

**Office of Equity & Civil Rights  
 Mayor's Commission on Disabilities  
 Meeting Minutes  
 March 27, 2024**

Attendance

Voting	27-Mar
Bouma, Chair	x
Blevins	E
Fields	x
Grade	x
Greenberg	x
Haynes	x
Jackson	x
Levine	x
Trentadue	E

Non-Voting	27-Mar		
		DHR Butwin	x
BCDSS			
BCFD Yancey/Brewer		DOT Gardener	x
BCHD Pugh		HABC Elam	
BCPSS Paxton		Law Levine	x
BCRP Nyakoe		MOED	
BPD		OEM Bright/Smith	
Com. on Aging		Planning	
CRC		French	
DHCD Curtis		Pratt Library Kelly/Stokes	

OECR Staff:

Lisa Kelly  
 Viola Woolums  
 Eyphra Ransom  
 Robin Drummond

Guests:

Sterling France  
 James Orman – People on the Go  
 Keyonna Mayo – IMAGE Center  
 Chip Woods – St. Peter's Adult Learning Center  
 Sherrie Young-Smith – National Federation of the Blind  
 Lisa Stanley – Baltimore City Board of Elections

I. Welcome/Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Aloma Bouma at 1:05 pm.
- Chairperson Bouma requested a rollcall and welcomed everyone.

II. Opening Remarks

- Opening remarks were given by Chairperson Bouma.

III. OECR Program Report

The Program Report was given by Viola Woolums.

- Administrative Updates
  - OECR has announced a Call for Proposals for Civil Rights Week programming.
  - OECR continues to process 8 applications for MCD membership, all 8 applicants have participated in a preliminary interview with OECR.
  - Reminder: attendance requirements are being enforced and members will be resigned after 2 unexcused absences in a rolling 6-month period. 4 members have resigned due to lack of attendance and will be notified by OEC: Khary Davis, Daniel Ewald, Jessica Salmond, and Michael King.
  - The next meeting is scheduled for April 24, 2024, at 1:00 pm with additional 2024 meetings listed as follows:  
May 22  
June 26  
September 25  
October 23  
November 27
  - Community Relations Commission (CRC) upcoming hearing with Housing Authority of Baltimore City is on April 24. Meeting information will be updated on the CRC Website when available.
- Legislative Updates
  - MCD submitted timely written testimony in support of HB0822/SB0790 the legislation to remove some of the penalties from the Employed Individuals with Disabilities (EID).
  - The bill crossover date for this Maryland legislative session was March 18 and the General Assembly will adjourn April 8.
  - Special thanks to Adam Levine for submitting the testimony.

- Accessibility Concerns
  - Anyone interested in serving as Chair of the Access Committee, please contact Chairperson Aloma Bouma and Viola Woolums to express your interest.
  - Ms. Woolums included a summary of the disability inquiries received since the last MCD meeting: 1 community partnership, 2 service referrals, 1 effective communication, 1 building accessibility, 1 parking.
    1. The Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC) received a request for assistance related to inaccessible web content, but it was actually related to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) website.  
Status: Office of Equity & Civil Rights (OECR) contacted the DHCD ADA Coordinator but has not yet received receipt acknowledgement.
    2. Local hospital allegedly does not have enough accessible parking at its main entrance, in part, because they are also used by the hospital valet services.  
Status: OECR requested a site visit and will inform MCD when it is scheduled.
    3. The elevator at the SSA hearing office has been out of operation for some time and claimants with mobility impairments cannot access the hearing office. They have been offered virtual hearings.  
Status: OECR contacted SSA but has not yet reached the correct point of contact for this issue.
    4. Ms. Woolums will send out a list of accessibility concerns.
  - OECR and the Mayor's Office have been working with the Baltimore City Association of the Deaf to increase accessibility of City broadcasts and services.
  - DOT has invited the MCD to attend their ADA Transition Plan meeting on April 10 at the Zeta Center. Meeting link is embedded in the Program Report. Chairperson Bouma urged people to pay attention the discussions pertaining to disabilities.
  - Chairperson Bouma welcomed announcements for other meetings in the organizations represented.

#### IV. Approval of the minutes

- David Greenberg moved to approve the February 28, 2024 minutes, seconded by William Fields. Motion carried and minutes were approved without objection.

V. MCD Chairperson Update

- Chairperson Bouma thanked everyone for attending.
- Chairperson Aloma Bouma discussed Civil Rights Week.
  - Urged nominations for impact awards. These can be directed to her.
  - Programming will focus on disabilities and youth.
  - There was still agreement that there should not be evening activities this year, and that it would be nice if there were food again. Outstanding questions: should there be an exhibit hall?
  - She spoke about people who were recognized at the breakfast last year and asked everyone to keep in mind someone with disabilities could be recognized this year.
- **Guest Speaker:** Lisa Stanley, Acting Deputy Director, Baltimore City Board of Elections
  - Ms. Stanley spoke on Accessible Voting concerns including: voter registration, mail-in ballots, electronic ballots, and polling place changes
  - Questions/comments
    1. Polling tables – some are required to be at a height to be used by people who use wheelchairs. Chairperson Bouma noted that some of the ballot marking devices (BMDs) are freestanding at chest height for standing instead of on tables at an accessible height. Mr. Greenberg noted that, at the League, there is a lower table that the device can be located on.
    2. The scanning processes – everyone should be submitting their own ballot, but if someone is unable to do this, they can ask for assistance from the election judges.
    3. Chair Bouma commented on Voting Judge training.
    4. If there is a problem on election day, contact the Chief Judge of your polling place, or the Board of Elections Officer directly if necessary.
  - Chairperson Bouma serves as an election judge Election Judge
    1. Issue: When you vote, you are required to scan your ballot when it's complete regardless of how you complete the ballot.
      - a. The scanner is not accessible to people with disabilities
      - b. An election judge is not allowed to touch the ballot of another person.
      - c. If a voter cannot reach the scanner, there is a form to complete to allow an election judge to assist the voter with submitting the ballot.
      - d. Training is needed to ensure election judges know how to assist.

2. Keyonna Mayo
  - a. Spoke about preferential treatment for people with disabilities – sometimes they are not given a choice as to whether they want to bypass the line to vote and they are pressured to accept the preferential treatment. Others agreed.
  - b. What is the deadline to request mail-in ballots? Ms. Stanley responded May 7<sup>th</sup>.
3. David Greenberg encouraged those with disabilities to vote early at the League for People with Disabilities.
4. Other members and guests weighed-in on their experiences at the polls. Ms. Stanley provided her contact email: [Lisa.stanley@baltimoresity.gov](mailto:Lisa.stanley@baltimoresity.gov)

#### VI. Committees Discussion

- Chair Bouma asked to send out a list of the Committees to everyone to allow them an opportunity to sign up.
- Legislative Committee – Committee Chair, Adam Levine
  - [SB77<sup>1</sup>/HB111](#) – *Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles – Authorizations and Requirements* both died in committee.
  - [SB331](#) – *Taskforce to Study Paratransit* was withdrawn by sponsor.
  - [SB185/HB98](#) *Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing – Deafblind Co-Navigation Services Program* would have provided services at no cost for the Deafblind – both died in committee
  - [HB107<sup>2</sup>](#) – *Vehicle Laws – Bus Lane Obstruction – Monitoring Systems Expansion* – notably for the purpose of prohibiting a person from parking in a dedicated bus lane and creating a bus lane monitoring system to enforce the prohibition against driving, standing, or parking a motor vehicle in a designated bus lane. Died in committee.
  - [HB775-SB802<sup>3</sup>](#) – *Election Law – Voters With Disabilities – Electronic Ballot Return* – notably for the purpose of requiring the State Board of Elections to establish a process by which an individual with disabilities may return a marked absentee ballot to a local board of elections electronically. Both died in committee. Chair Bouma noted it will be reintroduced in next session because of some (positive) changes that are needed because of the study results.
  - [SB0092/HB0426](#) – *Places of Public Accommodation - Motion Picture Houses – Captioning* – notably requiring a public accommodation that

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<sup>1</sup> <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2024RS/bills/sb/sb0077F.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2024rs/bills\\_noln/hb/thb0107.pdf](https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2024rs/bills_noln/hb/thb0107.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2024RS/bills/hb/hb0775F.pdf>

controls, operates, owns, or leases at least two motion picture houses in the State to provide open captioning for at least two screenings each week. This passed with amendments.

- SB256 - *Public Safety – Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission* – Notably altering the membership and duties of the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission, but not specifically including a person with expertise in issues facing people with disabilities. Died in committee.
- HB0822<sup>4</sup> and SB0790<sup>5</sup> – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Employed Individuals With Disabilities. Janice Jackson reported that this bill did not pass. She felt that the Senate was not as receptive to their testimony, and the House gave them more time to speak. Ms. Jackson thanked James Orman for his support and work with People on the Go.
  1. Chair Bouma asked if Janice and James could write a letter to the senate and house expressing their concerns.
- Transportation Committee
  - Janice Jackson (Committee Chair) would like to nominate Keyonna for the Transportation Committee. She thinks Ms. Mayo would be an excellent addition.
  - MCD submitted letter with safety concerns from Civil Rights Week to the MTA.
    1. Ms. Jackson gave a summary of the letter and that each point was addressed. She said that there was a breakdown in the training and communication by MTA.
    2. Ms. Jackson would like to meet with the new COO of Mobility to address the customer service, policies, and training to include the transportation committee. The meeting invite will be sent to members when that meeting is scheduled.
  - William Fields stated that he recently tried to get home from church, and the driver never told him that he was going to pick up 2-3 other people. It took him over 2 hours to get home. He filed a complaint and was told that MTA is not concerned until someone has been on the bus for more than 2 hours.

## VII. Open forum

- Janice Jackson – Ethics & Digital Accessibility, April 10 12-2 at UB campus library. The event is a joint event with OECR regarding Center for Ethical Engagement. Lunch will be served. Call Ms. Jackson if you would like to attend.

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<sup>4</sup> [2024 Regular Session - House Bill 822 Third Reader \(maryland.gov\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> [2024 Regular Session - Senate Bill 790 Enrolled \(maryland.gov\)](#)

- Chip Woods – Mike Bullis from the IMAGE Center retirement party is being planned by the IMAGE Center. It will be held at the League on April 20, 2024, 3-7 pm. Attendance has a ticket cost.

IX. Closing

- Next meeting is scheduled for April 24, 2024, via Zoom.
- There being no further business to discuss, Chairperson Bouma asked for a motion to adjourn. William Fields moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Janice Jackson at 3:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Drummond  
Special Assistant  
Office of Equity and Civil Right