



Monday, June 28, 2021 / 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.  
Public Meeting (Virtual) of the Howard County Commission on Disabilities

**Meeting Minutes**

**PRESENT:** Nicole Czarnecki  
Elliott Finkelstein  
Arthur Gold  
Joshua Hirsh  
Marian Vessels  
Karen Wood

**ABSENT:** Doug Lea  
Randy Murbach  
Heidi Burghardt  
Ande Kolp  
Mia Williams

**STAFF:** Erica Lewis  
Michelle Henry  
Terry Zeigler

**GUEST:** Kelly Cimino

**INTERPRETERS:** Not required

**I. Call to Order, Roll Call, Welcome**

**Call to order -  
Elliott Finkelstein – Welcome everyone**

**II. New Business**

- A. Presentation: Howard County Housing Opportunities Master Plan  
(Handout)  
Presenter: Kelly Cimino, Director  
Howard County Department of Housing and Community Development

The Housing Opportunities Master Plan was created as a result of legislation passed in November 2019.

Kelly provided an overview on the Master Plan. She noted that the area median income for Howard County is \$117,730.00 and approximately 11% of land in Howard County is undeveloped. Housing affordability and accessibility are major concerns. The Master Plan includes 80 recommendations, including the creation of 20,000 additional housing units in the County and the creation of an affordable housing trust fund to expand the number of income-restricted housing units.

Commission members expressed the following concerns and recommendations:

- What is the timeframe for adding 20,000 additional housing units? Have any deadlines or timelines been established?
- Will there be expanded housing options in western Howard County?
- Consider the availability of public transit in the planning of all new housing units, especially in areas of the County currently underserved by public transit.
- The Master Plan calls for “expedited or by-right approval” for accessibility modifications that enable independent living for persons with disabilities. Consider policy and funding to address not only the installation of home modifications but also to help pay for the cost of removing home accessibility features at the end of tenancy, if required by landlord/property owner.
- Can visitability or accessibility features be required in new housing development of attached housing and single-family homes? Examples of such features are no-step entrances, doorways and hallways 32” or more in width, one bathroom on main level which is usable by a person using a wheelchair or walker, and construction of walls to support installation of grab bars. According to Kelly, legislation may be needed.
- Is the affordable housing trust fund adequately funded? It was reported that the County Executive recommended \$5 million but only \$2.5 million was approved. By contrast, neighboring Montgomery County has \$30 million in their affordable housing trust fund.

## B. Committee Updates:

### 1. Access Committee (Michelle)

During the June 3 meeting, members viewed a virtual video tour of the new circuit courthouse (9250 Judicial Way in Ellicott City). The committee raised some questions and comments regarding the new facility, which Michelle will forward to the project manager. Members also reviewed draft recommendations regarding ADA requirements for alterations in existing facilities, including places of historic significance. These recommendations will be submitted to the Department of Planning and Zoning, for inclusion in the drafting of updated design guidelines for historic Ellicott City.

Next Access Committee meeting is scheduled for September 14. Agenda item is Historic Preservation. Suggestion made for commission members to attend Historic Preservation Board meeting to gain an understanding of the Board's role and processes. The Access Committee's September 14<sup>th</sup> meeting date may be changed to coincide with the next meeting date of the Historic Preservation Board.

### 2. Provider Committee (Erica)

May Provider Committee meeting was cancelled. Next scheduled meeting will be September 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Provider Committee is still seeking a Chair. Commissioners are asked to contact staff if interested in serving as chair of the provider committee. Ande has agreed to remain committee chair until another Commissioner takes over the position. Elliott suggested Erica send out a reminder e-mail.

Recommendation made to commission members to consider joining a subcommittee.

## C. Ideas for Fall 2021 Event

### 1. Discussion held regarding a Fall 2021 Commission event.

Prior to COVID-19, an annual awards event was held in October. Fall 2021 restrictions may prohibit large indoor events. Commissioners are asked to email suggestions to Erica.

2. Elliott made a motion recommending the creation of a public service announcement to promote awareness of the need for shared use of the public right-a-way by users of bicycles and e-scooters, as well as pedestrians including those with mobility and other disabilities. Arthur seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

III. Old Business

A. Approval of Minutes for April 26, 2021

Joshua motioned to approve April minutes. Karen seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

B. Updates

1. CoD Recruitment to Fill Vacancies

A news release request was sent to the Public Information Office to recruit candidates for possible appointments to the Commission.

Suggestion was made for commissioners to review applications, meet candidates, and make recommendations. Michelle will report back on this.

2. 2020 Annual Report

Administrator approval for release of the report is pending.

IV. Announcements

1. Commissioners are asked to keep track of their participation in community advocacy and disability-related activities, and to report this participation to Erica. This information will be included in the next annual report.

V. Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned 8:30 p.m.

To request accommodations to participate in Commission meetings, please call 410-313-6402 (voice/relay) or email [CoD@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:CoD@howardcountymd.gov) at least five days (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays) prior to the meeting date.