



CITY OF SALISBURY

DISABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

November 14, 2024, 3:00 p.m. GOB Room 306

Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88637607639>

Committee Members Present

Katherine Jones

Ron Pagano

Amy Crouse

Greg Tyler

Jessica Cook

Brandon Theriot

Shanda Ward

Virginia Bender

Jeremy Wolfer

Members Absent

Ivy McIntyre

In Attendance

Adith Thummalapalli, Project Engineer City of Salisbury

Call to Order

- The Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) Meeting was called to order at 3:01 pm by Katherine.

Introductions & Welcome

- All active members introduced themselves. Jessica's son expressed potential interest in being the DAC's student member, and introduced himself.

Last Meeting Minutes Review

- Motion by Amy and seconded by Brandon to review and approve the meeting minutes from September 2024. The minutes were reviewed and approved unanimously.

Active DAC Projects – Progress Reports

City Provided Ramps for Downtown Businesses

- Following the September DAC meeting, Katherine was able to get the Department of Aging to donate about 30 threshold ramps of varying length, and took delivery of those ramps at Bay Area CIL's storage space. The ramps are on hand and available for distribution, but each interested business would have to be evaluated to see what ramp length would be necessary to ensure access to patrons using wheelchairs. The committee agreed that this would be the next step, following approval of this initiative by the Mayor.
- Following the September meeting, Ron updated the letter to the Mayor about the ramp initiative, to emphasize that the City would not bear any financial responsibility or be liable for anything related to the ramp. The business would bear responsibility once they accepted the ramp to use on their property. Ron had sent the letter to the Mayor's office, but had not received a response yet.
- Katherine mentioned that she and Adith had a meeting scheduled with Jessie Turner on 11/20 to discuss some items, and anticipated that this initiative might be one of the items being discussed. After further discussion regarding logistics of surveying businesses and delivering ramps, the committee decided to table further discussion of the initiative until after the meeting with Jessie and after official permission to proceed with the initiative was received from the Mayor.

Curb Cut Audit

- Adith provided some information about the curb cut audit and how such an initiative might work, after discussing the idea with the GIS department at the City. Two potential ways forward were presented, an electronic approach and a more physical approach, and both were discussed at length by the committee. The electronic approach would involve people going to locations of interest or locations of known violations and dropping a location pin with a mobile device, using a platform such as Google Maps or ArcGIS, while the physical approach would involve denoting areas of interest or violations by circling locations on a map. Both methods would require volunteers to do the work, as the City doesn't have the manpower to do so at this time.
- The pros and cons of each approach were discussed at length and the committee posed further questions about what would happen to the data once it was collected and what the eventual goal of the initiative would be. The end goal would be to bring all crosswalks and curb cuts up to ADA standards. The committee discussed that the Citizen Problem Reporter would be a good place to start in identifying areas of concern, and discussion moved on to that agenda item.

Citizen Reporter Reports

- Discussion occurred about how best to incorporate data from the Citizen Problem Reporter into the curb cut audit and committee members posed questions about how the platform worked, who receives the reports, how issues are assigned to the required departments or entities, and how verification that the issue was resolved occurred. Adith answered the questions to the best of his ability and said he would come to the next meeting with more answers after speaking more to the GIS department. Shanda shared a success story of someone she knew reporting an issue with potholes through the Problem Reporter and having it resolved promptly, which reinforced the idea that this tool is serving its purpose.

Guests: Ms. Patricia Thomas (ADA Coordinator) and Mr. Jarrod Oliver (Operations Manager) from Shore Transit

- The scheduled guests from Shore Transit were unable to attend the meeting, so this agenda item was skipped. They will be invited again for the next meeting.

DAC Line Item on Annual City Budget

- Michele brought the idea of a line item for the DAC on the annual City budget to City Council and everyone supported the idea, so it was passed along to the Mayor's office. Jessie said she would have updates regarding this for Katherine and Adith at the meeting on 11/20, which would be communicated to the rest of the committee by Adith via email or at the January meeting, depending on level of urgency or if a response was needed from the committee.

Agency Updates

- Jeremy shared an update about WCBOE's 12th annual Lower Shore Transition and Self-Advocacy conference that took place on 11/9 at WorWic Community College. There were many local agencies and providers in attendance and over 40 families in attendance, with many helpful breakout sessions, aimed at supporting students with disabilities and their families in the three lower counties (Wicomico, Somerset, and Worcester) as they transition out of the school system and potentially towards higher education or into the workforce.
- Jeremy also shared an update about the upcoming WCBOE Pathways night at WorWic which was being planned for February. Pathways night are college and career readiness nights held to bring together employers, agencies, providers, colleges and students and families for networking and personal development breakout sessions and presentations for students to build skills necessary for entering college or the workforce. The event is still in the planning stages but happens a few times each year. Jessica asked if homeschoolers were allowed to attend and Jeremy said yes.

- Katherine shared a quick update about wellness workshops occurring at Bay Area CIL and how well attended they have been lately, and discussed an upcoming yoga workshop for employees and the community.
- Shanda shared information about the Eastern Shore Sickle Cell Association's upcoming blood drive on 11/30 at the Delmarva Blood Bank and said she would send Adith a flyer with the information to pass out to all committee members and their networks.

Open Discussion/Concerns for DAC to Address

- Jessica discussed an issue with potential employment discrimination for individuals with disabilities and how the DAC could potentially help. She mentioned being contacted by an organization called Endeavor Disability Advocacy who offer litigation services to those facing employment discrimination due to their disabilities and handle organizations that are in violation of the ADA and other related laws. She said she would share the information with Adith to pass along to the committee and their networks.
- Greg mentioned an issue with the computer systems at the library not being accessible by individuals who are blind or low-vision and how they needed to wait for assistance from library personnel to do simple tasks like access the computers or return books. Katherine mentioned that similar issues were brought up in the past and were planned to be addressed in the upcoming move of the library to a new space.
- Discussion about a high school student member of the DAC occurred and members asked some questions regarding how other City committees with members under the age of 18 handled that situation and some discussion of how the DAC might do that occurred.
- Katherine mentioned that she would be getting reappointed for a third term serving the DAC and expressed that she would be interested in handing over her position as DAC Chair, if there were any members interested, but she would continue to serve for as long as needed to find a replacement. This was noted as an item to add to a future DAC agenda.

Adjourn

- Next Meeting (1/9/2025 at 3:00 pm)
- A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Brandon and seconded by Ron. The meeting was adjourned at 4:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Adith Thummalapalli

Adith Thummalapalli, City Liaison