



**Montgomery County, MD**  
**Commission on People with Disabilities**  
**Annual Planning Meeting Summary Minutes**  
**January 20th, 2015**

**Welcome and Approval of December, 2014 Meeting Summary Minutes:**

Trish Gallalee, Chair, convened the meeting. Nelson Migdal, Commissioner, made a motion to approve the December, 2014 Meeting Summary Minutes. Charlie Crawford, Vice Chair, seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the December, 2014 Meeting Summary Minutes were unanimously approved as written. Approved minutes are available online at [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd).

**Montgomery County's Taxi Cab Regulations – The Honorable Roger Berliner, Councilmember, Montgomery County Council:**

Councilmember Roger Berliner is the Chair of the County Council Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy and Environment (T&E) Committee. He reported that the County Council's T&E Committee is currently reviewing the County's taxi cab regulations and discussing the issues surrounding the entry of shared ride service companies such as Uber and Lyft into the Montgomery County market. Uber and Lyft are unregulated companies that connect riders to drivers via a smartphone app.

Taxi cab companies currently licensed by the County are required to have at least 5% of their fleet comprised of accessible vehicles, but there is not a requirement for these accessible vehicles to be on the road. Taxi cabs are rented by the drivers and the drivers choose which vehicle to rent. (Prior to 2001, Montgomery County required that 20% of the fleet be accessible.)

Councilmember Berliner opened the floor to questions and comments.

Cindy Buddington, Commissioner, noted an incident when she needed to take a taxicab home from a store due to an emergency situation where her wheelchair battery failed, but three of the five taxicab companies she called did not have any accessible vehicles on the road at the time. She asked how the County can mandate that accessible taxi cabs be available. Councilmember Berliner said that taxi cab drivers lease their vehicles from the taxi cab companies at the rate of \$110 per day, although the rate is for the accessible vehicles. Many drivers have stated that they do not want to drive the accessible vehicles as they are less profitable than the sedans. Councilmember Berliner noted that the County does not regulate the rates that companies charge their drivers. Hilary Kaplan, Commissioner, suggested that the County market the advantages of using an accessible vehicle to increase awareness and use. Uber and Lyft drivers use their own private vehicles and determine their own work schedules. Riders can request a ride via an application on their smartphone and can pick which driver they would like to use. Uber and Lyft generally charge riders less than a taxi cab. These services are becoming more popular, but they are not regulated.

Trish noted that when she called to schedule a cab 24 hours in advance they could not provide a taxi during the window of time she requested as the driver had a repeat client that had already requested that time frame.

Seth Morgan, Commissioner, reported that Uber is facing a lawsuit from the National Federation for the Blind in California over drivers allegedly discriminating against passengers with visual impairments and mistreating or not allowing service animals. He questioned how Uber and Lyft drivers are trained and if training includes disability awareness. Dana Cohen added that training should include awareness of individuals with mental illness and autism.

Kathy Mann Koepke, Commissioner, said that mobility devices are not just limited to wheelchairs. Individuals may also use scooters or Segways. All types of mobility devices should be taken into consideration when new regulations are being discussed.

Charlie Crawford, Commissioner, discussed his issues when using a taxi cab service with his service animal. Often the driver will either say they are not required to take service animals or they will say they have an allergy to dogs and will refuse to transport the service animal. Charlie suggested that documentation be displayed in all taxi cabs stating that service animals are welcome. He would like the allergy issue to be addressed during new regulation discussions.

Councilmember Berliner encouraged the Commission to contact him with concerns, comments and suggestions as the Council continues to discuss these issues. He is now a member of the County Council Health & Human Services Committee and he looks forward to working with the Commission on this topic and other issues.

For more information, please view the County Council Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy and Environment Committee's [Discussion: Taxi and Uber](#).

**Election of Officers – Nominating Committee Slate of Officers – Nominees Presented by Charlie Crawford, Vice Chair:**

On behalf of the Nominating Committee, Charlie Crawford, Vice Chair, placed into nomination the slate of Marcie Povitsky for Vice Chair. No other nominations were taken from the floor. Kathy Mann Koepke made a motion to approve the nomination for Vice Chair. Nelson seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the nomination was unanimously approved. Charlie placed into nomination the slate of Seth Morgan for Chair. No other nominations were taken from the floor. Nelson Migdal, Commissioner, made a motion to approve the nomination for Chair. Marcie Povitsky seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the nomination was unanimously approved.

**Workgroups:**

The Commission separated into the Accessibility and Access Issues Committee and the Developmental Disability (DD) Advisory Committee to discuss goals and outcomes. Hilary Kaplan, Commissioner, will be the Chair of the Accessibility and Access Issues Committee.

As a member of the DD Advisory Committee, Steve Riley, Commissioner, made a motion for the Commission to send a letter to the County Executive and County Council requesting that funding for Resource Coordination services be included in the FY16 fiscal budget. Dana seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion was unanimously passed. The letter will be signed by the Chair of the Commission and the Chair of the DD Advisory Committee.

Angela Washington, Ex-Officio Member, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Diversity Manager, Office of Human Resources (OHR), reported that the County has mandated an immediate hiring freeze. Departments are in the process of requesting exceptions. She also reported that Fariba Kassiri has replaced Joe Adler as the new Acting Director for OHR. Mark Maxin, Commissioner, made a motion for the Commission to write a letter to Mr. Adler thanking him for his years of advocacy work for persons with disabilities. Charlie seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

Charlie reported that he is now the interim President for Mid-Atlantic Guide Dog Users.

**Next Full Commission Meeting:** Wednesday, February 11th, 2015 – Executive Office Building, 101 Monroe Street, Lobby Auditorium, Rockville, Maryland, 20850 – 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

**Steering Committee Meeting:** Wednesday, February 18th, 2015 - 401 Hungerford Drive, 1st Floor Tan Conference Room, Rockville, Maryland, 20850 – 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

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