

CITY OF MONROE
SPECIAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES COMMITTEE MEETING
300 WEST CROWELL STREET
MONROE, NORTH CAROLINA 28112
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2024 – 3:00 P.M.
AGENDA
www.monroenc.org

- Item 1.** Public Comment Period
- Item 2.** Approval of Minutes – October 1, 2024
- Item 3.** Discussion of Proposed Language for Special Needs and Disabilities Request Form for Signage in Residential/Business Areas
- Item 4.** City Communication Team Survey Update
- Item 5.** Wolfe School Presentation
- Item 6.** Mosaic Pediatric Therapy Correspondence (*Information Only*)

ATTENTION COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Please contact Angie Sustar at asustar@monroenc.org or 704-282-4651 to confirm your attendance. Thank you.

**CITY OF MONROE
SPECIAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES COMMITTEE MEETING
OCTOBER 1, 2024
MINUTES**

The Special Needs and Disabilities Committee of the City of Monroe, North Carolina met in the City Hall Council Chambers located at 300 West Crowell Street in Monroe, North Carolina at 3:00 p.m. on October 1, 2024 with Chair Julie Thompson presiding.

Members Present: Council Member Julie Thompson (Chair), Committee Member Kelly Stegall, Committee Member Selina Campbell, Property Management Director Ryan Jones (ex-officio), Mayor Robert Burns and Clerk Angie Sustar

Members Absent: Melinda Plue and Karen Heath

Staff: Community Development Manager Teresa Campo, Senior Staff Attorney Terry Sholar, and Assistant City Manager Lisa Hollowell

Chair Thompson called the Special Needs and Disabilities Committee Meeting of October 1, 2024 to order at 3:03 p.m. and welcomed everyone in attendance. A quorum was present.

Chair Thompson advised that two swift water rescue teams from Monroe had dispatched to Western North Carolina to assist with rescue efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. Chair Thompson asked Mayor Burns to pray for the safety of all involved and for the families affected.

Item No. 1. Public Comment. None

Item No. 2. Approval of Minutes – August 6, 2024. Chair Thompson asked if anyone had any questions or concerns about the minutes, if not, if anyone would like to make a motion that the minutes of the September 3, 2024 Special Needs and Disabilities Committee be approved.

Motion: Mayor Burns moved to approve the minutes of the September 3, 2024 meeting.

Second: Member Campbell

Action: The motion to approve the minutes of the September 3, 2024 meeting passed unanimously with the following votes.

AYES: Chair Thompson, Mayor Burns, Members Stegall and Campbell

NAYS: None

Item No. 3. Community Survey Information Update. Community Development Manager Teresa Campo provided valuable feedback with recommendations and options for the community survey. She advised that as the Community Development Manager for the City she does compliance monitoring programmatically and identified areas of the survey to address such as: inclusivity of all groups that are disabled, the protection of information (HIPPA), and that the tool used would determine how the City will protect the information. She referenced how the American Community Survey (ACS) looks at and documents disabilities and the benefits of aligning with them. She spoke with the Centralina Council of Governments who does a lot of the multi-jurisdictional surveys and some regional survey and they state that the real point is HIPPA and public information
Chair Thompson advised that the goal of the community survey was to gather information from the

community to identify services currently offered that are helpful and other services needed. She noted that personal information questions are asked to assist with identifying the actual needs. Chair Thompson stated that she understands that the information has to be HIPPA protected and asked if the survey should be narrowed.

Ms. Campo answered that the people/organizations who can collect that information would know about our population here and maybe they could share the types of disabilities with the populations they serve in Monroe.

A brief discussion followed as Committee members asked questions and Ms. Campo provided insight to possible methods for gathering information, storing data, and establishing base line standards.

Mayor Burns added that he suggests the survey be anonymous and put an “other” category where someone can fill in any disability not listed. He reiterated the importance of protecting information and stated that the current survey tool was for trial basis and the final survey would be on a secure tool through the City website.

Mayor Burns asked Ms. Campo how she would collect the information recognizing that she has done surveys before and has an understanding of HIPPA compliance matters.

Ms. Campo responded that she has done surveys and has professional experiences that look at fair housing and various critical issues. She suggests identifying a tool that is secure, that is an open form that you own and control the data. She advises to involve Communications so that you can justify its good data (especially if you’re going to make policies on it) and to pick the survey tool She added:

1. Start with your research looking at the service agencies and what you have in that data.
2. Compare that with the American Community Survey, if those numbers don’t align; that is your justification that you’re missing someone. DSS and Health and Human Services can possibly reference any group that wasn’t captured.
3. If it’s about physical and mobility, that would be simplest and would be something that would be community wide that you would be at liberty to ask, “do you think buildings are accessible and what buildings do you think aren’t accessible, and what buildings do you think should be accessible and can you get from A to B”.

Mr. Jones asked Ms. Campo to clarify the purpose of the survey related to her suggestions and that distribution would be managed in collaboration with the Communications department.

Ms. Campo responded that a standard has been established in the community because the services are already being provided and that gives you a basis. You can take that basis and compare it to the American Community Survey because that picks up people who aren’t getting services.

Mr. Jones clarified the purpose of the initial survey to be one that would establish a standard baseline as to how the city prioritizes specific needs relative to accessibility.

Mayor Burns agreed and clarified his goal related to establishing the baseline standard and working to improve that standard based on the information gathered.

Ms. Campo remarked the tools are a great idea that needs to be inclusive, determine what data you’re trying to capture and the tool you’re using is one that’s secure, and protocol is followed.

Mr. Jones agreed with Ms. Campo when it comes to the privacy portion and clarified that Communications would need to be involved in the appropriate dissemination of the survey, as well as, the appropriate program to be utilized to disseminate the survey.

Chair Thompson asked if the survey is completely anonymous which listening to all of this and having previous HIPPA experience that sounds like the only real option that we have in order not to somewhere along the line not being compliant.

After a brief discussion with Ms. Campo, Chair Thompson clarified that:

1. To protect anonymity, the survey will need to be anonymous.
2. To list and include as many groups as we're aware of.
3. To provide an "Other" box and space to enter any disability not previously listed.
4. To include a public information disclaimer for any possible comments made.
5. That the tool used ensures privacy, is not on someone's personal platform, and protects information.

Chair Thompson asked Ms. Campo if she could provide a list of categories that she has from previous surveys.

Ms. Campo responded that she could provide what the American Community Surveys and the federal government have provided.

A brief discussion followed between Member Stegall, Chair Thompson and Ms. Campo relating to the survey, the analytics and capacity of the survey tool, and cost.

Chair Thompson thanked Ms. Campo for her assistance and willingness to share information.

Mr. Jones stated that it would be a good idea for the committee to look at the survey as it is and with assistance from Communications and let staff review it. He stated that he wanted this to be the best product that we could possibly put out. He stated that he could have conversations with Ms. Campo and whoever is needed to ensure all boxes are checked. He will be glad to share the review via email as they progress.

Mayor Burns added that we are all eager complete this step and move forward to the next.

Item No. 4. Signage Update. Chair Thompson advised that she asked Senior Staff Attorney Terry Sholar to provide an update and share the letter that will be sent to Mosaic Pediatric Therapy relating to signage. Mr. Sholar explained to the committee that he had spoken with Director of Engineering Sarah McAllister about standard signage. He stated that there might be a precedent being set that we may not want. He advised that the City does not put signs on private property. It puts signs on public streets just like the DOT puts signs on public highways. He added that if we put a sign there, we are putting it on private property and will need permission from the owners of the private property. He suggested sending a letter acknowledging the work they are doing in the community and for the safety of the public and the children in the area, would they consider putting up a sign. He advised that sending a letter to the business owner and the property owner would be the best action.

Mr. Sholar drafted a letter to the business owner and property owner. He presented a copy and committee members provided feedback and recommendations.

Chair Thomson asked for a recommendation to move forward with sending the letter after the edits. Mayor Burns asked for a consensus by a raising of hands. All members in attendance raised their hand.

Chair Thompson thanked Mr. Sholar for working on the letter and moving it forward.

Member Stegall asked how do we identify business and companies like this that we would in the future send these types communications to. Is this on an “as it comes” basis?

Mr. Sholar responded, yes this is an as needed basis as you identify businesses that may need this. He reiterated that on a public street the City has more freedom to do that, again, our policy is that we do not put signs on private property. He added that the DOT has a policy and a sign they have developed for DOT streets and roads. There is a form for the parent to complete stating that they have a disabled child and are requesting a sign to be installed. They agree to notify the DOT when that child becomes of age and it is removed. Mr. Sholar stated this is primarily aimed for disabled children and the City could develop a policy similar to that and make it available for businesses that are located on a public street that serve disabled children.

Discussion followed.

Chair Thompson suggested putting an item on the agenda for next month to create a policy and a form for us to refer residents too.

Chair Thompson advised that this Committee is a twelve month committee and we have until May 2025 to make sure that we get all these pieces especially the communication portion back from our Communications staff about the survey and have the time to get that solidified and then disbursed and then get the data back.

Mr. Jones added that as a point of clarification, Communications would assist with the process to distribute the survey.

Member Stegall asked if there is enough time to achieve the goal.

Chair Thompson responded, yes. After a survey timeline of thirty days and an additional thirty days for committee data review, then we would have a plan to take to Council. She clarified that the purpose of the committee is to determine an action plan in regards to our mission statement and the goals set at the beginning. Council is the policy making body and would take it from there.

Member Stegall asked when do we need a hard stop in terms of the survey needs to be ready to go out by this date. She stated that if we’re not going ahead and setting that tentative timeline now, what does that look like. When do we need to send the survey out?

Discussion followed between Committee members relating to the survey processes and establishing a timeline.

Mr. Jones stated that he can make the recommended revisions for the next meeting and will share them with key staff members with the knowledge to have something concrete and ready to go.

Chair Thompson stated that the timeline could be set now or it can be an item for next month’s agenda once Ryan has a chance to gather some information and we can go from there.

Member Stegall asked should we consider surveying the organizations in the community that provide services at the same time so that we're gathering all of the information at the same time so that we do have everything at the table in March to start drafting the recommendations.

Chair Thompson responded that is part of the Resource List that has been compiled.

Member Stegall asked would it be prudent to survey organizations at the same time to determine existing services in the community to be able to have all information needed in early spring to move forward.

Mr. Jones agreed and stated that one of the needs of the people might be having the knowledge of the services that exist. He added that if this were the case we would immediately go back and provide a solution,

Member Stegall added or at least connecting with that organization post survey and advise that this is the information gathered and this is a gap in communicating the services and how do we help. If our goal is to put out a plan for next steps for the City in terms of communicating these opportunities or increasing accessibility across the board, wouldn't it be prudent to know what services are being offered. We understand what agencies are listed but knowing what services are being offered specifically through those agencies so that we have all the information at once to be able to move forward.

Mayor Burns stated that is a great plan of action. Working backwards from when the due date is will help solidify when we need to get this thing done. That gives us seven months to work towards this goal.

There being no further business, Mayor Burns made a motion to adjourn. Member Stegall seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with the following votes:

AYES: Members Stegall and Campbell, Chair Thompson, and Mayor Burns
NAYS: None

The meeting adjourned at 3:53 p.m.



CITY OF MONROE

P.O. BOX 69 • MONROE, NORTH CAROLINA 28111-0069
FAX 704-283-9098

October 7, 2024

Ms. Callie Bernard
Mosaic Pediatric Therapy
1944 Wellness Blvd.
Monroe, North Carolina 28110

Re: Traffic Signs

Dear Ms. Bernard:

I am writing this letter as Chair of the City of Monroe's Special Needs and Disability Committee. Mayor Burns appointed the Committee to take a look at issues experienced by our disabled citizens and offer recommendations to the City regarding ways to assist. The Committee discussed potential hazards for individuals with disabilities and especially children with disabilities. It was suggested that the City identify areas where disabled citizens and children receive services and make recommendations regarding traffic hazards. That is the purpose of this letter.

You and Mosaic Pediatric Therapy provide a great service to Monroe and its children with behavioral needs. Due to the potential number and concentration of children around your business, we strongly urge you to consider installing signs along Wellness Boulevard alerting motorists that it is an "Autistic Child Area." The Committee believes the signs are needed due to the amount of traffic on Wellness Boulevard and the potential danger to children. The North Carolina Department of Transportation has a standard "Autistic Child Area" sign which is recommended in North Carolina. The City's Engineering Department will be glad to assist you with information regarding the sign.

Wellness Boulevard is a private street and the City does not post signs on private streets. However, when needed, the City recommends installing signs on private streets to protect the public. To that end, I am also sending a copy of this letter to The Park at Monroe Property Owners Association so they will be aware of this request.

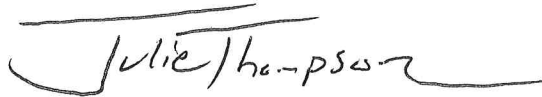
Ms. Callie Bernard

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Thank you for all you do for our community and our most precious assets, our children. I am thanking you in advance for your consideration and cooperation.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julie Thompson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Julie Thompson, Monroe City Council Member

cc: The Park at Monroe Property
Owners Association, Inc.
2085 Frontis Plaza Blvd.
Winston Salem, NC 27103

Robert Burns, Mayor
Monroe City Council
Mark Watson, City Manager
Sarah McAlister, Director of Engineering