****

**City of Salisbury**

**DISABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**December 10, 2020**

**Committee Members Present**

Timothy Meagher, Chairperson

Gregory Tyler, Citizen

Michael Dyer, United Needs & Abilities

Stephen Bullock, PT Job Coach

Dr. Katherine Jones, Bay Area Center for Independent Living

Amy Crouse, Blind Industries

Dominique Sessa, Citizen (New Member)

Adith Thummalapalli, Citizen (New Member)

Michelle Gregory, City Council Rep

**Committee Members Not in Attendance**

Jeremy Wolfer, Wicomico County Board of Education

**In Attendance**

Julie English, *Mayor’s Office Administrative Assistant*

Julie Christopher, Optimal Health Care

**The Disability Advisory Committee met at 3:00pm virtually via Zoom.**

**Call to Order**

The Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) Meeting was called to order at 3:05pm by Mr. Meagher.

**Introductions and Welcome**

The meeting began with brief introductions of all in attendance. Mr. Meagher appreciated everyone’s patience with technology.

**Last Meeting Minutes Review**

The minutes from the September 17, 2020 meeting were approved by Mr. Meagher and seconded by Mr. Bullock. All were in favor.

**Gifts to the Student**

Mr. Meagher informed the committee that each student who joined the last meeting was sent a letter and small token of appreciation from the group. This was to thank them for taking the time to meet with us and share their experiences with us.

**Agency Updates**

Mr. Dyer shared that they are very challenged at the moment due to Covid positive results for staff. In particular, parents of disabled children currently have a high stress level in attempting to find someone to teach their children from home. There is discussion happening about the various phases of the vaccine and who will be included in each phase.

Dr. Jones shared that the only significant change in their programs was having to shut down the pool. They built a green room to provide virtual programs for the students. With electronics being their forte, the company has grown.

Ms. Christopher, a member of the public working for Optimal Health as a Community Coordinator, informed the committee of the growth of her employer.

Mr. Bullock discussed schools still being closed to in-person classes. He shared that the hybrid learning was a challenge. They are looking forward to the day schools can open up again.

Ms. Crouse stated that Blind Industries has been unable to have students come in for learning. They have done braille over the phone as a result. Referrals have come in so they call and sign up for whatever programs are available. Goodie bags are being prepared for seniors and will be distributed to cheer them up for the holiday season. They are looking forward to the seniors getting vaccinated.

Ms. Gregory shared her experience on the Environmental Task Force. They are looking to recommend more bike pathways, green transport, and public transport. Those recommendations will go in front of the City Council for review and approval. Council is currently prioritizing things for the new fiscal year.

Mr. Tyler explained the idea of a floating bus stop.

**Vulnerable Populations**

Dr. Jones announced that there are a few scholarships left for those in need of housing.

Mr. Bullock shared about the One Stop events and the giveaways they offer. Habitat and the Local Management Board are assisting those struggling to pay their rent.

**Downtown Video**

We discussed doing a video of the downtown changes that are beneficial to the disabled community. Mr. Meagher added that there are numerous businesses that would benefit from us highlighting these changes. Dr. Jones offered for her business to fund the video if we choose to go with a small-scale outlet such as Delmarva Life. Ms. Christopher mentioned that she has connections to some of the businesses downtown that may be on board with this idea. Optima may also assist financially with this idea. Ms. Gregory agrees with bringing in the businesses downtown.

A target time for this video and possibly doing an event is July. This will help to highlight Disability Pride Month. In addition to raising awareness of those who are disabled in the community, this would also bring awareness to the business owners that changes need to be made to accommodate those with disabilities.

Mr. Tyler added that bringing in someone like Delmarva Life would produce a good quality video. Ms. Gregory added that the City has a fantastic media team that would be able to highlight the structural changes and also visit the businesses that have good accessibility. We can also highlight this during the National Folk Festival.

The video would also help to promote the committee itself and let people know we exist and are available if needed.

Ms. Gregory added that putting the committee out on social media would assist in letting others know we are here. Once we get a decent group of followers, the businesses will be more likely to assist. Miss Sessa, Mr. Thummalapalli, Ms. Christopher and Ms. Gregory would like to manage a social media page for DAC. Ms. English will connect with Chris about the video downtown and report back to the group.

**Meeting Schedule for 2021**

The committee agreed to continue meeting quarterly and on Thursday’s. All 2021 dates were recorded. Mr. Meagher added that calling him is the best way to connect with him.

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting was set for Thursday, March 11, 2021 at 3:00pm. The location will be determined based on the Covid situation at that time.

**Adjournment**

The DAC meeting was adjourned at 4:38pm.

**Minutes Recorded By:** Julie English, Mayor’s Office