children with ASD and their typically developing peers, resulting in a reduced need for schools to provide special education services. Larry noted that of six children that were participating in the program, four children entered kindergarten in a general education classroom. The program costs approximately \$100,000 per child per year. The program is currently being launched in Northern Virginia and hopefully will be launched in Montgomery County within the next two years.

The Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Inter-Generational Center located on Spring Street in Silver Spring was built in 2008. The land was donated by the County and Easter Seals was asked to pay back the value of the land (\$1,900,000) in access scholarships over 17 years. Easter Seals completed that project in 7 years. The Center will begin a multi-million renovation next week. It is the first Center in the country where children and seniors get together every day. Medical adult day services are available for adults age 18 and over. Larry noted that there is a new trend of a large segment of middle aged individuals with Down Syndrome developing alzheimers.

Easter Seals is a provider of the Maryland Assistive Technology Program. In September 2016, Governor Hogan announced a tablet program for individuals with disabilities who are unable to use a standard telephone due to hearing status, speaking difficulties, low vision, low mobility, or cognitive factors. Individuals can apply through Easter Seals and staff will work with the individual to determine appropriate assistive technology.

The Little Warriors program provides free child care to families of wounded service members who are being treated at nearby Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

The Veterans Staffing Network has assisted 100,000 Veterans in obtaining employment. They also provide career coaching and work specifically with homeless Veterans. Larry noted that this year he will be working on new approaches to employment with persons with disabilities.

Larry reported that a contract was signed yesterday to develop a Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic at Easter Seals. This will be the 7<sup>th</sup> clinic in the country and the only one for the capital region. The clinic treats mental health issues including depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, adjustment issues, anger, grief and loss, family issues, transition challenges, relationship problems, and children's behavioral problems. The clinic is free to all Veterans of any discharge status, National Guard, Reserves, their spouses and children, with a focus on post-9/11 Veterans.

Kathy Mann Koepke asked about mental health services for persons with disabilities. Larry noted that if an individual needs such services they are referred out to another agency. He also noted that once the infrastructure for providing mental health services has been set up by Easter Seals, they may look to adapt the services and provide them for persons with disabilities.

**Commission Vision Statement:**

A motion was made for the Commission to adopt the following vision statement:

***InclusionMontgomery:*** Dedicated to the Inclusion of All People in our Community

We believe that all people have a right to equitable treatment, support for their human rights, a fair allocation of community resources, and engagement in the community to the level of their preference. We are dedicated to planning for and serving the whole community regardless of race, color, religion, ancestry, sex, age, disability, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, genetic status, family responsibilities, gender identity, and presence of children, or any other characteristics.

The motion was seconded. A vote was taken and the vision statement was unanimously approved. The Vision statement will be used on the Commission's website and social media, and Seth will draft letters that will be sent to Council President Berliner and County Executive Leggett to inform them of the Commission's new vision statement.

**Chair and Vice Chair Report:**

Seth Morgan, Chair, reported that the Steering Committee will meet next Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Rockville Memorial Library, 21 Maryland Avenue, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Meeting Room, Rockville, MD 20850.

Seth reported that interviews for the Commission have been completed and recommendations have been sent over to the County Executive.

Marcie Povitsky, Vice Chair, reported that she is continuing to design a Google form for the Respect the Space Survey. There may be an option available to allow file uploads and she will discuss with Betsy how about the possibility of incorporating this feature.

**Ex-Officio and Member Updates:**

Dennis Pillsbury, ADA Title II Compliance, reported that the restrooms on the terrace and lobby levels at the Executive Office Building will begin renovations soon.

Faisal Khan, Department of Transportation (DOT), reported Montgomery County Executive Regulation 1-17 – Transportation Services Improvement Fund is available online and open to public comment until March 2, 2017. The Fund was created primarily to improve the availability of accessible transportation and the regulation includes information on how funds will be dispersed to the taxicab companies and drivers. Seth noted he has concerns about the dispersment of funds and he will his opinions with the group.

Susan Smith, Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC), reported that former Commissioner Jackie Simon has been voted in as Chair of the HOC Commission. The HOC Academy: Adult Education and Work Force Development Program is discussing starting an employment initiative for individuals with disabilities and older adults featuring panel presentations. Susan reported that the Mental Health Advisory Committee discussed that the mental health courts have begun in Montgomery County. District Court started in December and Circuit Court started in January. As of this point only a few cases have been through. MHAC has tentatively set a date of May 11<sup>th</sup> for their annual substance abuse and mental health forum.

Rita Gale, Montgomery County Public Libraries, reported that Aspen Hill Library will have a book drop installed. The County's ADA Compliance office has allocated funding to make accessibility improvements to the exterior of the Aspen Hill Library including making both the ramp from the parking lot and the exterior ramp to the meeting room on the lower level ADA Compliant. Work will be done to the pathway leading up to the library and an access path will be added to the new book drop.

Larry Bram, Co-Chair, Developmental Disability Advisory Committee (DDAC), reported DDAC will hold it's next meeting on Monday, February 12<sup>th</sup> at the Rockville Memorial Library, 21 Maryland Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Meeting Room from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Karen Marichaeu, liaison from Commission on Aging (COA), announced that Congressman John Delaney will be hosting a Seniors Workshop on Tuesday February 21st in Gaithersburg at the Activity Center and Bohrer Park. The workshop will focus on economic security. The event starts at 1:00 PM and is free to attend and open to the public. COA will be hosting a stake holder's engagement event on Wednesday, March 29<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 a.m. to noon at the Silver Spring Civic Building. The event will focus on rolling out *Age-Friendly Montgomery County: What Does That Mean To You?*.

**Announcements:**

Larry Bram, Commissioner, announced that Easter Seals has free tickets to people with disabilities, low-income individuals, and their families to attend the first night of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus on Thursday, March 30<sup>th</sup>. Please contact Larry for a form.

Trish Gallalee, Commissioner, reported that she has been invited to by the City of Rockville to join the Rockville Delegation visit to Pinneberg, Germany, which is the sister city to Rockville, at the end of May. During the visit, Trish will discuss disability and access issues with the Pinneberg Delegation. In October, the Pinneberg Delegation will visit Rockville.

**Next Full Commission Meeting:** Wednesday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017 –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, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017 – **\*\*PLEASE NOTE LOCATION\*\*** Rockville Memorial Library, 21 Maryland Avenue, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Meeting Room, Rockville, MD 20850 — 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

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