



Marc Elrich
County Executive



Darren M. Popkin
Sheriff

Office of the Sheriff
Domestic Violence Coordinating Council
Thursday, November 18, 2021
5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Minutes

Attendees: Debbie Feinstein, Chair (Montgomery County Office of the State's Attorney); Tom Manion, Vice Chair (Montgomery County Office of the Sheriff); Nicole Drew (Montgomery County Commission for Women); 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); Carolyn Hoffman (Court Watch Montgomery) Jessica Volz (Adventist Healthcare); Lavontte Chapmon (Community Member); Michelle Maxberry (Community Member); Carissa Zheng (Student Member); Smita Varia, Staff (Montgomery County Office of the Sheriff);

Absent: The Honorable Karen Ferretti (District Court for Montgomery County); Dorne Hill (Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services); The Honorable Karla Smith (Circuit Court for Montgomery County); Assistant Chief Dinesh Patil (Montgomery County Department of Police); The Honorable Rebecca Smondrowski (Montgomery County Public School – Board of Education); Amy Palumbo (Community Member); Mindy Thiel (Community Member); Maura Lynch (Community Member);

Guests: Colleen Bokman (Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services); Lisa Mandel Trupp (Office of Montgomery County Councilmember Sidney Katz); Captain Amy Daum and Lt. Gerald McFarland (Montgomery County Police Department); Jenica Kramer (House of Ruth);

I. Welcome and Introductions

II. Guidelines for the Virtual Meeting

The meeting was conducted virtually using Microsoft Teams. Tom Manion reviewed guidelines for participants. He asked everyone to mute microphones when not speaking. Tom Manion asked the participants to use the chat function if they would like to speak and to use the raise hand function. He also requested that participants should identify themselves each time they speak.

III. Approval of September Minutes

The September 9th meeting minutes were approved.

IV. Announcements

There were no announcements

V. Member Updates

There are 4 new members on the DVCC. The two new members representing non-profit, or advocacy organizations are Carolyn Hoffman who is the Director of Court Watch Montgomery and Jessica Volz, who is the Clinical Director of Forensics, Forensic Medical Unit at Adventist Healthcare Shady Grove Medical Center. Lavontte Chapmon is the new Public Member and Carissa Zheng is the new Student Member.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Legislative and Policy Planning Committee – Maura Lynch, Chair

Maura Lynch was absent. Debbie Feinstein announced that there is a new stalking bill that is being discussed. Currently, stalking is a misdemeanor in Maryland and carries a 5-year maximum penalty. The proposed legislation maintains the misdemeanor for first time offenses but enhances the penalty and nature of the offense under the following circumstances: If a person has a prior conviction for stalking either in Maryland or another State OR the person has a protective order in effect against them at the time of the stalking (where the petitioner is the victim of the stalking), the person will be guilty of a felony stalking and subject to a maximum penalty of 10 years in jail. There is also a movement towards increasing funding to sexual assault centers and forensic nursing programs. If a member is interested in joining the Legislative committee, please email Smita Varia.

B. Victim Services Committee update – Tom Manion, Chair

Tom Manion updated the Council that the Victim Services Committee met in October. For legal services, Tom Manion coordinated a separate meeting for all of the legal service providers – DVS Legal Services, House of Ruth, the Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse (JCADA), Ayuda and the Montgomery County Health and Human Services Trauma Services. During that meeting, the legal services providers discussed staff turnover, service capacity and what administrative protocols would be helpful to efficiently utilize all of the services.

For issues related to housing, Maura Lynch is going to be working with Jill Larson, the Director of the Betty Ann Krahnke Domestic Violence Shelter to set up legal services for shelter clients who may be having trouble securing long term housing due to previous criminal records.

The Safe Start program, which is the therapy program for children who have been exposed to domestic violence is continuing their fall therapy groups with success. Additionally, the Town of Chevy Chase has will be holding their annual holiday donation drive to benefit both the Safe Start program and the Family Justice Center.

After receiving feedback from Jill Larson, the Director of the Betty Ann Krahnke Domestic Violence Shelter that many clients have misconceptions of their rights when they file for a Protective Order, Smita Varia is creating a handout to clarify rights of petitioners.

Lastly, the Victim Services Subcommittee is working on creating a multi-disciplinary center that works with clients who are dealing with all types of power-based violence, including domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, elder abuse and stalking. The committee is currently collecting research and data and building political support. The committee is also in the early stages of discussing operations and infrastructure.

C. Education and Outreach Committee – Debbie Feinstein, Chair

Debbie Feinstein debriefed the Council on the current initiatives. Domestic Violence Awareness Month activities went well. There was a Press Event with many elected officials, two webinars on bystander intervention and strangulation, the Breathe In, Speak Out yoga series to raise money for Choose Respect, and ongoing social media. In addition, Bus Ads for the Family Justice Center and the Crisis Center are running on RideOn buses thanks to funding from Councilmember Sidney Katz's Office, the Montgomery County Commission for Women and the Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation.

Smita Varia reported that the Annual Choose Respect Video Contest is now open for entries. This is the yearly video contest where middle and high school students create 60 second videos about dating violence for a chance to win \$1,000. All participants will receive student service-learning hours if they follow the rules.

RespectFest planning is underway as well. RespectFest will be both virtual and in person. The Student Advisory Committee is also planning on hosting mini events throughout the year to engage with students more often.

Smita Varia updated the Council that the in-class Expect Respect dating violence prevention workshops have reached almost 1,800 students at 9 schools this semester. Debbie Feinstein and Smita Varia are also leading a webinar for high school students in December on sexual assault and consent.

At the next Education and Outreach Committee meeting, the members will start discussing training health care professionals on how to screen for domestic violence, in addition to training Restaurant and Bar staff to recognize warning signs of dating violence, domestic violence and sexual assault and how to safely intervene.

Lastly, Debbie Feinstein, Donna Rismiller and Smita Varia are reaching out to school Athletic Directors to promote Coaching Boys into Men and Athletes as Leaders.

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

The Offender Program and Policy Committee has not met in a while due to programs having been paused during COVID. Tina Michaels will reach out to members to start meetings again.

Colleen Bokman reported that the Abuser Intervention Program (AIP) has started back up again with a small waitlist. They are getting referrals from Parole and Probation, District Court, Circuit Court and Child Welfare. There is a slight delay with referrals from Pre-Trial.

VII. Adjournment

Debbie Feinstein, vice Chair adjourned the meeting at 5:48 pm.

The next DVCC meeting will be on January 13, 2022, 5pm-7pm



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