



CITY OF SALISBURY

DISABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

July 11, 2024, 3:00 p.m. Government Office Building 306

Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83612357108>

Committee Members Present

Sarah Gleason

Virginia Bender

Greg Tyler

Katherine Jones

Amy Crouse

Jessica Cook

Jeremy Wolfer

Ivy McIntyre

Members Absent

Ron Pagano

In Attendance

Michele Gregory, City Council Liaison

Adith Thummalapalli, Project Engineer City of Salisbury

Call to Order

- The Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) Meeting was called to order at 3:06 pm by Katherine.

Introductions & Welcome

- All active members introduced themselves and potential DAC members Brandon Theriot and Shanda Ward provided short introductions.

Last Meeting Minutes Review

- No minutes to review.

Potential DAC Member Introductions

- Brandon shared some highlights from his resume including his experience as President of his high school's ASL club, being part of the Maryland Leadership Equity Forum, and attending the Workforce and Technology Center in Baltimore to learn life skills.
- Shanda shared some highlights from her resume including her current job at the Crisis Center at TidalHealth, her previous 27 year job working with children at Maple Shade, and her work in starting and continuing the Eastern Shore Sickle Cell Association from 2019 to today.
- DAC members asked both potential members other questions regarding their life goals and what they hope to contribute as members of the DAC.

Active DAC Projects – Progress Reports

Shore Transit Service Routes

- In response to complaints regarding lack of route coverage from those community members who use Shore Transit, there have been noticeable changes.
- More individuals have been put in the ADA service category, no longer need to live within 2 miles of an existing bus route, and no longer have limitations on what days and times they can schedule rides. Paratransit services are now available during all Shore Transit hours of operation. Shore Transit has also implemented an automated, phone-based, system for scheduling rides.
- Many of these changes came about as a result of advocacy done by Amy and BISM, Virginia, and Adith.
- Jessica mentioned that one of her clients uses Shore Transit for transportation to the MAC center and that availability is still limited for him. She was advised to call the MAC center to see if they are organizing transportation to and from the center in this case.

Accessibility Issue Online Reporter

- Adith reviewed the process of reporting accessibility and other issues via the Citizen Online Reporting Tool and what the various colored pins meant.
- Next step is to do a social media push to raise awareness about the Reporting Tool. Michele shared that a social media push was done when the tool was first launched and suggested it is time for another one.

Wheelchair Charging Stations

- Adith shared that there is no available City funding for wheelchair charging stations, but grant funding is an option. Katherine suggested that the grant money used for Vision Zero could potentially be utilized. Michele said that she will check if this is a possibility, as well as look at other grants the City has received.

Potential Idea: Donations to the DAC

- Brandon suggested the idea of having people donate to the DAC as a source of funding. Michele explained that this would require the DAC to have a line-item on the City's budget, which should not be difficult to request. She recommended the DAC write a letter to City Council.
- Katherine proposed a motion for the DAC to write this letter requesting a line-item so that the DAC can collect donations for accessibility projects.
- A motion to have a DAC vote on this topic was made by Greg, seconded by Virginia. Voting occurred and motion was passed unanimously.

City Provided Ramps for Downtown Businesses

- Ron was not in attendance, and could not provide an update regarding this initiative. Katherine explained the goal of the initiative to our new members.

Curb Cut and Sidewalk Audit

- Ron was not in attendance, so this item was tabled for the next meeting in September.

Tabling at 3rd Friday on 7/19

- Adith mentioned collaborating with other mayoral boards and commissions to have a display board and table at the upcoming 3rd Friday on 7/19. All DAC members were encouraged to come and spread the word about the work we do.

Support Dominique Sessa in Competing for Ms. Wheelchair US

- Guest Dominique Sessa spoke about her upcoming competition for Ms. Wheelchair US and her platform of "Disability Shouldn't Have a Price Tag", as well as her fundraising efforts to pay for the trip to the competition.
- Dominique also shared about an episode she hosted on PAC 14 for Wicomico County Schools and shared that she interviewed Katherine and Adith as part of the episode.
- Dominique will attend the next DAC meeting to share how her experience at the National Ms. Wheelchair competition was.

Agency Updates

- Bay Area CIL will begin doing 12-week, paid, adult, work-based, learning experiences for their clients.
- Katherine also mentioned that Bay Area CIL has an event coming up for members of the Down Syndrome community and young children on teaching social skills and promoting self-esteem through improv, taught by Davonte Perry of the Down Syndrome Association of Maryland.

- Ivy posed a question regarding reasonable accommodations for individuals with intellectual disabilities at a youth summer camp and Sarah explained why the situation of an individual over 18 wanting to attend a camp for youth may not fall under ADA.
- BISM attended the National Federation for the Blind National Convention which was very successful, and Amy discussed BISM's BELL (Braille Enrichment Literacy and Learning) Academy for school-aged children.
- A suggestion to post Dominique's fundraising link at the DAC 3rd Friday table was suggested and accepted.
- Jeremy talked about summer employment of Wicomico County students in various fields such as HVAC, high performance manufacturing, retail, and business. There are 19 students participating in the program and it has been a huge success.

Open Discussion/Concerns for DAC to Address

- Katherine provided an overview of an issue submitted to the DAC from a member of our disabled community: a young woman with a disability faced ridicule and poor treatment at a local business, but was not actively discriminated against or denied service. This is not something the DAC can step in and assist with, however, the family will be encouraged to contact Disability Rights Maryland to see what can be done.
- The number of vacancies available on the DAC for our new members was questioned, Adith to check and see how many vacancies available and if both applicants could become members.

Adjourn

- Next Meeting (3/14/2024 at 3:00 pm)
- A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Ron and seconded by Jessica. The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Adith Thummalapalli

Adith Thummalapalli, City Liaison