

**Commission on People with Disabilities
October 28, 2004
Room 12, Health Department**

Minutes

Attendee: Paula Marcos – Health Dept.
Cindy Phillips – Housing Authority
Pat O’Conner – So MD Center for LIFE
Gene Potts – So MD Center for LIFE
Arthur Shepherd – (R, P & CS) Recreation Division
Julie Randall – Community Representative
Kathy Sears – Greenwell Foundation
Cynthia Brown – (R, P & CS) Community Services Division

Excused: Jackie Fournier and Dennis Phillips

The meeting was convened at 4:35 by Vice Chair, Arthur Shepherd.

September minutes were accepted as presented.

Disability Awareness Day Event – A. Shepherd suggested combining the event with the Easter Festival, since both events fall on the same date. This could potentially increase attendance for the Disability Awareness Day Event (D.A.D.) Paula Marcos disagreed with the idea stating the D.A.D. has had growing attendance each year and the focus of the event could be lost by combining it with an Easter Egg Hunt. Kathy Sears suggested inclusion activities for the Easter Egg Hunt (i.e. rabbit leading inside toward disability information/activities). P. Marcos stated last year she and Christi Bishop (Therapeutic Specialist with Recreation, Parks and Community Services) did a great deal of the work and fears C. Bishop will not be available if she is needed for the R & P Easter activity. Julie Randall stated C. Bishop should be available that day for the D.A.D. rather than the Easter Egg Hunt, however A. Shepherd said C. Bishop would most likely be needed at the Rec & Parks activity. P. Marcos added she would like to see more volunteer support on the day of the event from COPD members. G. Potts responded by offering more volunteers from his agency. The possibility was discussed about having the event on a different Saturday (usually scheduled on the last Saturday in March). A. Shepherd explained this would mean canceling indoor sport activities on one of the other Saturdays in March, which is not feasible. The discussion concluded with the following options: 1) have the 2 events together; 2) have 2 separate events on 2 separate days; 3) have 2 separate events on the same day (one in the morning and one in the afternoon). A decision is to be made at the November meeting.

Housing – Cynthia Phillips reported the fair market rent for one and two bedroom apartments has been lowered. She also stated the Housing Authority recently moved to the former Sheriff’s Office in Leonardtown. J. Randall expressed concerns about accessibility since this building has no elevator. Cynthia Brown replied reasonable accommodation is provided by the Housing Authority’s designation of an area on the first floor to conduct business with clients with special needs. J. Randall stated more should have been done to make the building accessible when structural changes were made to the entrance. She would like to see the county do more than just the bare minimum. J. Randall made a motion for G. Potts to research the ADA legislation with regards to this issue and provide results to A. Shepherd in order to determine if the County Govt. is in violation of the law and to authorize A. Shepherd to draft a letter to the County Commissions regarding non-compliance. The motion was seconded and passed.

Recreation – A. Shepherd reported there are 12 new inclusion participants this year with various types of disabilities. Adaptive swimming continues and plans are underway for Special Olympics in the spring.

Employment – G. Potts reported the Center for LIFE is establishing a computer lab for people with disabilities.

MD Alliance of Disability Commission and Committees – K. Sears will be attending her first meeting in November and will report back to the group.

New Business – J. Randall expressed concern about non-compliance at the Jobs Connection/DORS office in Lexington Park. She suggested the commission address this in the near future.

Election of Offices – All agreed more community representatives are needed. P. Marcos motioned A. Shepherd and J. Randall serve as co-chairs. Motion was seconded and approved.

Future meetings will begin promptly at 4:30. However, the November meeting will be a planning session and will begin earlier and last longer – 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Thursday, November 18, in room 12 of the Health Department. It was suggested to rotate locations of future meetings to member agencies. K. Sears offered Greenwell as the location for the December meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Cynthia Brown