Montgomery County, MD
Commission on People with Disabilities
June 8th, 2016

Welcome and Approval of May 2016 Meeting Summary Minutes:
Seth Morgan, Chair, convened the meeting. A motion was made to approve the May, 2016 Meeting Summary Minutes. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken and the May, 2016 Meeting Summary Minutes were unanimously approved as written. Approved minutes are available online at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd.

Design for Life Property Tax Incentive Program – Diane Schwartz Jones, Director, Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS)
Diane Schwartz Jones, Director, DPS, gave an overview of the Design for Life (DFL) Property Tax Incentive Program website: http://designforlifemc.org.

DFL Tax Credit Incentive Program breakdown:
http://permittingservices.montgomerycountymd.gov/DPS/pdf/DFLTaxCreditIncentiveTable.pdf

The program is a result of the work of the DFL Committee of the Commission and the voluntary DFL program. The Commission reached out to the County Council and County Executive who enacted Bill 5-13: Property Tax Credit – Accessibility Features in 2013 that established a property tax credit for accessibility features installed at an existing residence as well as a property tax credit for single family attached and detached homes that meet Level I or Level II criteria. The bill went into effect July 1, 2014.

There are nine accessibility features that a homeowner can install under the property tax incentive program. Homeowners can receive a tax credit equal to 50% of the costs, up to $2,500 total. Applications can be filed within 12 months of the installation. These features include:

1. no-step front entrance or a no-step entrance to another location providing access to the main living space; (can be from garage, back door, deck, etc.)

2. ramp creating a no-step entrance;

3. interior doorway w/32-inch clear opening;

4. exterior doorway w/32-inch clear opening + exterior lighting controlled from inside the residence or automatic or continuously on;

5. walls around a toilet, tub, or shower reinforced and properly installed grab bars;

6. maneuverable bathroom or kitchen;

7. an exterior or interior elevator or lift or stair glide unit;

8. accessibility-enhanced bathroom, including a walk-in or roll-in shower or tub;

9. alarm, appliance, and control structurally integrated to assist with a sensory disability.

Accessibility Standards for Level I (VISITable) home and Level II (LIVEable) home include design elements such as a no-step entrance, and slightly wider interior doors. These elements accommodate people living with temporary or permanent disabilities as well as friends or relatives with mobility limitations and make it easier for everyone including access for a baby stroller or large objects.

There are four design elements required to meet Level I: at least one no-step entrance, an accesible route to a place to visit on the entry level, a usable powder room or bathroom, and a 32-inch nominal clear width interior door. Homeowners can

apply for a property tax credit up to $3,000 maximum. Builders who design new construction homes that meet these elements can apply for a school impact tax credit based on the percentage of homes that meet Level I.

To meet Level II the home must meet the four design elements required for Level I as well as four additional design elements: an accessible circulation path that can accommodate a wheelchair or other mobility aid, an accessible kitchen, at least one accessible bedroom, and an accessible bathroom that includes a walk-in or roll-in shower or tub. Homeowners can apply for a property tax credit up to $10,000 maximum.

The maximum credit that can be applied in any tax year is $2,000. Excess credit is carried over into the following years.

The website features a Resource Center that provides information regarding legislation, technical guidelines and requirements and brochures as well as information and articles on accessible and universal design.

The website is viewable on desktop computers, tablets and smartphones. Those with mobility impairments who can not use a mouse can tab through the various sections on the website with their keyboard.

The gallery section of the website features homes that have accessible and universal design features installed. This section is currently under construction as the images do not have alternative text. The section will be updated to show text relating to the image when a mouse is rolled over the image. DPS envisions promoting businesses that promote accessible features, and visitable and liveable homes. Homeowners, builders and remodelers are encouraged to send photos of their homes and projects to be featured on the website. Images can be sent to Jessica Fusillo, Community Outreach Manager, DPS, or Simin Rasolee, Customer Service Manager, DPS.

The program continues to grow and has seen an increase in applications. DPS has partnered with the Department of Finance to certify and track applications.

DPS has had some outreach to the building industry through the Maryland Building Industry Association. They are looking to put advertisements on the back of Ride On buses as well as running advertisements in the Senior Beacon. Ms. Jones noted that for the sale of new homes the contracts are required to highlight the property tax credit so the buyer is aware that they can ask their builder to design their home with accessible features. It was suggested that DPS also reach out to the local remodeler organizations as well as insurance companies. DPS would also like to partner with the private sector to promote this program and organize an annual event that would acknowledge companies that are using the Design for Life building standards

The floor was opened to questions.

It was asked if the program is available for apartment owners. It is not open to apartment owners as they are not paying property tax. The accessibility features property tax credit is available for condominiums and attached and detached single family homes. Level I and Level II property tax credits are only available for attached and detached single family homes.

It was noted that Level II requirements are confusing as it states that the homeowner must have an accessible powder room as well as an accessible bathroom. It was asked that if a homeowner were to have one accessible bathroom would it negate the requirement to also have an accessible powder room. Ms. Jones will look into this question.

Hilary Kaplan, Commissioner, asked if DPS has staff available that can assist homeowners with making recommendations for accessible design based on the persons needs. DPS staff are only available to provide a design consultation if the homeowner would like to know if they are qualified to apply for the property tax credits. DPS would eventually like to have a resource list of such providers on their website.

Dennis Pillsbury, Department of General Services, asked what regulations and standards DPS is referencing in the technical guidelines. Ms. Jones suggested contacting Hemal Mustafa for information regarding the technical guidelines.

Trish Gallalee, former Commissioner, asked how a City of Rockville resident receives the tax credit as they have their own permitting process. The City of Rockville and the City of Gaithersburg do not fall under Montgomery County's jurisdiction for permitting. Ms. Rasolee noted that homeowners must notify their permitting department that they will be

applying for a DFL property tax credit with Montgomery County. Once the project and a final inspection is completed the permitting office will send the documentation to DPS for review. Ms. Jones stated that they will review and confirm the process with the City of Rockville and the City of Gaithersburg, and instructions on how to file with those jurisdictions will be added to the website.

Ms. Jones, Ms. Fusillo, and Ms. Rasolee presented the Commission with a framed proclamation that presented by County Executive Leggett and the County Council in May for Building Safety Month. The joint proclamation was presented to the Commission on People with Disabilities and to the Department of Permitting Services (DPS) for their joint efforts to raise awareness for accessible housing and their contributions to the Design for Life Property Tax Credit Initiative.

Introduction of Commission Members:
New Commissioners and current Commissioners were invited to introduce themselves and give brief remarks regarding their background. New Commissioners will be appointed on June 14th.

Chair and Vice Chair Report:
Seth Morgan, Chair, reported that travel and dependent care remibursements are due to Carly Clem by June 17th. The Commission will not have a full meeting until September 14th, 2016. The meeting will most likely be a retreat and the location is to be determined. The Steering Committee will meet next week on June 15th and will meet again on July 20th. The Steering Committee will not meet in August. Steering Committee meetings are held at 401 Hungerford Drive, Rockville in Conference Room 1D.

Marcie Povitsky, Vice Chair, reported that she attended a Library Accessibility Committee meeting where Rita Gale, Montgomery County Public Libraries, gave a presentation about the currently under construction Wheaton Library. The library will be connected to the new Wheaton Recreation Center.

Ex-Officio Updates:
Due to time constraints Betsy asked Ex-Officio members to e-mail their updates to her for inclusion in the minutes.

Roundtable:
Betsy Luecking will contact new Commissioners about orientation.

Public Comments: None.

Next Full Commission Meeting: **ANNUAL PLANNING MEETING – PLEASE NOTE EXTENDED TIME**
Wednesday, September 14th, 2016 – Executive Office Building, 101 Monroe Street, Lobby Auditorium, Rockville, MD 20850 – 5:15 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Steering Committee Meeting: Wednesday, September 21st th, 2016 – Health & Human Services, 401 Hungerford Drive, 1st 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