



**Montgomery County, MD  
Commission on People with Disabilities  
February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

**Welcome and Approval of January, 2016 Meeting Summary Minutes:**

Seth Morgan, Chair, convened the meeting. A motion was made to approve the January, 2016 Meeting Summary Minutes. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken and the January, 2016 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 Parks Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance: Transition Plan Overview – Bob Green, ADA Compliance Project Manager, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), Montgomery Parks, Park Development Division, and Wen Huang, RLA, LEED AP, ASLA, ADA Compliance Project Manager**

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

The transition plan includes identifying barriers within Montgomery Parks' system that limit accessibility to programs and activities, describes the methods, actions and strategies needed to make facilities accessible across the entire park system, and establishes the schedule and timeline for barrier removal.

Over the course of three years consultants assessed all 418 parks in the County and identified 14,000 barriers. Of those barriers 6,000 were identified as 'easy barrier removals' which are removals that require less than a half day's labor, such as installing signage or insulating a pipe. It will cost approximately \$48,000,000 over 15 years to complete the work, although the program will continue far beyond that timeline. In response to how the Commission could be helpful, Bob encouraged the Commission to advocate for completing the barrier removals in a more timely manner.

Amenities within the Montgomery County Parks system have been identified as one of two types – recurring and unique. Recurring are amenities which occur in a number of parks, such as playgrounds, playing fields, basketball and tennis courts. Montgomery Parks will be retrofitting parks so that 1 out of every 3 recurring amenity is ADA compliant. This ratio was determined by reviewing what other parks systems are doing around the country after their Department of Justice settlements. Unique amenities, including historic buildings, carousels, nature centers, and ice rinks, will all be made ADA compliant. Parks and amenities were ranked to determine barrier removal priority based on population density, park usage, proximity to public transit, and unique amenities within the park. Citizen inquiries and special services requests will move a park or amenity up the priority list. It is the goal of Montgomery Parks that everyone will have access to an accessible park within 15 minutes via private or public transportation.

The first step in the transition plan is to develop an implementation plan that includes a yearly plan to renovate amenities based on ranking priority, yearly available funding budget and resources, and changes based upon new information and changing priorities. Any new projects or maintenance plans for facilities will be fully accessible.

A version of the PowerPoint presentation will be made available online for resident input. Bob will share this information with Betsy Luecking, Staff, so she can send it out to the Commissioner and her other distribution lists. . Bob Green reported that Montgomery Parks is in the process of redesigning with their website. They will present before the Commission at a later date when the website is completed. The website will include a list of all the parks and their accessibility features.

The floor was opened to questions.

Seth asked if issues such as drainage are considered when making paths and parking spaces accessible. Bob said that renovation plans are taking these issues more into consideration to alleviate drainage problems from occurring.

Hilary Kaplan, Commissioner, asked about the number of accessible parking spaces available at parks. It was noted that if an individual is having an event, such as a picnic at a park, they can call the Program Access office to request that spaces close to the picnic area be designated for that particular gathering.

Concerns regarding lack of benches near the playground area and lack of access to playgrounds for individuals using mobility devices were discussed. Bob reported that Montgomery Parks is installing more benches inside the playground area as well as adding partially paved areas on the outer sides of playgrounds. They are still researching different types of surfaces that could be used.

**Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Consideration of Using Transportation Network Companies (TNC's) for MetroAccess Overflow – Beth Levie, Organizing Department American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)**

During an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) meeting in January WMATA proposed allowing transportation network companies, such as Uber and Lyft, to provide alternative paratransit services to MetroAccess clients. Uber and Lyft currently do not offer access to wheelchair accessible vehicles. A co-op of taxi drivers in Montgomery County has formed who are interested in providing taxi services using wheelchair-accessible taxis. A coalition of disability rights activists, labor unions, and taxi drivers are urging WMATA to select companies that provide access for all. The coalition has sent a letter to WMATA (see handout).

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

**Chair and Vice-Chair Report:**

Seth Morgan, Chair, reported that the Developmental Disabilities Advisory Committee (DDAC) voted at their last meeting to ask the Commission to advocate for the County to provide funding for an additional 100 individuals for Coordination of Community Services (formerly Resource Coordination) to increase the program cap to 600 individuals. Seth noted that the Commission has already sent their budget priorities to the County Executive. Jay Kenney, Chief, Aging and Disability Services, added that the County only very recently received information that they will exceed the current 500 cap and they are still in the process of hiring additional staff to handle the caseload. He suggested that the Commission wait until next year to ask for more funding when the program is more stable. Data suggests that the program is not going to be cost neutral and they are projecting a deficit for FY17. Betsy Luecking, Staff, suggested that DDAC advocate for funding for FY18 in October / November when the County Executive and County Council begin their operating budget discussions.

[Senate Bill 413 – Developmental Disabilities Administration \(DDA\) - Crisis Resolution Funding](#) would appropriate \$3,500,000 to be used to provide ongoing services to individuals in the crisis resolution category of the waiting list. Karen Morgret, Commissioner, noted that she attended Developmental Disabilities Day at the Maryland General Assembly today and Bill 413 was well received by legislators at the hearing.

The County Council Government Operations and Fiscal Policy (GO) Committee will be meeting in March to continue further discussions on expanding advocacy efforts to include State and Federal levels with the approval by the Office of Intergovernmental Relations (OIR). It is expected that OIR will give a presentation on their recommendations at this meeting. Seth plans to attend.

Last month the Steering Committee met with Dan Russ, Chair of the Commission on Health (COH), to discuss ways the Commissions can partner on projects and advocacy efforts. The COH continues to work on the issue of accessible medical facilities and care for persons with disabilities.

**Ex-Officio Updates:**

Charlie Butler, Department of Recreation (DR), reported that Therapeutic Recreation will be hosting a family swim pool party on March 5<sup>th</sup>. DR may be moving locations in 2019 into the Wheaton redevelopment government facility.

Anil Saini, ADA Compliance, Department of General Services (DGS), reported that they are in the process of implementing an online ADA training for staff which would register and track all employees that have received the training. DGS continues to provide ongoing customer service training for Ride On bus drivers.

Faisal Khan, Department of Transportation (DOT), reported that Al Roshdieh has been confirmed by the County Council as the Director of DOT.

Susan Smith, Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC), reported that the HOC waiting list currently has 28,770 individuals. Susan was unable to get a breakdown of how many people have disabilities. The waiting list combines all of HOC's programs. HOC has started a new program called HOC Academy that provides services to HOC residents, such as the Employment Initiative Program, which assists HOC residents in obtaining skills and experiences necessary for successful employment. HOC has just begun a Fatherhood initiative as well as a program called Construction 101, which assists residents in becoming apprentices in construction fields. HOC is also assisting with training County Ride On bus drivers. Susan also reported on the Mental Health Advisory Committee (MHAC) which has been working for several years to establish a Mental Health Court within Montgomery County. Mental health courts link offenders who would ordinarily be prison-bound to long-term community-based treatment. Typically their criminal charges are related to their disability. Several months ago a task force was created to take on the task of establishing such a court and the outcome is a mental health court will be put into place before the end of the calendar year for both district and circuit courts. Betsy Luecking, Staff, added that the Justice for Veterans organization spoke at the last Commission on Veterans Affairs (CVA) meeting. Many Veterans do not want to be associated with a mental health court and the CVA requested that a separate Veterans docket be created within that court system with Veteran mentors to assist those Veterans. Under consideration is also that the court be called Behavioral Health Court.

Rita Gale, Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL), reported that due to fiscal constraints the State of Maryland will not be providing libraries with desktop video magnifiers as reported at last month's meeting. She also reported that in 2014 the Maryland General Assembly passed a bill to create a Deaf culture digital library. The Maryland Division of Library Development and Services has chosen MCPL to manage the service for the State. The digital library will be a first stop information center that will provide Maryland residents, local library staff, college and university librarians, and other librarians throughout the State access to online resources on deaf culture, comprehensive electronic collection of deaf resources, deaf cultural programs, and training programs for library staff. MCPL was selected due to their work with persons with disabilities. The State also requires that the Project Director for the program be a certified librarian who is Deaf. Susan Cohen, Librarian, who is deaf will be managing the program. Rita noted that once the resources are online MCPL would be happy to give a presentation to the Commission.

Christopher Moy, Montgomery College, reported that he has recently become aware of the need for adult literacy ESOL classes for adults who are deaf and do not speak English. Montgomery College is researching the feasibility of creating such a program. Betsy Luecking, Staff, noted that there is a group of individuals who are deaf and are learning English that currently meets on Fridays at the Gaithersburg Library. She added that at least 10 individuals who are blind and do not speak English are currently receiving services for the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) and are in need of a similar type of program.

Karen Maricheau, Liaison to Commission on Aging (COA), reported that the City of Takoma Park implemented a pilot program called Snow Angels which provides snow removal assistance with walkways, steps, sidewalks and driveways for Takoma Park residents who are physically unable to remove snow from their residence. Snow removal services are provided by volunteers. The program was very successful during the last winter storm with 40 volunteers providing services at 75 homes. Karen noted that the County may want to try starting a similar program. She also reported that the City of Takoma Park will be holding a Volunteer Fair on Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup> at Piney Branch Elementary School.

Karen reported that the COA Public Policy Subcommittee went to Annapolis on February 3<sup>rd</sup> to lobby for the Care Act, which would provide caregivers more authority and the ability to be involved with discharge plans to care for their loved one. COA also expressed their concerns for seniors and people with disabilities who are vulnerable and need financial protection against fraud and scam. Karen noted that Lt. Governor Rutherford announced that the State is facing an \$18B deficit of unfunded pensions for seniors. The State is trying to find a solution for that deficit.

**Roundtable:**

Betsy Luecking, Staff, announced that the Steering Committee next week will be held at the Department of Permitting Services (DPS) office, 255 Rockville Pike. DPS has asked the Commission to preview the new draft Design for Tax Incentive Program website. RSVP to Betsy if they plan to attend. This is the link to the current site.

<http://permittingservices.montgomerycountymd.gov/DPS/designforlife/DesignForLife.aspx>

**Public Comments:** None.

**Next Full Commission Meeting:** Wednesday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016 – 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 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016 – Health & Human Services, 401 Hungerford Drive, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor 1D Conference Room, Rockville, MD 20850 – 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

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