

Mayor's Committee for Persons with Disabilities
Monthly Meeting (Virtual)
 April 8, 2025

Present:

Gloria Whitehead, Chair
Marge Clemons, Co-Chair
Michelle Bush
Hillary Honig Ensminger
Jackie Pilgrim

Absent:

Pearley Yelverton	Deborah Kolesar
Michael Wilson, Co-Chair	Trevor Bower

Guests:

Captain Mark Morais, DPD	Cassandra Barnes, Department of Health & Human Services	Tara Walton, Transportation Department	Lyndsey Gibson, CandleScience	
Chris Daniels	Victoria Mosey,	Phyllis Flournoy	Marshall Burkes	Daniel Ellison

Staff

Sharon Williams, Committee Liaison	Danice Taylor Committee Assistant
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I. Call to Order

Called to order by Co-Chair Marge Clemons

II. Attendance and Announcements

Daniel Ellison announced a pop-up art event on the third Friday at the Marriott Hotel. The event is an opportunity for artists who identify as having a disability to exhibit and sell their work.

III. Meeting Protocol shared by staff

1. Share your name each time you speak.
2. Be recognized by the chair before you speak.
3. Two minutes for each speaker each time you speak.
4. Stay on the agenda topic.
5. If you are using visuals, describe what is on the screen.
6. Chat will be muted - only the host can be messaged during the meeting. Do not share documents in the chat
7. Chat messages sent to the host will be read by the host at the end of the meeting.

IV. Reading Minutes

Danice Taylor summarized the meeting minutes from March.

Jackie Pilgrim made a motion to approve the minutes from the March meeting.

Hillary Ensminger seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

V. New Business

National Disability Employment Awareness Month Honoree Lyndsey Gibson, representative of CandleScience, shared an inspiring story about CandleScience and its impact on the community. Lyndsey then responded to committee member questions and comments about CandleScience.

Kramden Institute representative Marshall Burkes shared information about the services offered by the nonprofit organization Kramden Institute to the Durham Community and the wider North Carolina Community.

VI. Old Business

Actionable Items Subcommittee Review, Discussion, and Assignments.

The by-laws have three subcommittees: Public Policy, Awards and Outreach, and Employment and Education.

Staff shared the three subcommittees' objectives and proposed actionable items.

Public Policy Subcommittee Objective and Actionable Items

The Public Policy Sub-Committee of the MCPWD focuses on accessibility and barrier removal throughout the community. Members of this subcommittee will solicit resident input on accessibility projects and promote compliance with ADA and other applicable laws related to accessibility and equity for persons with disabilities. The subcommittee will also provide informational and policy recommendations on the accessibility of City of Durham services and facilities, and public and private events to address barriers to people with physical and intellectual disabilities. The subcommittee may develop recommendations that promote government and private sector accessibility awareness and may make recommendations to the City Council.

Actionable Items

- Advocate for change, funding, and support of issues as identified directly by those with disability.
- Work to address and correct discrimination and inequities associated with disability in Durham
- Waiver for the blind provides access to long-term support services for individuals who are blind, elderly, or have significant disabilities, allowing them to remain living in their community setting

Awards and Outreach Subcommittee Objective and Actionable Items

The MCPWD Awards and Outreach Subcommittee plans the annual National Disability Employment Awareness observance in October to honor businesses, agencies, and individuals for outstanding support of Durham residents with disabilities. This subcommittee may also develop or promote outreach events that raise awareness of the advantages that people with disabilities can provide employers in the City of Durham.

Actionable Items

- Have a luncheon to increase visibility in the community.
- Create a forum of Durham providers of services for persons with disabilities.
- Serve as a resource referral hub with a viable presence, with office hours through procured funding from the Council and City Budget.

Employment and Education Subcommittee Objectives and Actionable Items

The Employment and Education Subcommittee of the MCPWD will promote and develop policy recommendations that support educational and employment opportunities for people with disabilities. The subcommittee may also develop or promote education initiatives in conjunction with Durham Public Schools and Durham-based institutions of higher learning.

Actionable Items

- Higher skill development employment for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Educate faculty, administration, and parents on services available to children if they are between diagnoses.

Subcommittee Formation

The meeting attendees volunteered to serve on one of three subcommittees:

- Public Policy- Hillary Honig Ensminger, Michelle Bush, Daniel Ellison, Tentative Michael Wilson
- Awards and Outreach- Marge Clemons
- Employment and Education- Jackie Pilgrim, Cynthia Holland, and Gloria Whitehead

Co-Chair Michael Wilson was not in attendance but was tentatively assigned to the Public Policy subcommittee. As per the MCPWD bylaws, each subcommittee must have an MCPWD Chair or co-chair.

Other meeting attendees stated they would review the subcommittees and select a subcommittee to volunteer on at a later date.

Overview of the work of each subcommittee and how liaisons can help

Sharon Williams stated she will email volunteers for each subcommittee to coordinate their availability.

Other Items.

Danice stated that tickets for the 2025 Disability Conference have been purchased, and members who RSVP'd should have received an email including a digital ticket.

The City Clerk has published the MCPWD vacancies. Applications are being accepted. For assistance filling out the application, contact Equity and Inclusion Director and MCPWD Staff Liaison Sharon Williams.

VII. Adjournment.

Jackie Pilgrim made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Hillary Ensminger. The meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting May 13, 2025, at 12:00 pm