

# **Frederick County Commission on Disabilities (COD) Minutes**

## **Monday, April 8, 2019**

At the beginning of the meeting, Chair Nadine Autry recognized the existence of a quorum and asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda as presented. Upon motion the vote to approve the meeting agenda was unanimous.

### **Attendance**

The following members were present: Nadine Autry, Karen Duffy, Marsha Flowers, and Barb Trader.

Miles Ward, County staff liaison, was present.

The following members of the public were present: Keith Nolan, Whitney Cummins, Mari Lee, Karen Rushing, Jenn Tousey, Sharon H. Payne, and John Gretz. Sign language interpreter Pearl Sims was also present.

### **Public Comment**

Whitney Cummins said that she wants to be an advocate. She has an invisible disability and has experienced difficulty voting. She wants voting authorities to announce to everyone that access to voting for people with disabilities is available.

John Gretz expressed concerns about the COD's adherence to some requirements of the COD Bylaws and Maryland Open Meetings Act, and its failure to approve the February 2018 minutes.

## **Report from the Chair**

Nadine Autry thanked member Karen Duffy for completing the online Maryland Open Meetings Act training. Nadine also provided a summary of three calls for assistance that had come in during the past month, and summarized progress to date on reviewing and revising the COD's *Keys to Independence* community resource guide.

Nadine Autry also reported that there will be a nomination of officers for terms starting July 1, 2019. Election will be held in May.

## **Guest Speakers**

Mari Lee and Keith Nolan, two recent COD chairs, spoke about their experiences serving on the COD. Keith Nolan said that it appeared from the meeting agenda that the COD is currently working on matters similar to those when he served. He said that members discussed participating in public events, but he always hoped the COD would be able to host a big town hall meeting and invite the entire disabled community in Frederick County to raise issues and make comments.

Mari Lee said that she enjoyed looking into issues when people called the COD for help, and described a meeting with Frederick's mayor to discuss problems at the city's parking decks where only "speaker boxes" are available when customers experience problems. They are no help

to deaf people, and the COD hoped that video screens with text capability would be installed.

Concerns were expressed regarding access and other problems experienced at voting locations by people with disabilities. Miles Ward offered to contact Stuart Harvey, the Frederick County supervisor of elections, and invite him to attend the May COD meeting, but asked members to send him an email at least two weeks beforehand with the questions they wanted Mr. Harvey to answer.

Mari Lee said that she would work to get the HRC to cohost a community event with the COD. Keith Nolan said that he felt it was important for every COD member to bring something to the table, and find some event or activity to work on.

## **Business**

A) Barb Trader moved to revise the minutes of the March 11, 2019 meeting, in particular language appearing near the bottom of page 2, to state that the minutes for February 12, 2018 should be corrected to reflect the discussion at that meeting and be brought to a future meeting for approval. The motion was seconded, and the vote to approve it was unanimous.

B) Upon motion, and subject to that revision being made, the minutes of the March 11, 2019 were approved unanimously.

c) Frederick County Division of Public Works will present its updated ADA Transition plan at the September COD

meeting, and provide an overview of work completed to date, current inventory of pedestrian facilities in County rights-of-way, and plans for future ADA complicate work.

D) Miles Ward reported that we have 4 positions that are vacant and need to be filled. We also have five applicants that are interested in serving on COD. We will need to set up a time to interview each of them and nominate four at the May meeting. The COD's nominations will be sent to County Executive Jan Gardner for appointment, subject to confirmation by the Frederick County Council. Two of the applicants were at the meeting and introduced themselves with a brief explanation of their background.

E) Marsha Flowers expressed interest in working with the County's video Service Department on creating an informative, entertaining video about the work the COD is doing. A target date for completion could be October, which is Disability Employment Awareness Month in Maryland. Could we establish a committee of three?

F) There was discussion regarding whether a Business Leadership Network existed in Frederick County, and how it might create jobs for people with disabilities. Karen Duffy agreed to contact Rick Weldon at the Chamber of Commerce and find out.

G) There was discussion on whether the County's public schools are interpreting the ADA to require the least restrictive environment possible for children. It was suggested that Linda Chambers might know, in case

anyone from the COD wanted to contact her and find out.

H) Karen Duffy agreed to take over the COD's account on Facebook.

I) Barb Trader described efforts that have been made in some jurisdictions to promote visitability. This is a program adopted by governments to make private homes more comfortable and convenient to visit for people with disabilities. A stated percentage of homes constructed have no exterior steps, wide doors and hallways, and a bathroom of the first floor that is accessible to a person in a wheelchair. Barb asked whether the COD would want to recommend that Frederick County adopt an ordinance like this. [Visitability.org](http://Visitability.org) is a website with more information.

The meeting was adjourned.

Secretary, Marsha Flowers