



Marc Elrich
County Executive



Maxwell C. Uy
Sheriff

Office of the Sheriff
Domestic Violence Coordinating Council
Thursday, July 11, 2024
5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Mission: To reduce the incidence of domestic violence and create a safe community for families to live free of abuse.

Minutes

Present: Tom Manion, Chair (Montgomery County Office of the Sheriff); Dr. Jessica Volz, Vice Chair (Adventist Healthcare); Debbie Feinstein (Montgomery County Office of the State's Attorney); The Honorable Karla Smith (Circuit Court Montgomery County); The Honorable Michael Glynn (District Court Montgomery County); The Honorable Sidney Katz (Montgomery County Council Member); Rochelle Perry (Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services- Parole and Probation); The Honorable Lynne Harris (Montgomery County Public Schools-Board of Education); Ben Stevenson (Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation); Lavontte Chatmon (Community Member); Dorne Hill (Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services); Dr. Mindy Thiel (Community Member); Michelle Maxberry (Community Member); Ashley Noy, Staff (Montgomery County Office of the Sheriff)

Absent: Kendall Stanley (Community Member); Maura Lynch (Community Member); Amy Palumbo (DVS Legal Services); Assistant Chief Nicholas Augustine (Montgomery County Police Department); Aanika Arjumand (Student Member); Tondalayo Royster (Montgomery County Commission for Women)

Guests: Amina Khalid (Public Member); Amanda Katz (Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse, Director); Clarie Beck (House of Ruth Maryland- Associate Director of Clinical Services); Lieutenant David Cohen (Montgomery County Police Department-SVID) ; Avi Kriden (Public Member); Fatimata Mohammed-Ali (Public Member); Jennifer Diaz (Public Member); Karen Foxman (DC Volunteer Lawyers Project- Montgomery County Office); Sharon Ledner (Chief of Staff- Sidney Katz); Lisa Mandel-Trupp (Chief of Staff)

I. Welcome and Introductions

II. Guidelines for the Virtual Meeting

Tom Manion reviewed guidelines for virtual meeting participation. He asked everyone to mute microphones when not speaking. He asked the participants to use the chat function or the raise hand function if they would like to speak. He also requested that participants identify themselves each time they speak.

III. Approval of May Minutes

The May 9, 2024, DVCC meeting minutes were reviewed. The Honorable Michael Glynn proposed a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Dr. Mindy Thiel and passed.

IV. Announcements

- Lavontte Chatmon announced that Court Watch Montgomery is actively looking for board members to join their Board of Directors. An email was sent out to the DVCC earlier this week but Lavontte is available via email for anyone who may be interested.

V. Guest Speaker: *Executive Director Lavontte Chatmon, Court Watch Montgomery*

- Court Watch Montgomery was designed to observe and collect data about what occurs in domestic violence hearings and improving the system for victims of intimate partner violence. The organization began in 2010 with two victim advocates who attended court with victims and assisted them with filling out Protective Orders.
- Court Watch Montgomery relies heavily on volunteers who attend court, observe hearings, and collect data.
- Court Watch Montgomery has been able to advocate for funding to include additional security in the courthouse to allow people to feel safer.
- Court Watch Montgomery volunteers collected data showing that there was a limited number with staggered exists. After years of reporting there has been a significant increase in the number making staggered exists regularly done by most judges.
- Court Watch Montgomery reports were able to increase the number of firearms that are surrendered to law enforcement by Respondents after a Protective Order is issued.
- Court Watch Montgomery advocated for the Safe Passage Center. The Safe Passage Center is a location that provides free, supervised visitations and monitored exchange in a structured and secure environment.
- Lavontte Chatmon reported on the 2023 Gun Report that Court Watch Montgomery released last year (<https://courtwatchmontgomery.org/guns-and-domestic-abusers-protective-orders-and-gun-removal-in-montgomery-county-maryland/>)
- The 2023 Gun Report showed that access to guns makes it more deadly for victims. In 2022 the Sheriff's Office data showed that 304 firearms were relinquished in Montgomery County in connection to 80 Protective Order Cases.
- Court Watch Montgomery recommends that judges verbally announce gun restrictions in all temporary and final hearings where they are included in the Protective Orders.
- Court Watch Montgomery recommends judges include and highlight in all temporary and final protective orders information relevant to the firearm. For example, presence, type, and location along with any information relevant to the firearm.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Legislative and Policy Planning Committee – *Maura Lynch, Chair*

- Maura Lynch was not in attendance at the meeting. Tom Manion asked anyone who is on the Legislative Committee to provide an update on what they have been working on in the last month. Debbie Feinstein stated the committee is working on drafting a letter to the judges at District and Circuit Court to request additional information as it pertains to firearms for the safety of sheriff's deputies who are responsible for serving the order.

- The Honorable Karla Smith stated that she does not ask follow-up questions as it was her understanding that the deputies oversee asking questions pertaining the firearms when they are interviewing the Petitioner. Judge Smith states that she can send an email to the bench to inform everyone that additional questions regarding the firearms should be asked by the judges.
- Debbie Feinstein stated that she will connect Judge Smith and Judge Glynn to Maura Lynch in an email regarding this letter along with Tom Manion, Captain Brickles, and Ashley Noy.
- Tom Manion announced that Maryland is one of the few jurisdictions that does not have an Advocate Privilege Law. The Advocate Privilege Law protects communications between certain parties, such as advocates and victims, and prevents them from being forced to disclose information to others. Tom requested that this be something Maura and the Legislative Committee begin working on.

B. Victim Services Committee update – Tom Manion, Chair

- Tom Manion reported that the regularly scheduled Victim Services Committee meeting fell on a holiday and the committee was unable to meet. The committee is currently working on increasing petitioner representation at Protective Order hearings. The next Victim Services Committee meeting will be in August.

C. Education and Outreach Committee – Debbie Feinstein, Chair

- Debbie Feinstein thanked Lavontte Chatmon and Smita Varia as they are taking the lead on the outreach to medical providers initiative. The initiative is to provide domestic violence training to medical providers and distribute Family Justice Center awareness cards to the medical offices.
- Debbie reported that Jodi Finkelstein (Executive Director, Commission for Women) has seen being done in Montgomery County by Safe Bars. Safe Bars is an organization that trains individuals who work in restaurants and/or bars to recognize signs from individuals who are in abusive situations. The committee will be connecting with Safe Bars to see how they can collaborate for trainings on domestic violence.
- Debbie reported that the committee has connected with Montgomery County Recreation to facilitate the Coaching Boys into Men and Athlete as Leader program with the soccer teams and summer programs. The committee has discussed funding the material for the coaches of the recreation department.
- Debbie reported that the Family Justice Center awareness cards are continuing to be distributed throughout the county.
- Debbie reported that Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) is in October and this year the committee will be chaired by Smita Varia (Program Manager, Family Justice Center) any who is interested in participating in the DVAM Committee can email Ashley Noy or Smita Varia.

D. Offender Program and Policy Committee – Ben Stevenson, Chair

- Ben Stevenson reported that the committee has been working on getting connected with the court to identify individuals with Protective Orders in order to expedite the process with those who need to attend the Abuse Intervention Program (AIP)
- Ben will be connecting to Debbie Feinstein to restart Expect Respect presentations in the jail for juveniles.
- Ben reported that the jails are still offering parenting classes. The Inside Out Dad program just finished a cohort recently with 6 participants.

- Ben reported that he will be looking at the lobby of the the facilities to see if awareness cards are available and if not will connect with Debbie and Ashley for more outreach material.

VII. Adjournment

Tom Manion, Chair, adjourned the meeting at 6:15 pm

The next DVCC meeting will be on September 12, 2024, 5 pm-7 pm IN-PERSON



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