

**Mayor's Committee for Persons with Disabilities  
Information Session (Virtual)  
February 11, 2025**

**Members Present:**

Gloria Whitehead, Chair	Pearley Yelverton
Jackie Pilgrim	Michelle Bush
Marge Clemons, Co-Chair	Hillary Honig Ensminger
Michael Wilson, Co-Chair	

**Members Absent:**

(Excused)	Deborah Kolesar
(Excused)	Trevor Bower

**Staff Liaisons**

Sharon Williams, Equity and Inclusion Department Director	Danice Taylor, Equity and Inclusion Department Administrative Coordinator
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**Guests:**

Daniel Ellison Esq, Duke University	Captain Mark Morais, Durham Police Department	Cassandra Barnes, Department of Health & Human Services	James Davis, Durham Neighborhood Improvement Service
Phillip Jordan, Neighborhood Improvement Services	Shaleigh Comerford, Shaleigh Dance Works Inc.	Phyllis Flournoy	Cedric Weatherspoon

## **I. Call to Order.**

Called to order by Chairperson Gloria Whitehead

## **II. Attendance and Announcements.**

Phillip Jordan announced that the Renegade housing development is scheduled to open in the Spring of 2025.

Hillary Ensminger announced that she has been awarded a grant.

Pearley Yelverton announced that the Epilepsy Support group meets every 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday.

## **III. Meeting Protocol shared by Danice Taylor:**

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**

Sharon Williams summarized the meeting minutes from January.

Michael Wilson, co-chair, made a motion to approve the minutes from the January meeting. Pearley Yelverton seconded the motion. The vote passed unanimously.

Michael Wilson, Co-Chair, made a motion to approve the minutes of the November meeting. Pearley Yelverton seconded the motion. The motion passed with four members voting in favor and two members abstaining.

## **V. New Business.**

National Disability Employment Awareness Month Honoree, ShaLeigh Comerford, representative of Shaleigh Dance Works Inc., shared her inspiring story about

Shaleigh Dance Works and its impact on the community. ShaLeigh answered questions and heard comments about her business from committee members.

## **VI. Old Business**

Gloria Whitehead, Chair stated that the by laws are approved by the City Council.

Danice Taylor read the following next steps.

### **The Bylaws are Approved. What Comes Next:**

8. There will now be 11 vacancies on the MCPWD.
9. The Clerk's Office will be advertising all 11 vacancies (you will be advised when this starts).
10. Applications are submitted to the City Clerk's Office.
11. The Clerk's Office will verify residency.
12. You are not required to have a disability (anyone can apply).
13. You must be a resident of the City of Durham to be a member.
14. Representatives of non-profit organizations, small businesses and agencies doing business in the City of Durham and providing services to persons with disabilities can be appointed as members of this committee.
15. City Council will vote on appointing members to the committee.
16. Members serve for 2-year terms beginning August 1st in the year of appointment.
17. Members may serve no more than 3 consecutive 2-year terms.
18. In the event of a vacancy, replacement members will serve for the duration of the term of the member they are replacing.
19. Members of this committee are eligible to apply for the monthly stipend for your contribution to the work of this committee.

Gloria Whitehead stated that the committee would review and discuss the Actionable Items from the June 2024 MCPWD Meeting to identify the committee's work plan for 2025.

- 1) Serve as a resource referral hub with a viable presence –with office hours through procured funding from Council and City Budget.
  - Committee members would like to reimagine what this looks like, and suggested virtual support.

- 2) a. Advocate for change, funding, and support of issues as identified directly by those with disability.
- b. Work to address and correct discrimination and inequities associated with disability in Durham.
- c. Waiver for the blind (does not exist - Elderly, Blind and Disabled (E.B.D. Waiver) 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).
- 3) Create a list of voting members and contact information.
  - The list created in prior years has been shared and will be revisited after member appointments.
- 4) Create subcommittees to address some of the issues.
  - Subcommittees are identified in the by-laws.
- 5) Housing for persons that have intellectual and or developmental disabilities.
  - A Guest speaker will be invited to present on this topic at an upcoming meeting.
- 6) Higher skill development employment for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities
  - Recommended for research in the Subcommittee.
- 7) Links or a database of resources for persons with disabilities in Durham added to the MCPWD website
  - Sharon shared the website link with committee members via email.
- 8) Create a forum of Durham providers of services for persons with disabilities.
  - Recommended for research in the Subcommittee.
- 9) Epilepsy training for Police Officers and home health care providers.
  - The discussion will include City Departments with knowledge in this area that can support the committee with furthering this conversation.
  - Captain Morais will provide information about what the CIT class looks like.
- 10) Educate faculty, administration, and parents on services available to children if they are between diagnoses
- 11) Have a luncheon to increase visibility in the community (added January 2025)

**VII. Subcommittee Purpose and Formation**

Sharon Williams

**VIII.**

The meeting was adjourned.

**Next Meeting March 11, 2025, at 12:00 pm**