



Marc Elrich
County Executive



Darren M. Popkin
Sheriff

Office of the Sheriff
Domestic Violence Coordinating Council
Thursday, November 14, 2019
5:00 PM – 7:00 PM
Family Justice Center 5th Floor Conference Room
600 Jefferson Plaza, Suite 500, Rockville, Maryland 20852

Minutes

Attendees: Debbie Feinstein, Chair (Montgomery County Office of the State's Attorney); Tom Manion, Vice Chair (Montgomery County Office of the Sheriff); Teresa Bennett (Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services); Ingrid Gonzalez (Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services – Parole and Probation); The Honorable Sidney Katz, (Montgomery County Council); Tina Michaels (Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation – Pre-trial Services); Spencer Cantrell (Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse); Laurie Duker (Court Watch Montgomery); Lilah Katz (Student Member); Amy Palumbo (Community Member); Izola Shaw (Community Member); Mindy Thiel (Community Member); Ronald Whalen (Community Member); Smita Varia, Staff (Montgomery County Office of the Sheriff);

Absent: Nicole Drew (Montgomery County Commission for Women); The Honorable Karen Ferretti (District Court for Montgomery County); Chief Marcus Jones (Montgomery County Department of Police); The Honorable Karla Smith (Circuit Court for Montgomery County); The Honorable Rebecca Smondrowski (Montgomery County Public School – Board of Education); Eshigo Okasili (Community Member);

Guests: Lisa Mandel-Trupp (Office of Montgomery County Councilmember Sidney Katz); Willie Parker-Loan (Montgomery County Department of Police); Tazeen Ahmad (Montgomery County Commission for Women); Steve Neff (Montgomery County Public Schools); Asjoure Brown and Alia El Radi (House of Ruth Maryland); Meaghan Tarquinio and Pamela Holtzinger (Frederick Health); Brett Engler (Frederick County State's Attorney's Office); Shin Young (Korean Community Service Center); Elaine Arndt (Moms Demand Action of Montgomery County);

I. New Member Introductions

Debbie Feinstein introduced the four new members of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council. Spencer Cantrell from the Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Laurie Duker from Court Watch Montgomery are the two new members representing non-governmental/non-profit domestic violence services or advocacy organizations. Amy Palumbo and Izola Shaw are the two new public members.

II. Approval of September Minutes

The September 12, 2019 DVCC meeting minutes were reviewed. Councilmember Katz proposed a motion to approve the minutes without revision. The motion was seconded by Lilah Katz and passed.

III. Announcements

Debbie Feinstein announced that the Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office, Montgomery County Department of Police, The Montgomery County Family Justice Center and Adventist Healthcare Shady Grove Medical Center are hosting a training entitled, "Responding to Strangulation in Montgomery County: A Collaborative Approach" on December 11th with two separate sessions, 8:30 – 12:00 pm and 1:00 – 4:30 pm at the Public Safety Training Academy. The training will be an introduction on strangulation and will initiate a conversation on a community wide approach to raising awareness and keeping victims safe.

Tazeen Ahmad announced that the Montgomery County Commission for Women's 40th Women's Legislative Briefing will be on January 26th, 2020 at the Universities at Shady Grove.

IV. Committee Reports

A. Legislative and Policy Planning Committee – *Chief Marcus Jones, Chair*

Chief Jones was not present at the meeting. Debbie Feinstein updated the Council that legislation has been drafted to add strangulation as a 1st degree assault in Maryland. The current draft language will add "A person may not intentionally suffocate or strangle another in the commission of an assault" to the current statute. This legislation is a collaboration between many counties and there are already sponsors in both the State House and State Senate. Individuals or agencies can submit written testimony and/or go to Annapolis and testify in support of the legislation if they so choose. Lilah Katz asked what the opposition to this legislation is. Debbie Feinstein said that the argument is that current legislation on 1st degree assault already encompasses strangulation, so there is no need for a separate listing – however, it is not specific or comprehensive enough and often times strangulation is charged as a 2nd degree assault.

Spencer Cantrell reported that the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) conference is next Saturday, November 23rd. After the conference, MLAW's will announce their legislative priorities.

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

Tina Michaels reported on the initiatives that the Offender Program and Policy Committee is focusing on. They are looking into Abuser Intervention programs specifically designed for juveniles and offering the Abuser Intervention Program to offenders who are incarcerated. Both initiatives will need additional funding. During the last Offender Program and Policy Meeting, Judge Ferretti brought up the suggestion to have Protective Order conditions available for Judges during criminal bond hearings. Tina said that Judges should have access to Secure Case Search which will give them the information they need. Ingrid Gonzalez said that Probation Officers should also have the Protective Order conditions with them for the Violation of Probation reports.

The committee is interested in the recidivism rates of offenders who complete the Abuser Intervention program to measure its effectiveness. Mindy Thiel said that while offenders who are part of the families she works with are engaged in the Abuser

Intervention Program, their violence tends to decrease. Mindy Thiel also said that she is seeing more Judges ordering the Abuser Intervention Program, therapy for victims and Safe Start Counseling for children. Laurie Duker said that Court Watch Montgomery does collect data on when Judges order the Abuser Intervention Program. Laurie Duker said that a Baltimore Judge wants to add “surrender of guns” to the Judges’ checklist for District Court.

Teresa Bennett announced that the Abuser Intervention Program is going to be going under a Request for Proposal process. The current provider’s contract ends on June 30, 2020.

C. Victim Services Committee - *Tom Manion, Chair*

Tom Manion reported on the initiatives for the Victim Services Committee. He announced that the Montgomery County Family Justice Center’s First Annual Report for the fiscal year of 2019 was released in October.

The Safe Keep Program through the Police Department will provide a safe place for the pets of domestic violence survivors while they transition into finding pet-friendly housing. A Memorandum of Agreement with the Police Department Animal will include allowing pets to stay in their shelter for 60 days, which is the length of stay at the County Domestic Violence Shelter. The agreement also includes that if the Family Justice Center Client Assistants hear any disclosures of animal abuse or potential danger to animals in domestic violence-affected households, it will automatically be reported to the Animal Services Division of the Police Department. The Memorandum of Agreement is complete and is currently awaiting a signature.

The committee is planning on offering a free training for attorneys to learn how to represent clients in Protective Order hearings. The training will take place in early 2020.

The committee is having ongoing discussions about improving access to transitional housing for domestic violence survivors.

Preparations for the Safe Start Summer Camp 2020 are beginning, and their hope is to expand to new areas to increase accessibility for more families.

Tom Manion said that he gave a tour of the Family Justice Center to District Judges in October, and they are looking forward to setting up more tours for people working with the Judiciary. Laurie Duker said that when new judges come to the county, they should receive tours of these services in the community to increase familiarity and, in turn, increase referrals.

D. Education and Outreach Committee - *Debbie Feinstein, Chair*

Debbie Feinstein announced that bus ads are up on the outside of 15 Ride-On buses in the county with the message: “Are You Afraid of Your Partner? Free Help is Available,” including the phone numbers for the Family Justice Center and the Abused Persons Program. The funding for these ads was donated by the Commission for Women and Councilmember Sidney Katz’s office. There are also electronic ads inside of the extRa Ride-On buses, in libraries, and in the Executive Office Building. In October, there was a launch event for this initiative and Domestic Violence Awareness Month at the Executive Office Building with the County Executive. The County Council also presented a Proclamation for Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October.

RespectFest will be at the Wheaton Community Recreation Center - both inside and outside space - from 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm on March 29, 2020. There will be a main stage, educational content booths, food, the annual video contest presentation, and more. Students will walk around with “passports” to be stamped at each booth to receive student service-learning hours. The committee has also created a Student Advisory Committee to assist with the planning of the event.

Smita Varia announced that the in-class Expect Respect presentations will reach about 3,000 students this fall in high schools and middle schools, which is roughly the same as last fall. This year, students are taking a pre-survey and post-survey to measure what they are learning. The Student Advisory Committee wants to encourage teachers to assign the video contest to their students for extra credit. The Expect Respect presentation is still being given to incarcerated youthful offenders at the Department of Corrections, and the committee is working on completing background checks to get the presentation into the Noyes Juvenile Detention Center.

The multi-language cards have been re-stocked in all the libraries, and they are also available in Ride-On buses.

V. Adjournment

Debbie Feinstein, Chair, adjourned the meeting at 6:33 pm.

The next DVCC meeting will be on January 9, 2020, 5pm-7pm at the Family Justice Center



Domestic Violence Coordinating Council