



CITY OF SALISBURY

DISABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

July 10, 2025, 3:00 p.m. Virtual ONLY

Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81172680492>

Committee Members Present

Virginia Bender

Greg Tyler

Shanda Ward

Brandon Theriot

Katherine Jones

Jeremy Wolfer

Members Absent

Ron Pagano

Jessica Cook

In Attendance

Jessica Chittams, Potential DAC Member

Adith Thummalapalli, Project Engineer City of Salisbury

Call to Order

- The Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) Meeting was called to order at 3:02 pm by Katherine.

Introductions & Welcome

- All active members introduced themselves and potential DAC member Jessica Chittams answered a few questions Katherine had for her.

Last Meeting Minutes Review

- Motion by Brandon and seconded by Greg to review and approve the meeting minutes from May 2025. The minutes were reviewed and approved unanimously.

Active DAC Projects – Progress Reports

City Provided Ramps for Downtown Businesses

- Ron and Jeremy are collecting final measurements for ramp height and doorway width for the businesses interested and are planning to schedule deliveries soon. They will coordinate with Bay Area CIL to get ramps delivered once those measurements are collected.
- Some members expressed that this initiative wasn't being met with as much enthusiasm as the committee had hoped, and Katherine explained that the hesitation seemed to be with businesses signing the waiver of liability for the ramps as the perception is that taking a ramp would be an admission of noncompliance with the ADA for the business.
- Adith suggested that the DAC could expand the area being looked at for ramp distribution, beyond the downtown area, to include any business within Salisbury City limits. All members were in favor of this suggestion.
- Jessica suggested we could contact the Downtown Salisbury Business Alliance and offer to provide ramps to incoming businesses and Katherine agreed that partnering with them would be a good way to reframe the ramps as a positive thing rather than an implication of noncompliance with ADA regulations.

City of Salisbury ADA Transition Plan

- Adith explained that he has been officially tasked with drafting an ADA Transition Plan for the City and gave a basic overview of the process for how a plan is developed and what it means. He explained that the DAC can help with this process by engaging with the public and helping to prioritize what things need to be updated to bring City infrastructure up to ADA regulation.
- Discussion about how to best engage with the public occurred and DAC members said they would think about it and could discuss further at the next meeting.

REACH Initiative at Salisbury University - PACE

- Katherine provided an overview of a listening session involving stakeholders from the disability community, conducted by the REACH Initiative at Salisbury University, and that the researchers from that program were interested in conducting further listening sessions to understand the needs of the disability community from a context of ethics. More details would be provided soon, and DAC members were encouraged to attend themselves and share the opportunity with their networks.

Nominations and Elections for DAC Chair

- Katherine reminded members that she was interested in stepping down as Chair of the DAC due to her other commitments and becoming just a regular member, and Adith opened the floor for anyone to express interest in the role and/or nominate another member for the role. Brandon expressed interest and that he had some questions, which he would email to Katherine and Adith following the meeting.
- Adith mentioned that Dominique Sessa, who was a former Chair of the DAC, might be interested in rejoining and running for the position of Chair, and that he would follow up with her and have her apply via the online application on the City's website. Katherine confirmed that she would remain in the role of Chair until a new Chair was chosen.

Discussion About Service Animals

- Katherine brought up a situation concerning a private citizen with a service animal that was not behaving like a trained service animal in a public setting. In Maryland, service animals are allowed in most public spaces, while emotional support animals are not, but the qualifications of the animal cannot be questioned. The belief was that this animal was an emotional support animal, but this could not be verified by the business owner due to the aforementioned regulation in Maryland.
- Discussion about how to handle such a situation occurred, with Jessica sharing her experience with how this type of situation was navigated at the previous agencies she worked for. Katherine agreed that this wasn't a situation the DAC could directly get involved in and wasn't a concern that fell within the purview of the DAC's power as an advisory committee to City administration.

Vote on Appointments of Potential DAC Members

- Jessica was asked to exit the meeting at this time and a vote to pass along her application and Brian Bergen-Aurand's application to the City Council for them to vote on appointment at the next council meeting on 8/11.
- The vote was unanimous for Jessica's application to be sent to Council.
- Katherine recused herself from voting on Brian's application without having met him, but the vote was unanimous among all other members for Brian's application to be sent to Council.

Agency Updates

- Agency updates were skipped due to limited time remaining in the meeting.

Open Discussion/Concerns for DAC to Address

- No new concerns or discussion items were brought up.

Adjourn

- Next Meeting (9/11/2025 at 3:00 pm)

- A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Greg and seconded by Virginia. The meeting was adjourned at 4:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Adith Thummalapalli

Adith Thummalapalli, City Liaison