

**Office of Equity & Civil Rights**  
**Mayor's Commission on Disabilities**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**April 26, 2023**

Participants:

1. Adam Levine – Law Department
2. Aloma Bouma (Chair) – National Federation of the Blind
3. David Greenberg – League for People with Disabilities
4. Glenda Curtis – Department of Housing and Community Development
5. Janice Jackson – Commissioner - Consumer Advocate
6. Kimberly (Michelle Grade) – Sinai Hospital
7. Laetitia Griffin – Baltimore City Department of Transportation
8. Martin French – Baltimore City Planning Department
9. Willie Fields - Consumer

Office of Equity and Civil Rights staff:

10. Caylin Young – Deputy Director
11. Danielle Burton – Supervisor (Community Relations Commission)
12. Ty'lor Schnellla – Legislative Liaison
13. Viola Woolums – Legal Counsel
14. Robin Drummond – Special Assistant

I. Welcome/Call to Order

- a. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Aloma Bouma at 1:09 pm.
- b. Chairperson Aloma welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- c. Chairperson Aloma requested a roll-call.

II. Opening Remarks

- a. Opening remarks were given by Chairperson Aloma Bouma.
- b. No ASL service was needed.

III. Director's Report

- a. The Director's report was given by Deputy Director Caylin Young.
  - i. Fair Housing month. Community Relations Commission has been doing community outreach, presentations and webinars regarding fair housing.
  - ii. Hearings
    1. Investigative hearing with the Department of Planning. – May 3, 2023, City Hall, at 6 pm. It is open to the public and accessible via WebEx. Testimony can be submitted to Danielle Burton at [Danielle.burton@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:Danielle.burton@baltimorecity.gov).

2. Past Hearings have been with the Fire Department and Department of Public Works. Future hearing will be with the Department of Transportation.
  3. AFRAM Festival – June 17-18, 2023. OECR is advising the Mayor’s Office regarding accessibility concerns.
  4. MC Accessibility Code waiver request – Viola Woolums gave an overview of the request for exemption. Chairperson Aloma would like to ensure there is clarity on what it entails. Commissioners weighed in on the discussion.
- iii. Administrative updates
1. OECR has hired Viola Woolums – Legal Counsel for Mayor’s Commission on Disabilities.
  2. OECR has hired Ty’lor Schnellla – Legislative Liaison for the Agency. Chair Aloma had asked Ty’lor to work with Adam Levine on current update of Article 1 and also drafting the scope of the purpose of the MCD.
  3. Chairperson Aloma requested the contact information for Viola and Ty’lor.
- b. Reminder: Financial disclosures are due May 1, 2023. You may submit your financial disclosures at <https://ethics.baltimorecity.gov/financial-disclosure>. Feel free to contact Viola for assistance – William Fields requested assistance.
- c. The following meetings are listed below:
- i. May 24, 2023, 1:00 pm
  - ii. June 28, 2023, 1:00 pm
  - iii. September 27, 2023, 1:00 pm
  - iv. October 25, 2023, 1:00 pm
  - v. November 22, 2023, 1:00 pm
- d. Legislative updates
- i. Deputy Director Young will leave the updates to Mr. Levine at this time.

IV. Approval of the minutes

- a. The March 22, 2023, minutes were approved as presented.

V. MCD Chairperson Update

- a. Ms. Woolums introduced herself and spoke about her work with the Commission.
- b. Chair Aloma reminded everyone to complete their financial disclosures.
- c. Article I Subtitle 23-4 - Chairperson Aloma Bouma is working on the updated language and purpose. Viola Woolums will assist with the proper formatting of the draft document.
  - i. Members; associates
    1. Size, make-up and composition of the commission

- a. Commissioners are still working to agree on the number of Commissioners 15-17
- b. A quorum of 8-9
2. Representation –
  - a. Chairperson Aloma would like to insist that the majority of members of the MCD should be individuals with disabilities and the Chair should have a disability.
  - b. Commissioners discussed the concern that the “preferred” language will be in the statute for another 30 years since the last revision.
  - c. David Greenberg wants the wording to be “a preference” that the majority of the MCD and Chair be a person with a disability.
  - d. Janice Jackson agreed with the preference wording and that recruitment efforts will help to include more individuals with disabilities to be a part of the Commission.
  - e. Director: OECR will have to assist with the Director language as the OECR did not exist at the time of the original legislation.
- ii. Deputy Director Young discussed the process for making new amendments and the next steps.
- b. Chair Aloma asked for an update on the shared folder progress – Robin did not have an update. Chair Aloma explained that the Commission has requested one folder to upload documents like agendas, minutes, calendar, etc. Action: Deputy Young stated that the folder will be prioritized and accomplished by next week.
- c. Chair Aloma requested feedback on adding guest speakers to the meetings once/quarter. Suggestions:
  - i. Elections board to discuss voting accessibility
  - ii. Sheriff/police to talk about problems with all types of disabilities.
    1. Meet with the police accountability commission or higher. William Fields agrees now with the City going through the consent decree with the police department.
    2. Connect with the person in charge of the police trainings, and look for volunteers to participate in these trainings. Chair Aloma spoke about concerns with blind people being arrested and handcuffed behind their backs and unable to use their canes.
    3. Baltimore City DOT to discuss circulator or sidewalks. David Greenberg supports the idea and would like to hear from the head of mobility. Action: Deputy Director Young stated that OECR staff can assist as they have in the past.
- iii. MCD members are asked to send ideas to Chairperson Aloma or Viola.

## VI. Commission Subcommittees Discussion

- a. Recruitment: Chairperson Aloma asked that everyone try to bring in at least one new person. Ms. Jackson asked about removing inactive Commissioners and spoke about the by-laws. Chairperson Aloma responded that she is including in the Article revision about 3 meetings in a 12-month period with unexcused absences. Action: Chairperson Aloma and Viola are waiting to give notice to inactive members before they are removed.
- b. Chair Aloma asked if there were current members who are parents or family members of someone with a disability? There was no response, and she would like to see improvement in this area as part of commission development.
- c. Chairperson Aloma will be contacting people about joining the Committees. Action: She asked Viola to keep track of the list of members.
- d. Subcommittee Reports
  - i. Accessibility – Ms. Jackson asked for clarity of the work of the Accessibility Committee. Mr. Greenberg gave an overview of the past work. Glenda Curtis agreed to sit on that Committee and will meet with Viola Woolums. In addition, Glenda Curtis agreed to work with the Housing Committee.
  - ii. Education – no updates
  - iii. Health/Mental Health – no updates
  - iv. Commission Development – no updates
  - v. Employment – no updates
  - vi. Emergency preparedness – no updates
  - vii. Transportation – Ms. Janice Jackson will invite Carol Beatty’s office and the Maryland Department of Disabilities to give an update. She spoke about the 2050 Maryland Transportation plan survey, and she will send the link out to everyone. The MTA Citizens Advisory Committee is looking for new members and meets online via Teams. For more information contact the Office of Customer Community Relations. In addition, Ms. Jackson will reach out to Mr. Josh Wolf regarding the Uber/Lyft transportation service and accessible vehicles.
  - viii. Legislative – Mr. Adam Levine gave highlights on the types of bills that are in legislation as it relates to disabilities.
    1. HB264/SB400: *Places of Public Accommodation - Motion Picture Houses – Captioning* – died in Committee
    2. SB 168/HB 504 – *Maryland Disabilities Council – Establishment-* passed
    3. SB535/HB 608 – *Human Relations – Housing Discrimination – Service Dogs and Guide Dogs* - passed
    4. SB608/HB53 – *Human Services – Maryland Statewide Independent Living Council* – passed
    5. SB940/HB456 - *State Board of Pharmacy - Accessible Prescription Labels, Bag Tags, and Medical Guides for Blind, Visually Impaired, and Print Disabled Individuals – Regulation* - passed

VII. Open forum

- a. Ms. Viola Woolums asked if there were members of MCD who had attended the AFRAM festival in the past and had complaints or concerns about accessibility other than parking.
- b. Ms. Jackson stated that she had an issue with the seating for disabilities as able-bodied people would sit in the accessible area. She would like to know if there were improvements in that area.
- c. Chairperson Aloma stated that there had been issues with excessive heat.

V. Closing

- a. Next meeting is scheduled for May 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 2:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Drummond  
Special Assistant  
Office of Equity and Civil Rights