

**Office of Equity & Civil Rights
Mayor's Commission on Disabilities
Meeting Minutes
November 22, 2023**

Participants:

1. Adam Levine – Law Department
2. Aloma Bouma (Chair) – National Federation of the Blind
3. Curtis Black – Maryland Healthcare System – Division of Equity & Inclusion
4. David Greenberg – League for People with Disabilities
5. Janice Jackson – Commissioner - Consumer Advocate
6. Khalilah Yancey – Emergency Preparedness – Baltimore City Fire Department
7. Laetitia Griffin – Baltimore City Department of Transportation
8. Marlene Hendler – Transportation Committee
9. Michelle “Shelly” Smith – Baltimore City Office of Emergency Management
10. Willie Fields – Consumer

Guest:

11. Chip Woods
12. Robert Reaves – Chimes
13. Jacob Jeffler – BCAD President
14. Beth Eby
15. Chris Mason-Hale
16. Byron Pugh
17. Deanna Tilden – BCAD Treasurer
18. Keyonna Mayo
19. James Orman
20. Sheryl Cooper – ASL Interpreter
21. Vernon Leon – ASL Interpreter

Office of Equity and Civil Rights staff:

22. Viola Woolums – Legal Counsel
23. Martina Gardner-Phillips – Administrative Coordinator
24. Robin Drummond – Special Assistant

I. Welcome/Call to Order

- a. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Aloma Bouma at 1:04 pm.

II. Opening Remarks

- a. Opening remarks were given by Chairperson Aloma Bouma.

- b. Chair Aloma thanked David and Adam for their participation in the Civil Rights Week event.
- c. She thanked the panelists for the Disability Awareness day. She highlighted the evening event and she is following up with concerns.
- d. She spoke about food inequity and information that was spoken about by Valerie LaCour
- e. She highlighted other areas of concerns and complaints that were raised, ie. Sidewalks, transportation.
- f. She was thankful for the food as well. She thanked OECR.
- g. If any further concerns or issues, please email Viola and Aloma.
- h. Viola and David welcomed guests and applicants to send their information and contact information.

III. Director's Report

- a. The Director's report was given by Viola Woolums.
 - i. Administrative Updates
 - 1. OECR's disability-related Civil Rights Week events on October 31, 2023, were a success. Viola Woolums thanked MCD members for their assistance and attendance. She gave an overview of Civil Rights Week. Documents and Agenda from the event were sent out to everyone. She gave special thanks to David and Adam, and Aloma for speaking on the panel.
 - 2. OECR has received 4 new applications for MCD membership, thanks to the efforts of the Commission Development Committee.
 - 3. Member surveys – if you completed the survey your committee interests have been noted.
 - 4. MCD attendance requirements:
 - a) Meetings will be held the 4th Wednesday of each month.
 - b) A member will be resigned after 2 absences in a rolling 6-month period.
 - c) Starting in January, attendance records will be included in the meeting minutes.
 - 5. The next meeting is scheduled for January 24, 2024, at 1:00pm.
 - 6. List of meetings for 2024:
 - a) January 24
 - b) February 28
 - c) March 27
 - d) April 24
 - e) May 22
 - f) June 26
 - g) September 25
 - h) October 23

i) November 27

ii. Legislative Updates

1. Please report all legislation of interest to OECR as soon as it is identified.
2. MCD Legislative Committee will be meeting prior to the first MCD meeting of 2024.

iii. Accessibility Concerns

1. OECR is working to schedule site visits at 5 different sites to address accessibility complaints.
2. MCD members are asked to look out for requests to join the OECR staff on site visits.

IV. Approval of the minutes

- a. Motion to approve the October 25, 2023, minutes made by David Greenberg, and Khalilah Yancey. Minutes were approved without objection.

V. MCD Chairperson Update

- a. Chip Woods asked about 1) the term for a Commissioner; 2) the process; 3) policies and issues that are addressed by the Commission; and 4) How is the information and issues are disseminated to the Mayor.
 - i. Viola Woolums
 1. The term is 4 years beginning with the appointment of the Mayor
 2. The term ends with the appointment of a new mayor
 3. Commissioners may be reappointed.
 4. She spoke about the current breakdown of the membership
 5. The Commission is required to send an annual report to the Mayor's office regarding issues and comes from OECR
 - ii. Aloma Bouma
 1. The term is 4 years.
 2. The Article is being re-written but has not been approved.
 3. Concerns and issues can be sent to the Commission or OECR
 4. MCD is the advocate for all communities with disabilities.
 5. We are looking to change part of the language in the charter regarding disabilities.
 6. Not all problems go directly to the Mayor. However, legislative concerns go through the Mayor's Office.
- b. Willie Fields
 1. Are there 14 councilmanic districts under the current charter. V
 2. Ms. Woolums confirmed that there are 14 districts.
- c. The Chair would like to address any new issues or topics in January 2024

1. She would like to address intersectionality of people with disabilities.
2. Indigenous issues
3. Hispanic Issues
- ii. January is Braille History month and there will be a discussion
- iii. Audio transcription and Charm tv will be topics of discussion in the future.

VI. Commission Subcommittees Discussion

- a. Chair Aloma spoke about the subcommittees as someone had expressed interest in each of the Committees.
- b. James Orman spoke about his organization of People on the Go and invited members to attend their policy meetings.
- c. Chair Aloma stated that there should not be discussion about disabilities unless there are people with disabilities present.
- d. Viola shared the email list form.
- e. Shelly Smith –
 - i. Do MCD members attend the disabilities day.
 - ii. David Greenberg said no, the day of legislature is a different focus than MCD.
 - iii. Thanked Ms. Woolums for connecting her with the Coppin State panel.
 - iv. Hosting a full-scale mock exercise in the case of a disaster to train the public. If anyone is interested in volunteer community participation. Dec 6, at M&T Bank Stadium.
 - v. Plans and response recovery for all communities regarding emergency management. Follow-up: Contact Crystal Bright of Emergency Management.
 - vi. Shelly Smith spoke about the difference between state police vs city police situations and response issues. She would like to speak with the emergency managers to get their thoughts. Janice Jackson agreed.
 - vii. Chip Woods spoke about his experience during the Developmental Disabilities Day. He said that it is important to understand the Bills before attending.
- f. Adam Levine would like the legislative committee to meet with Chair Aloma Bouma and Viola Woolums before the legislative session.
 - i. The Chair Aloma mentioned the Movie Theater Access bill.
 - ii. She would like to address the bill again and write letters.
- g. Janice Jackson gave an update on transportation.
 - i. There is a new Director that should be a part of the Commission regarding Mobility issues.
 - ii. She addressed the issues of the day of the forum during Civil Rights Week. She felt the situation was unacceptable.

- iii. Chair Aloma asked the Transportation Committee for a list of things that went wrong and could be changed in the future. Ms. Jackson stated that there was a follow-up safety meeting.
- iv. Ms. Jackson is in the process of writing a letter and will send a copy to the Commission. Ms. Woolums said that it is best to schedule a Transportation Committee meeting to address the list of concerns.
- v. Mr. Fields stated that the city police should be involved in these issues.
- vi. Marlene Hendler spoke about emergency situations in her experience. She would like to work on the Transportation committee to address some of the specifics.
- vii. Keyonna Mayo spoke about her experience and would like to work on the transportation committee.

VII. Open forum

- 1. Chair Aloma thanked Ms. Woolums for her hard work with the Commission and wished everyone a Happy thanksgiving.
- 2. Motion to adjourn made by Adam Levine and seconded by David Greenberg. Meeting adjourned at 2:34 pm.

V. Closing

- a. Next meeting is scheduled for January 24, 2023, via Zoom.

There was no further business to discuss.

There being no further business to discuss, Commissioners voted to adjourn the meeting at 2:34 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Drummond
Special Assistant
Office of Equity and Civil Rights