



**Marc Elrich**  
*County Executive*



**Darren M. Popkin**  
*Sheriff*

## **Office of the Sheriff** **Domestic Violence Coordinating Council**

**Thursday, January 14, 2021**

**5:00 PM – 7:00 PM**

**Via Microsoft Teams**

### **Minutes**

Attendees: Debbie Feinstein, Chair (Montgomery County Office of the State's Attorney); Tom Manion, Vice Chair (Montgomery County Office of the Sheriff); Spencer Cantrell (Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse); The Honorable Karen Ferretti (District Court for Montgomery County); Dorne Hill (Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services); The Honorable Sidney Katz (Montgomery County Council); Tina Michaels (Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation); Assistant Chief Ron Smith (Montgomery County Department of Police); Vikhyana Gonzalez (Student Member); Michelle Maxberry (Community Member); Maura Lynch (Community Member); Amy Palumbo (Community Member); Ronald Whalen (Community Member); Mindy Thiel (Community Member); Smita Varia, Staff (Montgomery County Office of the Sheriff);

Absent: Nicole Drew (Montgomery County Commission for Women); Laurie Duker (Court Watch Montgomery); Ingrid Gonzalez (Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services – Parole and Probation); The Honorable Karla Smith (Circuit Court for Montgomery County); The Honorable Rebecca Smondrowski (Montgomery County Public School – Board of Education);

Guests: Lisa Mandel Trupp (Office of Montgomery County Councilmember Sidney Katz); Reggie Blankson (Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation); Captain Amy Daum and Lt. Gerald McFarland (Montgomery County Police Department); Carolyn Hoffman (Court Watch Montgomery); Alia El Radi (House of Ruth); Shin Young Park (Korean Community Center); Tondalayo Royster (Member of the Public); Vita Larkin (Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America); LaSheena Williams (Member of the Public);

### **I. Welcome and Introductions**

### **II. Guidelines for the Virtual Meeting**

Due to the COVID-19 health crisis, the meeting was conducted virtually using Microsoft Teams. Debbie Feinstein reviewed guidelines for participants. She asked everyone to mute microphones when not speaking. Debbie Feinstein asked the participants to use the chat function if they would like to speak. She also requested that participants should identify themselves each time they speak.

### **III. Approval of November Minutes**

The November 12, 2020 DVCC meeting minutes were reviewed. Amy Palumbo proposed a motion to approve the minutes without revision. The motion was seconded by Sidney Katz and passed.

### **IV. Announcements**

The Commission for Women is holding their 41<sup>st</sup> Women's Legislative Briefing on January 21<sup>st</sup>. For more information, visit [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw).

Tom Manion announced that the FJC received a grant through the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services to upgrade technology equipment at the FJC to enhance virtual services to clients during the COVID-19 crisis.

Debbie Feinstein announced that all criminal jury trials at the Circuit Court have been postponed until April 26<sup>th</sup>. The criminal trials at District Court are still being held.

Judge Ferretti said that people wanting to file for a protective order must only be present physically at the Courthouse for the first step (whether for an Interim Protective Order or a Temporary Protective Order). After that first step is taken, the other hearings can be done via video. She also mentioned that if the petitioner does not appear for the Final Protective Order hearing, the clerks are calling the petitioner to make sure there are no technological problems rather than dismissing the case. All Protective Order hearings are only being done at Rockville District Court.

### **V. DVCC Leadership**

Debbie Feinstein asked for nominations for Chair and Vice Chair of the Council. For 2021 - 2023, DVCC members nominated and elected Debbie Feinstein as Chair, and Tom Manion as Vice Chair.

### **VI. Committee Reports**

#### **A. Victim Services Committee update - Tom Manion, Chair**

Tom Manion updated the Council on the Victim Services Initiatives. Safe Start is continuing the Zoom Safe Start groups. The Town of Chevy Chase made a \$10,000 donation in both cash and gift cards for both the FJC and Safe Start.

The committee is working on setting up services to address addiction. Maura Lynch and Ngozi Obineme are working with Suburban Hospital who could potentially partner with the FJC to be a referral source.

The subcommittee on Reimaging Services for Victims of Family and Sexual Violence met for the first time in December. It was a brainstorming session about the issues the subcommittee will want to keep in mind while thinking about the future of victim services in the County and how to cohesively work together.

#### **B. Education and Outreach Committee - Debbie Feinstein, Chair**

Smita Varia said that the 11<sup>th</sup> annual video contest is currently open and the deadline is March 1<sup>st</sup>. Middle and High School students are invited to create a 60 video in English or Spanish addressing dating violence. The Choose Respect Student Advisory Committee is currently working on creating a promotional video to be sent out to the schools and posted on social media.

The Choose Respect annual event, called RespectFest, will be held the week of April 18<sup>th</sup>, which is the same week as National Victims' Rights Week. There will be a kickoff Zoom session on Sunday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, and then a week of events including interviews with a survivor of dating violence, yoga classes, self-defense demonstrations, quizzes, tik tok videos, scavenger hunts and a session for parents.

Debbie Feinstein mentioned that In lieu of in class Expect Respect presentations, Smita Varia is creating videos for MCPS to upload to their classroom portals for students to watch. Debbie Feinstein and Smita Varia have been working with MCPS to set up a Memorandum of Understanding to have the Choose Respect programs integrated into the curriculum.

Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School has implemented both Coaching Boys Into Men and Athletes as Leaders with their online "practices" with the baseball and softball teams.

The committee is also working on continuing to distribute the Family Violence Awareness cards throughout the county.

**C. Legislative and Policy Planning Committee – *Spencer Cantrell, Chair***

Spencer Cantrell said that the Maryland General Assembly is now in session. The committee is going to meet next week to discuss what legislation the DVCC should support this year. They are reviewing the recommendations by the Workgroup to Study Child Custody Court Proceedings Involving Child Abuse or Domestic Violence Allegations Child Custody. They are also discussing the Marriage as a Defense to Sex Crimes Act. This is a bill to repeal the current statute that makes marriage a defense to some sex crimes.

**D. Offender Program and Policy Committee – *Tina Michaels, Chair***

Tina Michaels announced that people being supervised through Pre-Trial are continuing to increase. Reggie Blankson mentioned that because jury trials have stopped in Circuit Court, they have more people on Pre-Trial who have serious offenses that they are monitoring.

The contractor for the Abuser Intervention Program has been secured and is working on getting office space. They are starting to contact those that have been ordered to participate in the program and the groups should begin in a month. The committee is exploring the idea of offering the Abuser Intervention Program in the Jails. Tina has also received data from the Montgomery County Police Department on the number of people incarcerated for domestic violence offenses. The committee wants to analyze the data to see how many prisoners would have benefited from AIP while in Jail, in order to make a case to offer the program at the Detention Centers. Another idea would be to have the inmates participate remotely with the outside group.

The committee is also continuing to address the transition between an offender going from pre-trial services to probation after sentencing. The Pre-Trial conditions are strict, but once they are sentenced to Probation, there is a lag time to when conditions start with Probation. The transfer should be more seamless.

Dorne Hill announced that the BAK Domestic Violence Shelter has seen an increase of clients. Both the Abused Persons Program and VASAP (Victim Assistance and Sexual Assault Program) are starting to use Zoom Health for their therapy.

## **VII. Adjournment**

Debbie Feinstein, Chair, adjourned the meeting at 6:02 pm.

**The next DVCC meeting will be on March 11, 2021, 5pm-7pm**



**Domestic Violence Coordinating Council**