



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

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

Seth Morgan, Chair, convened the meeting. A motion was made to approve the February, 2017 Meeting Summary Minutes. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken and the February, 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 on Design for Life Property Tax Incentive Program – Diane Schwartz Jones, Director, Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services - [www.designforlifemc.org](http://www.designforlifemc.org)**

**Handouts:**

- **DFL Homeowners Brochure:** [http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CPWD/HO\\_Brochure\\_vFinal.pdf](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CPWD/HO_Brochure_vFinal.pdf)
- **DFL Builders Brochure:** [http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CPWD/BP\\_Brochure\\_vFinal.pdf](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CPWD/BP_Brochure_vFinal.pdf)
- **Realtor Disclosure:** <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CPWD/DesignForLifeDisclosureTemplate.pdf>
- **Design for Life Tax Credit Incentive Program:** <http://permittingervices.montgomerycountymd.gov/DPS/pdf/DFLTaxCreditIncentiveTable.pdf>
- **Design for Life Technical Guidelines:** <http://permittingervices.montgomerycountymd.gov/DPS/pdf/DesignForLifeTechnicalGuidelines.pdf>
- **First Annual Design for Life Showcase:** <http://montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CPWD/FIRSTANNUALDDFLSHOWCASEgeneral.pdf>

The Design for Life (DFL) Property Tax Incentive Program helps residents install basic accessibility design features to make their homes welcoming to persons living with a temporary or permanent disability, accommodate friends or relatives who have a mobility limitation, and, ultimately, to help people age in place at home. The goal of the program is for accessibility features to become part of standard design and for the building industry to recognize it as a benefit.

The program provides 3 tiers of property tax incentives to make homes (single family attached and detached) more universally accessible:

- 1. Accessible Feature tax incentives** are for certain features that are permanently installed to improve access to or within an owner's principal residence (not limited to single-family homes).
- 2. Level I (VISITable) tax incentives** are available for permanent installations to any new or existing single-family homes, townhomes and duplexes that meet Level I accessibility threshold.
- 3. Level II (LIVEable) tax incentives** are available for permanent installations to any new or existing single-family homes, townhomes and duplexes that meet Level II accessibility threshold.

Level I and Level II both require a no-step entrance, which can be at the front, side, or back doors or through the garage.

School impact taxes are available for builders as an incentive to participate in the program.

The Department of Permitting Services (DPS) administers the DFL tax incentive program. Since the program was launched, DPS has issued 55 permits – 29 for accessible features, 2 for VISITable homes, and 24 for LIVEable homes. DPS is looking to be more aggressive in marketing and promoting this program to the community. Bus ads were run for a period of time and will be run again in the future. DPS has attended community and senior events and has met with the Montgomery Building Association and the Maryland National Capital Business Industry Association. They are available to meet with local construction, building and remodeling companies to discuss the DFL program. Asha Clark, Arc of Montgomery County, invited DPS to have a table at the Arc's upcoming Respite Resource Fair on March 25<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioners were invited to the first Annual Design for Life Showcase scheduled for Saturday, May 13<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at the Silver Spring Civic Building. Display tables are provided free to local organizations and builders if they are showcasing accessibility features or promoting services related to the DFL objective.

In 2006, County Council passed [Zoning Text Amendment 06-17, Accessibility Improvements Exemption](#), which allows accessibility improvements such as an unroofed and open structure, including a ramp and chairlift, to be exempt from setback or lot coverage limitations. This exemption was used for construction of Meadow Ridge Villas, a community for adults 62+ and individuals with a disability that was built in Montgomery Village where the properties have no-step entrances.

DPS would like to start a certification program for those who are designing and building DFL and to recognize and award those who are promoting and developing accessible design.

The cost of the permit fee goes towards the total property tax credit. The property tax credit stays with the property, which can be a good marketing tool if the homeowner would like to sell the property.

DPS offers ePlans and ePermits which gives site users the ability to submit documents to DPS, track the review status and make changes. DPS staff will review the plans, make comments, ask for additional information and approve the plans electronically. While individual needs of the homeowner are assessed by the homeowner and health professionals, DPS does offer free design consultation services for the homeowner and their architect or designer to understand the standards and ensure they are being incorporated correctly.

The floor was opened to questions.

It was asked if the tax credit program's maximum annual limit had been reached for the year yet. Diane noted that while it hasn't, they recognize that in the future they may need to increase the annual limit due to increased participation.

It was asked how user-friendly the application process. Once DPS makes their final inspection and certifies the home, the information is sent to Finance which administers the tax bills and will add the credit to the homeowner's property taxes.

It was suggested that DPS provide a link to a trade association on their website as a resource for homeowners.

Marcie Povitsky, Vice Chair, asked if DPS had connected with any local colleges or universities. Diane would be interested in showcasing university projects that feature good, accessible design. Marcie will help connect DPS with the appropriate department at the Universities of Shady Grove.

It was suggested that on the website's gallery tour of accessible homes also feature modest homes as that may encourage more homeowners to participate in the program. Diane noted that they would like to expand their gallery and encourage homeowners and contractors to send them photos of finished projects. Photos include builder or renovator information.

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

Seth Morgan, Chair, reported that three new Commission members will be appointed by the County Council next Tuesday: Neal Carter, Asha Clark, and Eric Jorgensen.

The Arc of Montgomery Respite Resource Fair is scheduled for Saturday, March 25<sup>th</sup>. The Commission will have a table at the event and volunteers are needed to help provide support. Commissioners are asked to contact Betsy Luecking.

The County Executive will be holding his annual budget meeting with the Boards, Committees and Commissioners on March 21<sup>st</sup>. Trish Gallalee will be attending on behalf of Seth.

The next Steering Committee meeting will be on Wednesday, March 15<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 pm to 7:30pm at the Rockville Memorial Library, 21 Maryland Avenue, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Meeting Room.

Marcie Povitsky, Vice Chair, reported that she attended the Library Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting that had a presentation on new technology that is being installed in all the libraries.

**Ex-Officio and Member Updates:**

Nancy Greene, ADA Title II Compliance, Department of General Services, reported that the audio loop in the Executive Office Building Auditorium and adjoining conference room has been updated. The contractor will be installing new speakers. The County Council Office Building will be undergoing partial renovations on the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> floors. The auditorium will also be renovated as well as the restrooms on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors

Sharon Norcio, Department of Recreation, reported that the department is currently completing online ADA training. February was National Therapeutic Recreation Month and the department engaged in disability awareness trainings and activities. Kathy Mann Koepke, Commissioner, noted that the accessible doors at the Germantown Community Recreation Center at not operational on Sundays when she attends class. Sharon will discuss the issue with staff.

Faisal Khan, Department of Transportation, reported that Orange Taxi will be included in the Call-n-Ride and Medicaid transportation programs starting next week.

Betsy Luecking, Staff, reported that Elizabeth Lang, ADA, Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL), has sent the Respect the Space survey to all library branches for them to submit. Libraries not currently in compliance have been shared with Nancy Greene, who noted that some will be brought into compliance during their scheduled renovations.

Susan Smith, Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC), reported that HOC will be installing a computer at their customer service centers located in Gaithersburg and Silver Spring. HOC will be holding a public hearing before their next meeting on April 5<sup>th</sup> and will discuss different housing options for individuals with disabilities. Susan noted that there may not be many housing vouchers available in the future. HOC is working with Housing and Urban Development to develop an 811 in Damascus which allows persons with disabilities to live as independently as possible in the community by subsidizing rental housing opportunities which provide access to appropriate supportive services. HOC has also signed a memorandum of understanding with the Maryland Department of Disabilities and Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development to set aside 10 units for the Bridge Subsidy Program, which is a 3-year tenant-based rental assistance program for eligible participants who are transitioning out of qualified institutions into independent renting through the Money Follows the Person demonstration. Susan also reported that Alexander House and Elizabeth House will be undergoing renovations.

Elizabeth Lang, MCPL, reported that the Davis branch is scheduled to reopen on Saturday, April 8<sup>th</sup> with a ceremony at 10:00 a.m. Aspen Hill and Little Falls branches are expected to reopen in May or June. The Library Accessibility Advisory Committee toured Long Branch and Praisner branches to provide feedback and suggestions on improvements. Elizaeth also reported that assistive technology workstations are being installed at all branches except at Noyes Children as well as at the Montgomery County Correctional Facility. The workstation includes a height-adjustable table, and a video magnifier that provides access to print and other materials by increasing the viewing size, contrast and brightness. Each workstation will have a standard computer with internet access, Word, Jaws, and a Magic keyboard that works directly with Magic software, which is intended for low vision users who need more assistance and provides screen enhancements. Information regarding these workstations will be made available via the website. Users can seek assistance from library staff.

Jay Kenney, Chief, Aging and Disability Services, reported that the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is currently implementing a new electronic case management record system that allows the sharing of information across service areas. The County Executive will release his proposed operating budget on March 14<sup>th</sup>. Due to recent Federal immigration enforcement activities, Jay reported that DHHS has been outreaching to the limited english proficiency (LEP) and immigrant communities. They are also working with advocacy groups and County attorneys to understand how

County staff interact with ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) and will be holding a managers meeting on Friday to discuss options.

Larry Bram, Developmental Disability Advisory Committee (DDAC), reported that last month DDAC heard a presentation from Officer Laurie Reyes, Special Operation Division Command, Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD), and Jake Edwards, Autism Ambassador, about the MCPD Dementia/ID/Autism Outreach Program. The next DDAC meeting will be held March 13<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 pm to 5:30 pm at the Rockville Memorial Library, 21 Maryland Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Meeting Room, Rockville. The Committee will hear a presentation about the Pathways to Careers Program, which offers people with significant disabilities guidance on the road to meaningful employment.

Karen Maricheau, Commission on Aging (COA), invited Commissioners to attend the COA Age-Friendly Stakeholder forum scheduled for March 29<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm at the Silver Spring Civic Building.

**Announcements:**

Scott Bleggi, Commissioner, announced that Upcounty Community Resources will be holding a ribbon cutting ceremony for their new weekend enrichment and respite program this Sunday, March 12<sup>th</sup> at Oasis Farm in Gaithersburg. County Executive Leggett is scheduled to speak. For more information, please visit: <http://www.ucresources.org/weekend-enrichment.html>.

**Next Full Commission Meeting:** Wednesday, April 12<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, April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017 – **\*\*PLEASE NOTE LOCATION\*\*** Rockville Memorial Library, 21 Maryland Avenue, 2<sup>nd</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