



Monday, April 25, 2022
Public Meeting (Virtual) of the Howard County Commission on Disabilities
6:30 to 8:30 PM
Meeting Minutes

PRESENT: Adeniyi Olu Adekoya
Beth Benevides
Heidi Burghardt
Nicole Czarnecki
Joshua Hirsh
Doug Lea
Greg Schuckman
George Stephens
Marian Vessels
Karen Wood

ABSENT: Steve Towne
Mia Williams

STAFF: Michelle Henry (absent)
Erica Lewis
Terry Zeigler
Stephanie Adibe

INTERPRETERS:
Sherry Atkinson
Becky Frey

I. Call to Order, Roll Call, Welcome

- Doug Lea called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.

II. New Business

- A. Commission Presentation and Discussion with County Executive Calvin Ball
 - County Executive was unable to attend tonight. The presentation and discussion will be rescheduled.
- B. Approval of Minutes for February 28, 2022
 - Minutes approved as written.
- C. Approval of Minutes for March 7, 2022 Special Meeting
 - Minutes approved as written.

D. Resuming Meetings In Person

- Discussion was held on whether to resume in-person Commission meetings. Some members expressed a preference to continue virtual meetings; others preferred the option of participating virtually *or* in-person. Concerns were raised regarding the necessary technology to offer accessible, hybrid meetings. It was suggested that meetings continue virtually until it can be confirmed that the appropriate technology is available. Further discussion and a vote on this issue will be held at a future meeting.

III. Old Business

A. Committee Updates

1. Access Committee

- Update provided by Marian. Plans for the new East Columbia 50+ Center were reviewed at the March meeting. The committee expressed accessibility concerns. However, many planning and design decisions had already been made by the County and contracted entities. The committee respectfully requests to be brought into the planning and design process early on, so that accessibility suggestions for County facilities can be incorporated into the final planning, decision, and purchasing process.
- The May meeting will focus on renovation plans for the Harriett Tubman facility.

2. Education Committee

- Beth, Heidi and George are members of this committee. The next committee meeting is scheduled for May 16 at 3:00 pm

3. Legislative Committee

- Olu, Josh, Greg and Mia volunteered to be members of this committee. The initial meeting date has not yet been scheduled.

4. Strategic Planning Committee

- Steve, Greg, Steve, and Olu are members of this committee.
- A survey was developed by the committee and distributed to Commission members for suggestions on concerns that should be a focus of the Commission. Not all surveys were returned. Verbal suggestions offered during tonight's meeting included the following:
 - Greg suggested poverty, employment, and education. He reports being told that better adult services (through DDA?) may be available in Baltimore County.
 - Doug suggested better transition services to adulthood, and employment of people with disabilities.
 - Marian suggested physical access, programmatic access, and an educational campaign to identify resources for people with disabilities.
 - George suggested a focus on students with disabilities.
 - Olu suggested training of law enforcement.
 - Beth suggested that veteran officers should be re-trained periodically.
 - Karen suggested service animal training for law enforcement personnel.
- Greg met with Michelle Henry and DCRS data analyst Charles Smith to discuss gathering statistical information. One of the committee's concerns is County funding allocation to support non-profit organizations. The group is requesting information and data on funding criteria and performance measures for these organizations.

- The next committee meeting is scheduled for May 6 at 6:00 pm and will focus on beginning the process of reviewing and updating the current strategic plan.

B. 2021 Annual Report

- The annual report has been posted on the Commission's web page and also forwarded to each member in electronic format.
- A copy of the report has been submitted to the County Executive.

IV. Announcements

- Beth reported that the Hussman Institute donated 250 sensory kits to the Howard County Police Department. The kits will be distributed by police officers and mobile crisis teams during situations involving individuals with autism and other disabilities. The kits contain items such as sunglasses, sentence starter cards, stress releases, letterboard with alphabet, yes/no cards.
- Olu has agreed to provide the Haiku at the June 27 meeting.

V. Adjournment

- Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.

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