

**Office of Equity & Civil Rights
 Mayor's Commission on Disabilities
 Meeting Minutes
 April 24, 2024**

Voting	24-Apr
Bouma, Chair	x
Blevins	x
Fields	x
Grade	
Greenberg	x
Haynes	x
Jackson	x
Levine	x
Trentadue	E
Paxton	E

Non-Voting	24-Apr
BCDSS	
BCFD Yancey/Brewer	x
BCHD Pugh	x
BCPSS Paxton/Pena	x
BCRP Nyakoe	
BPD	
Com. on Aging	
CRC Pineda	x
DHCD Curtis	

DHR Butwin	
DOT Gardener	E
HABC Elam	x
Law Levine	x
MOED	
OEM Bright/Smith	E
Planning French	
Pratt Library Kelly/Stokes	

OECD Staff:
 Robin Drummond
 Caron Watkins
 Viola Woolums

Guests:
 Donna Redd
 Keyonna Mayo – IMAGE Center
 Nikki Stokes – Pathfinders for Autism
 James Orman – People on the Go
 Curtis Black
 Sterling France

I. Welcome/Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Aloma Bouma at 1:07 pm.
- Chairperson Aloma requested a rollcall and welcomed everyone.

II. Opening Remarks

- Opening remarks were given by Chairperson Bouma.
- Chairperson Bouma suggested the Emergency Preparedness Committee brainstorm how MCD can generate awareness around the Key Bridge Collapse.

III. OECR Program Report

The Program Report was given by Viola Woolums.

- Administrative Updates
 - Ms. Woolums introduced Caron Watkins, Interim Director of the Office of Equity and Civil Rights and Chief Equity Officer.
 - Director Watkins introduced herself and gave remarks.
 - Reminder: financial disclosures are due May 1, 2024. For assistance, contact Ethics Officer Maura Romo at maura.romo@baltimorecity.gov.
 - The partnership with the Hoffberger Center for Ethical Engagement on Digital Accessibility on April 10, 2024, was successful. Ms. Woolums thanked Janice Jackson for her leadership and everyone who attended.
 - OECR is partnering with the Mid-Atlantic ADA center to host 4 educational trainings for the Baltimore City ADA Coordinator Network. The first was April 16, 2024, and was well attended.
 - OECR has not yet received any recommendations for Impact Awards in the area of disabilities for Civil Rights Week.
 - The next meeting is scheduled for May 22, 2024, at 1:00 pm with additional 2024 meetings listed as follows:
June 26
September 25
October 23
November 27
 - Community Relations Commission (CRC) upcoming hearing is today from 6-8pm with the Baltimore City Housing and Community Development at City Hall and via Webex.
 - MCD received 2 ADA inquiries since the last meeting; they will be discussed at the end of the meeting.

IV. Approval of Minutes

- David Greenberg moved to approve the March 27, 2024, minutes, seconded by Janice Jackson. Motion carried and minutes were approved without objection.

V. MCD Chairperson

- Chair Bouma thanked everyone for their work on the Baltimore City Charter and noted that the By-Laws and Handbook will be worked on soon.
- Chair Bouma thanked everyone for their hard work including Adam Levine and Jack Elam for their legislative work. She noted that during this session, she learned of a bicycle commission that MCD could work with.
- Chair Bouma announced the passing of the Director of the IMAGE Center and asked Keyonna Mayo to speak about them.
 - Ms. Mayo noted that the Director passed away April 5, 2024, after serving for over 10 years as a fierce advocate for people with disabilities.
 - Janice Jackson noted that the IMAGE Center is looking for a new Director – an interim is being voted on now.

VI. Committees Reports

- Legislative Committee – Chair, Adam Levine
 - HB107¹ - Better Bus Service Act of 2024 dealt with prohibiting a person from parking in a dedicated bus lane.
 1. Passed the House, but not the Senate.
 2. Would have created a video system to issue citations.
 3. Chair Bouma noted that portions related to curb cuts and bus stops were removed by amendment and people seemed concerned about the monitoring despite similar monitoring by red light cameras.
 - SB0092/HB0426² – dealt with movie theater captioning.
 1. Passed and is expected to be signed by the Governor.
 2. Requires all theaters to continue to offer closed captioning for each screening of a motion picture.
 3. Requires theaters with at least two motion picture houses in the State to have open captioning for at least two screenings per week.
 - HB 1076³ – dealt with textbook equity for blind students.
 1. Passed and is expected to be signed by the Governor.
- Transportation Committee –Chair, Janice Jackson
 - Awaiting the scheduling of a meeting with MTA in response to the MCD’s letter about safety concerns.

¹ https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2024rs/bills_noln/hb/thb0107.pdf

² <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0426>

³ https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2024RS/fnotes/bil_0006/hb1076.pdf

VII. Civil Rights Week

- Chair Bouma noted that the morning will be focused on youth with disabilities and the afternoon will feature discussions TBD. She called for discussion.
- Keyonna Mayo suggested running a focus group with kids and presenting findings during Civil Rights Week to elevate the voices of the children. Kennedy Krieger could be a community partner.
- Dianne Blevins suggested asking the Board of Education to identify concerns or asking children directly.
- Donna Redd noted that plans that involve children traveling should include Ms. Shonkaye Stanley for a risk management perspective.
- Sterling France noted challenges with taking kids out of school. October 8th is the beginning of the new school year, so scheduling is a concern.
- Andrea Pineda suggested taking a book reading about kids with disabilities to the children.
- Members discussed whether it would be practical to present on IEPs.
- James Orman shared that he identifies as autistic and would like to see a program with neuro-sensitivity and neuro-inclusion so the program can reach everyone. He has a general autism inclusion presentation that he will share. Most discussions are focused on individuals with disabilities; it would be good to educate those without disabilities too/ One suggestion: people who work in the special education could educate those without disabilities about how to create environments that are conducive to the success of people with disabilities.
- David Greenberg has an afterschool program at The League. He would like to see a presentation from the principal of the Baer School; it has been educating kids with disabilities since the 1930's. He noted parents are difficult to attract to this type of presentation.
- Janice Jackson noted it may be hard to get students to a program and suggested the MCD could go to schools to include students with disabilities. She agreed that the Baer school would be a good place to invite for a presentation.
- William Fields asked if there was an age range in mind and that would be able to set the presentation and Nikki Stokes suggested school aged children and spoke about the resources at Pathfinders for Autism and Partnership for Success Resource Center for Families and Schools (Michele Grant-Thornton).
- Chair Bouma suggested targeting BCPSS special education, school for deaf, school for blind, MOCFS panel presentation.
- Curtis Black suggested education and awareness from a legal/advocacy perspective with a focus on the importance of IEP meetings.
 - William Fields suggested a focus on employment concerns. Candidates for employment begin development at age 14 to 22.
- Chair Bouma noted that any additional thoughts/suggestions can be presented to the Chair and Viola Woolums.

VIII. ADA Inquiry Update

- The ADA inquiry update with given by Ms. Woolums.
- Notable updates on prior inquiries
 - Site visit at local hospital with accessible parking concern was completed. Recommendation forthcoming.
 - The elevator at the SSA hearing office back in service.
- Election Judge training PowerPoint presentation contains a video segment not accessible to the deaf.
- A local business contacted OECR for advice about accessibility of their potential rental space. Referred to Mid-Atlantic ADA Center for ADA Title III advice.

IX. Open forum

- Outreach options were discussed. Pathfinders does have an email list for recreational activities, but they do not provide direct services. James Orman is VP of the Autism Society of Baltimore-Chesapeake, and they have a similar list of contacts.
- Sterling France noted that he is the only blind real estate broker in the state, and he may be able to assist the caller who wanted to assess the accessibility of a commercial rental property.

IX. Closing

- Next meeting is scheduled for May 22, 2024, via Zoom.
- There being no further business to discuss, Chairperson Aloma asked for a motion to adjourn.
- William Fields moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Janice Jackson at 2:26 pm. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Drummond
Special Assistant
Office of Equity and Civil Right