



CITY OF SALISBURY

DISABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

May 15, 2025, 3:00 p.m. Government Office Building 306

Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84582224951>

Committee Members Present

Virginia Bender

Greg Tyler

Shanda Ward

Jessica Cook

Brandon Theriot

Members Absent

Katherine Jones

Ron Pagano

Jeremy Wolfer

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 3:04 pm by Adith.

Introductions & Welcome

- All active members introduced themselves and potential DAC members Jessica Chittams and Brian Bergen-Aurand provided short introductions.
- We were also joined by Ashley from Bay Area CIL to provide an agency update in the place of Katherine.

Last Meeting Minutes Review

- No official review of minutes due to absence of Chair and Co-Chair. Minutes unofficially accepted by all members present.

Potential DAC Member Introductions

- Jessica shared some highlights from her resume including her current position as Director of Student Accessibility Services at UMES for the past 2 years and prior position as a support coordinator with the DDA, positions with the Worcester and Somerset County Health Departments, and rehab counselor at a vocational rehab center in Virginia.
- Brian shared some highlights from his resume including his current position as Director of Learning Services at Worwic Community College and various other positions at higher education institutions, including Chicago City colleges, Bellevue Community College in Seattle, Nan Yong Technological University in Singapore, and UMES, over the past 35 years. Brian has also worked on a number of initiatives and policies for grade school children (including 504 and IEP) and in higher education and serves on the Wicomico County Library Board. He also has an interest in data analysis.
- 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

City Provided Ramps for Downtown Businesses

- In place of Katherine or Ron, Ashley provided an update on the project. One business downtown has been given a ramp and has signed the liability form, and we are waiting on confirmation from three other businesses before dropping off their ramps.
- Adith requested that any photographs taken of these ramps set up on storefronts be sent to him to pass on to the City's communication department in preparation for a future press release. Discussion occurred regarding a potential news story on WMDT or WBOC once more businesses have received ramps.

Comprehensive Development Plan Focus Groups

- Adith reminded members that the City was holding focus groups to solicit citizen feedback as the Comprehensive Development Plan was being written, two of which had already occurred (Land Use on 4/29 and Transportation on 5/6).
- Brandon shared his experience attending the session held on 4/29 and some of the discussion points that were brought up. Many citizens discussed the creation of a downtown market/eatery like Lexington Market or Reading Terminal Market, so access concerns with such a facility downtown were discussed.

- Adith announced that the remaining two sessions were concerning Housing & Culture (on 5/20) and Water Resources (on 6/12) and would be held at Fire Station 16 and encouraged DAC members to share with their networks and/or try to attend.

Tabling at Colors of Holi Festival on 5/31

- Adith informed members of a potential tabling opportunity at the Colors of Holi Festival at Winterplace Park on May 31st to raise community awareness about the DAC and the work we do.

Agency Updates

- Ashley reminded everyone that Bay Area CIL has an event coming up, on 6/10 from 11 AM to 12 PM and 1 PM to 2 PM, 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.
- Bay Area CIL recently held an art workshop on 5/13 and is planning a music therapy and drama workshop on 6/17. They are also hosting a series of nutrition workshops in conjunction with TidalHealth on 5/9, 6/12, and 7/10 from 11 AM to 12 PM, with the topics for each being intuitive eating, nutrition for diabetes, and food safety, respectively. Ashley also reminded everyone about Bay Area's monthly health and wellness classes for all ages.
- Shanda shared that 6/19 is Sickle Cell Awareness Day and that the Eastern Shore Sickle Cell Disease Association will be having an awareness campaign called Shine the Light on Sickle Cell, involving businesses from Wicomico, Somerset and Worcester counties sharing facts about Sickle Cell Disease and showing their support on social and news media outlets.
- Eastern Shore Sickle Cell Disease Association is having their 3rd annual golf tournament at Great Hope public golf course on 6/23 and will have a golf instructor from UMES teaching those who want to learn. There is a \$100 entrance "fee" for each player, all proceeds benefit the association.

Open Discussion/Concerns for DAC to Address

- Jessica Cook suggested the DAC try to have a table at the Spectrum Superstars 5K on 6/28 if any members could volunteer.
- Jessica posed a question to Michele regarding the lack of dental services and dentists locally for those with developmental disabilities and if anything could be done to address this. Michele suggested contacting state legislators and advocating at the state level for more medical services on the Lower Shore.
- The topic of affordable housing was raised in the context of the opening of Mitchell's Landing and Michele mentioned that she always pushes for the need

for affordable housing that people on a disability (SSI or SSDI) income can afford.

- Michele announced that due to the request from the DAC for a line item in the annual budget, to allow mayoral committees and commissions to fundraise and apply for grants, that all boards, committees, and commissions will benefit and receive a line item and \$500 seed funding.
- Greg suggested the DAC and administration give Amy Crouse a certificate of appreciation for her decades of service to Blind Industries and her years of service to the DAC.

Adjourn

- Next Meeting (7/10/2025 at 3:00 pm)
- A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Greg and seconded by Brandon. The meeting was adjourned at 4:07 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Adith Thummalapalli

Adith Thummalapalli, City Liaison