

Aging in Place in the Community Committee
Minutes
April 14, 2015

Present: Commissioners: Sue Guenther, Miriam Kelty, Isabelle Schoenfeld
Guests: Phil McLaughlin – MoCo DOT, Tim Shaw -Senior Connection, Harriet Block - JCoA, Leslie Marks – MoCo Senior Fellow
Staff: Pazit Aviv, Shawn Brennan

Phil McLaughlin, DOT, was invited to speak with AIPC about Ride-On. He described the 3 divisions of Ride-On: data collection and analysis; service planning; and scheduling and the main responsibilities of each.

Ride-On enjoyed growth until 2008 when budget constraints began and continue to be a major challenge. Since that time, improvements in services have been made from redistributing service from underperforming areas to areas with greater demands. About 12-15 shifts of this nature occur annually.

Of interest to AIPC is the fact that a survey of 20% of Ride-On customers has been completed recently as part of the Federal Title VI plan requirement. (Title VI prohibits discrimination based on race and income). The survey is of people who already ride the bus and included 11,000 respondents or 20% of riders. Among those, 2/3 are daily riders, 12% of respondents are seniors, 58% are female, and 75% have incomes of \$50k or less. The Title VI plan has been submitted to the County Council for approval.

Discussion revealed that persons served by bus routes are defined as those within ½ mile of a stop. It was acknowledged that many seniors may be unable to get to a stop easily. AIPC was interested to learn that some midday and evening diversions of schedule have been made in recent years to accommodate seniors. They include diverting to Arcola Towers, Victory Forest and some other buildings with heavy senior concentration. HHS funds and Recreation Dept manages DOT provided service to some senior centers. The JCoA programs that serve seniors also were noted. Some of these special services are door to door or curb to curb.

Other issues discussed include the challenge of effective outreach to the neediest population groups, accessibility issues especially for people with mobility impairments, bus stop and sidewalk improvement programs needed, the possibility of shuttle and/or van service to accommodate seniors.

The AIPC thanked Mr. McLaughlin for an informative presentation and discussion and agreed to follow-up on some of the issues raised.

There was discussion about the “draft” Summer Study proposal that Isabelle sent to Miriam and the Public Policy Committee co-chairs (others at the meeting were seeing it for the first time). It was proposed that the SS would explore 3-4 different approaches at the local government level to support senior residents of the community. These include the WHO Age-Friendly Cities; the AARP Livable Communities; Montgomery County’s Senior Agenda: Communities for a Lifetime approaches. Suggestions from the meeting attendees included:

- Explore Atlanta Ga. County, St. Louis County and a community on Long Island, NY as possible approaches.
- In addition to the example Qs in the draft proposal, ask panelists questions about budget/resources, i.e., costs involved in implementing the approach; what data and measures have been developed; how do they evaluate?

Leslie Marks agreed to co-chair the SS with Isabelle and Isabelle will modify the proposal based on the feedback from the meeting attendees. [post-meeting decision: put the draft proposal on-hold until we know what the Director, DHHS, direction will be as articulated in the planned response to Councilmember George Leventhal’s letter].

Discussion of assessing AIPC’s progress on its identified priorities and clarification of the assessment goals and method was postponed.

AIPC’s May 12 meeting will be the Montgomery County Village Gathering at White Oak Senior Center.