



**Commission on People with Disabilities  
Meeting Summary Minutes  
February 14, 2024**

**\*\* MEETING WAS HELD VIA ZOOM \*\***

**Welcome and Approval of January 2024 Meeting Minutes**

Karen Morgret, Acting Chair, convened the meeting. Due to lack of a quorum, the approval of the January 2024 Meeting Minutes was tabled until the March meeting. Approved minutes are available online at [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd).

**Brookside Gardens Accessibility – Mary Joy Mulumba, Community Outreach Fellow, Brookside Gardens, Montgomery Parks, M-NCPPC**

PowerPoint presentation: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CPWD/BrooksideGardensAccessibilityPresentation.pdf>

Mary Joy reviewed the PowerPoint presentation. The floor was opened to questions.

- **Are the Japanese tea garden, gazebo and labyrinth accessible?** The tea garden and gazebo are currently not accessible. The labyrinth is accessed by a bridge which is narrow and the area by the roses has steep wooden ramps. It was suggested increasing the accessibility of these areas to increase the inclusiveness of the gardens and allow groups to stay together. It was reported that Brookside will be replacing the bridge to the labyrinth which will make it accessible. Construction will also begin soon that will provide an overlook of the pond similar to the tea garden and it will be located on the loop trail.
- **It was suggested that Brookside offer accessible gardening programs including elevated garden beds.**
- **The only bathrooms are located inside the visitor center which is only open 9am to 4pm daily.** It was suggested access to bathrooms be made available after hours.
- **It was suggested that Brookside partner with existing guided educational tours that are provided by affiliation and association gardens and the county's overall garden program.**
- **It was suggested that an audible and Braille components be made available to describe the various plants and grasses in the gardens for individuals with a vision disability.**

Commissioners are invited to complete a survey on the accessibility of Brookside Gardens: <https://forms.office.com/r/9V1iTCRiHZ>.

**Adventure Sports Park at Wheaton Regional Park - Matt Weir, Landscape Architect Project Manager and Tricia McManus, Design Section Manager, Montgomery Parks, M-NCPPC, and Bob Green, Senior ADA Compliance Project Manager, Montgomery Parks, M-NCPPC**

PowerPoint presentation: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CPWD/WheatonRPRubiniProjects.pdf>

Matt reviewed the PowerPoint presentation. The floor was opened to questions.

- **Where is the parking located?** Matt showed where parking is noted on page 6 of the presentation. It was noted that everyone will be using the same routes to use facilities. Ramps that lead up to or down to a terrace is where accessible parking will be located. It was suggested that ample accessible parking be made available as often times those spots fill up quickly particularly at the playground lots.
- **What lighting will be installed?** The [Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan](#) does state that the facility must have adequate lighting where facilities are open at night. This includes upgraded lighting at the pickleball courts and basketball courts, as well as installing lighting at the dog park and adventure sports park. In particular, fields 4, 5, and 6 is where lighting will be installed as they are currently not lit. It was noted that the tennis bubble and ice arena are open until 11pm depending on the season.
- **Are the bathrooms near field 1 and 2 accessible?** Yes, they are accessible and include men's, women's, and all gender restrooms.

### **Recognition of the Outstanding Service of Bob Green, Senior ADA Compliance Project Manager, Montgomery Parks, M-NCPPC**

Karen read from a certificate of appreciation that was sent to Bob Green, signed by County Executive Marc Elrich in recognition and appreciation of Bob's service to this Commission from March 1, 2022, through February 1, 2024. Certificate language:

"The County Executive of Montgomery County, Maryland Awards this Certificate to in Recognition and Appreciation to Bob Green of your dedicated service to the residents of Montgomery County, Maryland as a member of the Commission on People with Disabilities representing the Montgomery Parks. Thanks to dedicated persons like you, Montgomery County continues to be a nationally renowned destination for people with disabilities to live, work and recreate, as exemplified by Montgomery County Parks' successful design, installation and operation of the accessible boat launch at Seneca Landing at Riley's Lock that provides for inclusion and benefits people with disabilities, disabled veterans, and the general public. Your collaboration with the Commission on Veterans Affairs, Commission on People with Disabilities and Team River Runner led to the successful installation of this accessible boat launch. You have my thanks and gratitude for making our community a more inclusive community."

Karen wished Bob a happy retirement and thanked him for all he has done for this Commission.

Joe Mornini, Team River Runner, also gave remarks and thanked Bob for his work on Seneca Landing at Riley's Lock. He noted that he has seen many people taking advantage of the accessible launch and it is being used from people all over Maryland. Team River Runner will begin their adaptive kayaking program again in May. The program runs on Sundays starting at 2pm. Joe offered to present to the Commission about the programs offered by Team River Runner.

### **Acting Chair Report**

Karen Morgret reported [Maryland House Bill 420](#) would require the Department of Natural Resources and local governing bodies to construct communication boards in certain newly constructed public play areas.

Steering Committee will meet next Wednesday February 21 from 5pm to 6pm via Zoom.

### **Update – Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Commission (IDDC) – John Whittle, Commissioner and Liaison to IDDC**

John was not able to attend tonight's meeting. In lieu of his report, he asked Betsy to share several documents with Commissioners via email which included the IDDC's letter of recommendations to the County Council regarding Bill 33-23 - Voluntary Registry for Emergency 911 Calls and an update on established IDDC ad hoc

subcommittees. A job listing for a part-time Program Manager II position that would provide staff support to the IDDC was posted today. IDDC is currently supported by a part-time contractor.

### **Ex-Officio Member Updates**

Bob Green introduced Jennene Blakely who has been appointed to represent Montgomery Parks.

Denise Isreal, Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), reported the Maryland Board of Public Works (BPW) approved more than \$87 million in funding for pedestrian improvement projects and advancing the Flash Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network in Montgomery County. She also reported that average weekly ridership for December 2023 increased by 37% compared to December 2022. Beginning January 16, 2024, Metro began offering Senior SmarTrip® cards at no cost to customers aged 65 and older. With the card, seniors can ride all County buses and most Metrobuses within the County for free. MCDOT is working to identify additional distribution sites such as senior centers where residents can acquire the Senior SmarTrip® card.

Sharon Norcio, Department of Recreation, reported registration for spring classes and summer camps is now open. RecFit passes are free for Montgomery County residents again in 2024. The [free RecFit pass](#) provides access to fully equipped fitness rooms, open gym (drop-in) activities and game rooms at any community recreation center during regularly scheduled hours.

Angelisa Hawes, Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL), reported MCPL is celebrating Library Lovers Month and Black History Month during February. Upcoming programs can be found on the library's website. Due to inclement weather last month, MoComCon was rescheduled to March 2, 2024. The event celebrates all things comics, graphic novels and fandoms.

Matt Barkley, Department of General Services (DGS), reported the ADA Compliance Team conducted an employee ADA training today which received positive feedback. The Team is also working on the County's emergency operations plan that includes shelters, evacuations and emergency scenarios. The County is collaborating with National Park Service to make Glen Echo Park more accessible as due to an agreement the County is responsible but will be able to access federal funds for the project. The first item is to make the parking accessible. DGS is currently working on 16 capital improvement projects that improve accessibility and continues to work on the Silver Spring Regional Recreation and Aquatic Center which will have its grand opening on February 24. The County's website design team will be conducting a training on website accessibility for the County's web design and web content publishers.

Betsy Luecking, Staff, noted that this Commission was started in 1978 prior to the ADA. It was Kermit Mohn, former Chair of this Commission in the 1990s, who advocated for MCDOT to have accessible buses. In fact, Montgomery County was one of the first counties in the country to have accessible buses. Two former Commissioners went on to become Director (Larry Roffee) and Executive Director (David Capozzi) of the U.S. Access Board, the agency which ensure access to federally funded facilities. The County continues to lead the way in accessible due to the advocacy and input of this Commission.

### **Commissioner Updates**

None.

### **Public Comments**

None.

Meeting Adjourned – 7:27pm

**Attendees**

**Commissioners Present:** Kaylee Davis; Tonya Gilchrist; Sammi Hampton; Samuel Korper; Cindy LaBon; Karen Morgret, Acting Chair; Avner Shapiro; Richard Shermanski; Jeneva Stone

**Commissioners Absent:** Myra Coffield; Karen Goss; Ricardo Lopez; Coni Nepomuceno; Lisa Quinn; Teresa Villani; John Whittle; Melissa Wyman

**Non-Voting Ex-Officio Members Present:** Matthew Barkley, ADA Title II Compliance Officer, Department of General Services; Jennene Blakely, Montgomery Parks; Rebecca Grayson, Housing Opportunities Commission; Candace Groudine, Human Rights Commission; Angelisa Hawes, Montgomery County Public Libraries; Sharon Norcio, Department of Recreation

**Non-Voting Ex-Officio Members Absent:** Patricia Cochrane, Montgomery County Public Schools; Karen Hochberg, Office of Human Resources; Denise Isreal, Department of Transportation

**County Staff Present:** Mary Jo Mulumba, Montgomery Parks; Matt Weir, Montgomery Parks; Tricia McManus, Montgomery Parks; Bob Green, Montgomery Parks

**Commission Staff Present:** Betsy Luecking, Staff Liaison; Carly Clem, Program Specialist II

**Public:** Seth Morgan; Samantha Shron; Francie Gilman

**Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities  
March 2024 Meeting and Events Calendar**

Full Commission Meeting – Wednesday March 13  
6pm to 7:30pm to be held via Zoom – link to be announced

Steering Committee Meeting – Wednesday March 20  
5:30pm to 6:30pm to be held via Zoom – link to be announced

Submitted by: Carly Clem, Program Specialist II  
Betsy Tolbert Luecking, Community Outreach Manager