



**Commission on People with Disabilities
Meeting Summary Minutes**

January 13th, 2021

****MEETING WAS HELD VIA ZOOM ****

Welcome and Approval of December 2020 Meeting Summary Minutes

Seth Morgan, Chair, convened the meeting. A motion was made to approve the December 2020 Meeting Summary Minutes. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken and the December 2020 Meeting Summary Minutes were unanimously approved as written. Approved minutes are available online at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd.

Update on Coronavirus-19 Vaccinations – Beth Shuman, Senior Legislative Aide, Councilmember Gabe Albornoz, Linda McMillan, Senior Legislative Analyst, County Council, and Dr. Michael Greenberg

Dr. Michael Greenberg reported group homes funded by the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) are in the County's priority tier 1, phase 1A vaccine group. The vaccination administration to the individuals in DDA funded group homes and their direct support professional (DSP) staff is a subject of some confusion. The administration of the vaccine to group homes residents has been difficult due to the federally orchestrated Operation Warp Speed program which has contracted with CVS and Walgreens. As of yesterday, a number of group homes were notified of plans to begin vaccinations. These vaccinations may not start until late January and run through February and March. This does not fully address the concerns relating to DSPs that work with individuals with developmental disabilities. DSPs will have to wait until that time period to receive a vaccination despite being in the highest priority category. Dr. Greenberg is working to clarify if DSPs can receive their vaccinations through the County clinics as other tier 1 individuals have been doing. Maryland has classified individuals with developmental disabilities that live at home, some of whom receive DDA funding and are in self-directed services, in phase 1B, tier 1. It is unclear if where those individuals fall in the Montgomery County vaccination groups. Dr. Greenberg is also working to clarify this issue.

Beth Shuman reported the County Council Health & Human Services (HHS) Committee will be hosting a worksession tomorrow, January 14th at 10:15am. Linda McMillan reported the Council receives an update on COVID every Tuesday. This past Tuesday the discussion focused on the vaccine plan and distribution. There were two topics that the HHS Committee wanted to continue the discussion on. One topic is to talk with the County's African American Health program, the Latino Health program, and the Asian-American Health Initiative about their response programs, how they can support the ongoing vaccine plan, and how the County can help advocate for use of community clinics and other providers to have different points of vaccine distribution. The Committee will also discuss the confusion related to the vaccine distribution for individuals with developmental disabilities and DSPs. While Dr. Greenberg will not be involved with the worksession, he has been working closely with all of the involved parties. The Worksession can be viewed on County Cable Montgomery through Comcast or Verizon or on YouTube. <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/COUNCIL/ondemand/index.html> (click on Committee Worksession and Staff Reports). The Worksession will also be recorded and can be viewed at a later date.

Eric Cole, Commissioner, said the Pfizer vaccine has been approved for individuals 16 and over while the Moderna vaccine is approved for individuals 18 and over. He asked if the County is making sure that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities ages 16 to 18 will only be receiving the Pfizer vaccine instead of the Moderna vaccine. Dr. Greenberg said it is his understanding that the Pfizer vaccine is being administered by CVS and Walgreens for group homes, although that may depend on what is being made available to the state

Linda said the state is only distributing Moderna vaccines to the local health departments. The Pfizer vaccine is being distributed to the hospitals and to CVS and Walgreens for the nursing home and assisted living contracts. She does not know if they are receiving the Moderna vaccine as well. HHS has been having ongoing discussions with the hospitals as they may have some surplus capacity and can coordinate their inventory.

Betsy Luecking, Staff, said she has received many inquiries from parents who have adult children with developmental disabilities living at home but they are not sure where they fall in the vaccine priority groups.

Visually Impaired Urban Transportation Study – Matt Johnson, AICP, BiPPA Project Manager, Division of Transportation Engineering, Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT)

Website: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT/Projects/TLCVision/>

MCDOT received a grant from the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC) to conduct a study and pilot design for users who are blind or have low vision navigating the urban environment especially with relationship with connecting to transit. MCDOT will be reviewing how to make sidewalks, intersections and bus stops safer and easier to navigate for people who have a vision disability as well as how those changes would impact all persons with disabilities. The study will be conducted from January 2021 to June 2021 and a toolkit will be created on best practices to guide the County in developing new sidewalks and other pedestrian spaces. The project will also create a 30% pilot design for a segment of roadway which has yet to be determined. MCDOT will be reviewing treatments across the country and throughout the world that may be effective and could be incorporated. While the grant is specific to Silver Spring, there is potential to incorporate these best practices throughout Montgomery County. The scope of the study includes creating tactile 3D documents that individuals can use to see how the plans will be laid out. The grant only funds the preliminary design that will provide a concept that the County will be able to advance over the next couple of years to a final design. The County can then implement the final project and test treatments in a way that will inform the future direction of pedestrian improvements in the County.

Commissioners interested in receiving updates on the project or notices of future meetings can e-mail Matt to be added to the e-mail distribution list - Matt.Johnson@montgomerycountymd.gov. Commissioners can also e-mail Matt with their concerns and questions.

MCDOT held a virtual public meeting on Monday, January 11th to hear from stakeholders and those who have difficulty navigating in urban environments. Over 70 people were in attendance including MCDOT staff and many individuals who had vision impairments. They received a lot of comments and had a good discussion. Matt looks forward to continuing that discussion moving forward over the next several months. MCDOT will post the meeting recording once captions have been added.

MCDOT is currently conducting a public survey to get information from those who have vision disabilities or are advocates, caregivers or related professionals supporting people who move around the County with reduced vision. Anyone who experiences challenges navigating streets and roads or works with people with vision or mobility impairments is encouraged to complete a survey that MCDOT has made available through the end of January. Survey: <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/6135451/Improving-Wayfinding-and-Safety-for-People-with-Disabilities-Project-Survey>

Increasing Inclusive Housing Options for People with Developmental Disabilities – Tim Wiens, Executive Director, Maryland Inclusive Housing (MIH) Corporation

MIH Handout – Overview:

<https://montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/DDAC/MIHOverview.pdf>

Tim Wiens introduced Andrea Mast, Administrative Assistant for MIH.

In January 2018, at the request of Bernie Simons, Deputy Secretary of the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), the Maryland Supported Living Advisory Committee was formed. Tim Wiens was asked to chair this Committee. A year later in December 2018, the Committee produced a report for Deputy Secretary Simons with a recommendation to form a new nonprofit organization to advance affordable and accessible housing, separately owned from services. Deputy Secretary Simons accepted this recommendation and asked the Committee to implement this and other recommendations. Maryland Inclusive Housing (MIH) Corporation was formed and incorporated as a result of this work. The first Board meeting was held on December 17, 2019, and Tim was hired and started as Executive Director in January 2020. During the first six months of 2020, he has worked with the MIH Board of Directors on creating policies, developing a plan of operations, and ensuring that the organization is ready to provide services and conduct activities in FY21, which started on July 1, 2020.

MIH has three main goals: 1) to facilitate the creation of housing teams in regions or counties throughout the state; 2) to employ Community Living Coordinators who would work as housing case managers for individuals who are receiving DDA services or are on the DDA waiting list; and 3) to be a housing information clearing house for DDA, for individuals with IDD and their families and for Coordinators of Community Services (CCS) workers and service providers.

The majority of MIH's funding comes from DDA grants. The DDA grant was renewed and increased for this year. These grants come with performance conditions related to the work herein described. MIH expects to become qualified and start to bill for Housing Support Services through the Maryland Medicaid Waivers in spring 2021. MIH is also pursuing other foundation and grant funding.

DDA is funding MIH as part of their transformation program. Deputy Secretary Simons is very committed to this work. People with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families want more options for residential services including more supported living, self-directed services, and in-home supports. As Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) unbundle services and funding, it has become clear that while housing is part of this bundle there is no real funding for housing. MIH will work on creating more affordable, accessible and integrated housing for people with I/DD that is separated from the ownership and control of services. Jubilee and Montgomery County have been a leader in this effort. Main Street Housing apartments is also a good example. Tim said MIH sees themselves as not seeking a piece of the existing pie but helping to grow and be included in those efforts.

Due to the size of the Board, MIH has decided to start forming housing committees with three jurisdictions – Montgomery and Howard Counties and Baltimore City - to facilitate the availability of affordable and accessible housing for adults who have developmental disabilities. MIH is looking for providers, people with disabilities, family members, public housing agency representatives, and developers. They are also seeking racial diversity within the committee to address those concerns. Jillian Copeland, Founder, Main Street, and Tigest Alemu, Executive Director, Community Options, Inc., are co-chairs of MIH Committee. Stephanie Killian, Chief, Division of Housing, Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs is an MIH Board Member. Tim would like MIH to be connected with this Commission and collaborate on ideas.

The floor was opened to questions.

Larry Bram, Commissioner, noted the COVID-19 pandemic has shown us that congregate living can be difficult and many group homes are not accessible. This is concerning as the disability community ages and would potentially be moving into these living situations. He agreed it makes sense for MIH to report to the Developmental Disability Advisory Committee (DDAC) and for DDAC to report to this Commission. Betsy said she will be adding Tim and Andrea to the DDAC e-mail list and they are welcome to provide updates to that Committee at any time.

Tom Liniak, Commissioner, how services will be paid for and who is entitled to access those services. Tim said at this point DDA has provided grant funding for FY20 and FY21. He expects that grant funding to continue and to grow. Housing support services will be billed to the Maryland Medicaid Waiver. MIH is also in discussions with the

Weinberg Foundation and the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council for additional funds. Anyone who is on the DDA waiting list or who is receiving DDA services would be eligible to receive housing support services.

Tim said he will follow-up with Susan Smith, Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC), to be a representative on the MIH Committee.

2021 Community Health Needs Assessment Planning – Christopher Rogers, PhD, MPH, Policy & Strategy Officer, Public Health Services, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services

Dr. Christopher Rogers reported the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) is supported by HHS staff as well as Public Health Services (PHS) staff with additional support from contracted facilitators who will manage the community conversations. The CHNA is a 12 to 15-month process with the goal of a final report to be produced in the last quarter of 2021. It is a collaborative effort where PHS staff work with the County and local partners to identify and prioritize significant health needs of the Montgomery County community over the next several years. The priorities identified in the CHNA report will help guide the County's community health improvement plan as well as other collaborative efforts with other Commissions such as this one that share a mission to improve physical and social health.

The CHNA includes both quantitative and qualitative data collection. The CHNA quantitative data collection will include primary and secondary data collection. The primary survey will be mailed to residents and collect health-related data on topics to include but not limited to health care insurance access, transportation access, diseases and conditions, common preventative methods, screenings and tests, physical activities and diet patterns. The purpose of the qualitative component of the CHNA will be to gather thoughts and perspectives from community members and key county stakeholders in a local environment to identify the most pressing needs of the community and to prioritize significant health needs of Montgomery County over the next several years. The qualitative assessment is a collaborative partnership with you and other county and community agencies, members, patients and families around assessing and addressing community needs. The qualitative assessment will include both focus groups and key informant interviews.

The focus groups will be online using Zoom where participants will interact with a moderator and each other. The focus groups will learn about health needs, barriers, priorities, and the community. They will explore perceptions and attitudes about the health of the community as well as learn about the availability and use of local resources and gather recommendations to improve the health of communities. Focus groups will consist of 8 to 12 participants. Participants will receive a \$10 gift card that will be sent to them via postal mail. There will be 20 focus groups in total made up of populations including the Hispanic or Latino community; the Asian community; blacks, africans and african-americans; people who are low income and uninsured; people from the agricultural reserves; people from various regions within Montgomery County; and persons with disabilities. Focus groups will begin as early as March and will run for two or three months. Dr. Rogers asked this Commission for assistance in identifying 8 to 12 community members with disabilities to participate in an online focus group. He will be following up with Betsy and this Commission to discuss a more specific strategy to recruit persons with disabilities.

The floor was opened to questions.

Seth asked if the growing aging population was being targeted. Dr. Rogers said there will be a focus group for adults age 60 and older.

Susan Emery, Circle of Rights, noted that approximately one-third of Montgomery County speaks a language other than English at home. In general, the older population speaks a language other than English. She asked if the focus groups will include older adults that speak other languages. Dr. Rogers said the focus groups for the aging community will include other languages. There will be other focus groups that will be conducted in preferred languages including Spanish, African-French, African-Amharic, and Korean. Those focus groups will be recruiting individuals age 18 and older and there is a chance an older adult will be chosen to participate in those groups.

Larry noted that there are many communities within the disability community. Eight to twelve people may not be able to provide a good representation the disability community. Betsy said it will be important to try to have a diverse group that represents the main disability groups so there is a cross section of individuals.

Trish Gallalee, Vice-Chair, asked if the focus groups will be held during the day or evening. Dr. Rogers said the focus groups will be flexible and will be held during the groups preferred timeframe whether that is morning, evening, or weekends. They want to make sure they hear the perspectives of the disability community so the CHNA can identify and prioritize those needs over the next several years.

Seth asked Dr. Rogers to share his contact information with Betsy as this Commission may have future questions. Christopher.Rogers@montgomerycountymd.gov

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Issues – Matthew Barkley, ADA Compliance Manager, ADA Compliance Team, Department of General Services

Website: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DGS-ADA/WhatWeDo.html

Title II of the ADA requires that state and local government entities do not discriminate against people with disabilities in their programs, services and activities. The ADA Compliance Team is located within the Department of General Services. The Team's goal is to coordinate Montgomery County government's overall ADA compliance efforts which includes providing training and technical assistance on a wide range of ADA and accessibility issues as well as building accessibility including construction and making physical modifications. The Team works to respond to citizen complaints if they are unable to access a Montgomery County facility, program or service.

The Team currently has 22 construction projects underway in various stages from the early stages of design through to completion. Since the last meeting, several projects have been completed including the Long Branch Library, the Long Branch outdoor pool, and the Upcounty Regional Services Center. The Team has been working on their three-year plan for the upcoming fiscal years. Projects are chosen based on complaints as well as the Department of Justice (DOJ) Project Civic Access settlement agreement from 2011. In 2006, DOJ conducted sample audits of over 110 buildings and facilities within Montgomery County including parks. The County self-audited all leased or owned buildings and facilities that were not included in the DOJ audit.

The Team is also in the process of implementing county-wide trainings including a mandatory comprehensive ADA Title II training for all county employees. Matt would like to involve this Commission in the process and receive feedback on the training prior to it being given to employees.

Commissioners can contact the Team via e-mail at adacompliance@montgomerycountymd.gov or phone at 240-777-6197 (V).

Trish reported she recently used an accessible door function that uses a swipe feature instead of a push button. She suggested the County look into installing these in the future as they are more sanitary and safer to use and may possibly be less maintenance than a push button.

Chair and Vice-Chair Report

Seth announced today is the first day of the legislative session in Annapolis which is now being held virtually. He reminded Commissioners that they can advocate or approach their elected officials as a private citizen, but they cannot be a representative of this Commission unless it has been given specific permission by the County's Office of Intergovernmental Relations (OIR) to take that position. Betsy added that OIR frequently sends her state and federal legislation to comment on as an employee of HHS and not as the role of staff liaison to this Commission. If the Commission has state or federal legislation they want to comment then the Commission must draft their position which Betsy will then forward to OIR for approval. If approved OIR would brief the delegation at their weekly meeting. Betsy can still work with the Commission on County legislation. Neal is the Chair of the Legislation subcommittee. Commissioners interested in joining that subcommittee can e-mail Neal at

nealzonwheelz@gmail.com. He noted that some bills have been pre-filed but none yet relate to disability. He will continue to monitor bills that are filed.

Ex-Officio Member Reports

Susan Smith, HOC, reported HOC applied for 100 housing vouchers for non-elderly disabled. She will notify the Commission once she receives word that those vouchers have been awarded. HOC will then begin selecting individuals off the wait list. The priority will be for persons with disabilities between the ages of 18 and 61 who are at risk of institutionalization, or currently in or at risk of being in a nursing facility or congregate setting, or who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Susan also reported that she is on the Mental Health Advisory Committee's Mobile Crisis Team Subcommittee. She and Jenn Lynn, Mental Health Subcommittee, Policing Advisory Commission (PAC), are working together to look at different ways to augment and change crisis services. They will be convening an emergency response collaboration meeting on January 28th to include individuals from emergency management services and fire and rescue.

Denise Isreal, MCDOT, reported Ride On continues to make health and safety their top priority. Buses are frequently cleaned and face coverings are provided to customers who do not have one. Buses continue to board using the rear door with the exception of users of wheelchairs, mobility devices and strollers. Fares are still suspended as of now and MCDOT plans on an extensive outreach campaign to the public once fares resume. Temporary partitions have been installed in the buses and permanent ones will be installed by early 2021. Ride On has developed brochures in various languages that detail safety procedures. Recertification and application dates have been extended for the Call-n-Ride and Medicaid transportation programs. Call-n-Ride services have been made available to help those participants who need to pick up groceries or carry-out orders. Flex Bus operations in Wheaton and Rockville have resumed. A new Flex Bus route will be added along the 29 corridor. Denise will share more information with the Commission once it becomes available.

Marybeth Dugan, Program Access Office, (PAO) Montgomery Parks, reported PAO is working on a new initiative to install communication boards at local parks. They have been working closely with the Montgomery Parks Foundation to begin raising funds for this project. PAO is looking at three different parks to install communication boards as a pilot – Hadley's Playground, Wheaton Park, and a park/playground next to the Miracle Field. PAO is working with the Autism Society in Howard County ... the communication board would include a training and a storytelling board of the importance of having a communication board not only for persons with disabilities but for persons of different languages. Each board costs approximately \$2,000 and will also include Braille. Marybeth will keep the Commission updated on this project. She also reported that Montgomery Parks will be opening their parkways this weekend for pedestrian use.

Simone Geness, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) reported the Special Education Advisory Committee will be meeting on January 21st at 7pm. The Zoom link can be found on the [MCPS's Office of Special Education website](#). The Transition Services Unit will be hosting their annual guardianship and financial planning meeting via Zoom on February 11th at 6:30pm. They will also be hosting a middle school Special Education parent night for families of 8th graders transitioning from middle school to high school. The Board of Education postponed the return to partial in-person learning for those students whose families selected that option from February 1st to March 15th. The Board of Education will reconvene on February 23rd to decide on the March 15th start date based on health metrics or if it needs to be pushed back further. School teams along with various district leaders are working hard to determine the best way and model to align with COVID-19 safety measures, how to provide instruction, and gearing up for professional learning opportunities for staff, providing PPE for staff as well as continuing to support students and families during distance learning.

Angelisa Hawes, MCPL, reported the Long Branch Library will be virtually reopening on Monday, January 25th. It has been closed due to renovations which include a new plaza, a new ADA ramp, new sliding doors, and a family restroom has been installed on the first floor. MCPL still offers contactless service to pick-up library materials as well as virtual programming and reference services via phone.

Announcements

Susan Emery, Circle of Rights, said CIR is moving from in-person meetings to virtual meetings. They are interested in connecting with someone from the Korean and Vietnamese community that can write and speak in the native language. She has posted a notice on the Montgomery County volunteer website. Interested individuals can contact Susan via e-mail at susan@circleofrights.org.

Betsy reported the School Resource Officer (SRO) hearing has been rescheduled to February 4th at 7:30pm. The Commission still has time to submit a statement if there is interest. She will work on a draft statement based on previous discussions. Trish suggested holding a Steering Committee meeting next week to continue a discussion on this topic. It was agreed that a Steering Committee meeting would be held next Wednesday, January 20th from 5:30pm to 6:30pm via Zoom. Betsy asked Simone to send her the SRO report once it has been released.

Meeting adjourned – 7:20pm

Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities February 2021 Meeting and Events Calendar

Developmental Disability Advisory Committee – Monday, February 8th

****PLEASE NOTE NEW START TIME****

3:30pm to 5pm to be held via Zoom – link to be announced

Full Commission Meeting – Wednesday, February 10th

6pm to 7:30pm to be held via Zoom – link to be announced

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

