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Harford County Executive

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Director of Administration



JOSEPH D. SLIWKA
Director of Community Services

Commission on Disability Meeting Minutes- March 27, 2023

Members Present:

Parnell Barmer
Andrea Beichler
Jaimie Brown
Councilman Dion Guthrie
Rachel Harbin (staff)
Chuck Kelly
Stephanie Schwartz
Marc Weinstein

Guests Present:

Katie York
Malcolm Whyte
Shelley-Rose Illig
Tim Illig

Members Absent:

Rebecca Cook
Mike Mathias
Jim Morrison
Sarah Ortiz-Brown
David Pickett
Michael Raidt

- I. Marc called the meeting to order at 5:00.
- II. Guest Speaker: Malcolm Whyte of Three Blessings Disabled Adventures presented. TBDA is a new nonprofit that provides kayaking, hunting, camping, and hand cycling for people who use a wheelchair, and their families. They focus on making outdoor adventuring accessible to wheelchairs and they are unique in their effort to include all family members in the excursion, not just the person with a disability. Note for follow up- TBDA would be a good resource for veterans so they should be connected to the Veterans Commission and maybe do a presentation for them. Upcoming events include turkey hunts and adaptive biking. For more information, visit their website:
<https://www.threeblessingsdisabledadventures.org/>

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III. Member Updates:

- A. Empowered Expo Planning Committee (Rachel): The Empowered Expo will be held on Saturday, April 22 from 8:30am- 1pm and the purpose is to provide critical resources for teens and young adults with IEPs and 504 plans to help them prepare for life after high school. Pre-registration is going well with over 100 already registered. Rachel asked for volunteers for the event and Marc W, Chuck K, and Andrea B volunteered.
- B. Legislative Committee – Mike M. was absent, so the group reviewed the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council- Priority Legislation document.
- C. Accessibility Committee- Marc opened comments or concerns from any attendee regarding accessibility and guest Shelley-Rose Illig shared kudos to the Harford County Sheriff's Office on their recent handicap placard initiative.
- D. Membership- Sarah O was absent so Rachel H reported. Applications for new applicants are still at the County Executive's Office. Marc asked for volunteers for someone to serve as Vice Chair when he is absent. Parnell Barmer agreed to serve as Vice Chair.
- E. Harford County Council Update: Councilman Guthrie shared updates on the Board of Ed budget that will include additional funding for special education services including new STRIVE program locations, for students with autism. Guest Katie York raised concerns about the lack of accessibility for the County Council meetings, specifically regarding live closed captioning, and Councilman Guthrie said he was aware of the issues and would be looking into it further.

IV. Old Business

- A. Behavior Crisis Workgroup Update (Rachel H)- The workgroup met in the early spring to brainstorm supports that can be put in place for families who have teens and young adults with such significant behavior concerns that there is a concern for health and safety. Take aways from the meeting were an information night at Harford Academy (Autism Night), training for Harford Crisis Response, building training relationship with Pathfinders for Autism and law enforcement, and more work is to be done.

V. New Business

- A. Social Play Program/Support Group (Rachel H)- To address a growing concern with parents that there is a severe lack of social and emotional support for their children with disabilities outside of the school day, ODS partnered with HCPS Partners for Success to host an outdoor play group for 10 children. It is four Thursdays at Mariner

- Point Park and is offered in conjunction with a support group for the parents onsite during the play group.
- B. ICanBike Camp (Rachel H)- Registration is open for ICanBike Camp and it is filling fast. Camp will be August 7-11 at Churchville Rec Center and riders have to be 8 years old. Volunteers need to be 15 years old.

VI. Public Comment and Announcements:

- A. Members agreed that the April 24th Commission on Disabilities meeting will be virtual.
- B. Image Center shared their Healthy Happy Homes program:
<https://harfordcountyhealth.com/healthyhappyhomes/>

VII. Adjournment