

**COMMISSION ON AGING  
MEETING SUMMARY MINUTES**

January 22, 2015

White Oak Community Center

1700 April Lane

Silver Spring, Maryland

<b>Members Present</b>	<b>Members Absent</b>
Arva Jackson	Frederic Burke
Sam Korper	Doris Chapman
Rudy Oswald	Song Hutchins
Barbara Mulitz	Tammy Duell
Sue Guenther	Grace Whipple
Myrna Cooperstein	<b>Liaisons</b>
Paul DelPonte	Gail Gunod-Green, Housing Opportunities Commission
Miriam Kely	Mary Phillips, Housing Opportunities Commission
DaCosta Mason	Faisal Khan, Department of Transportation
Noelle Heyman	
Judith Levy	<b>Guests</b>
Syed Yusuf	Beth Shapiro
Isabelle Schoenfeld	Lili Khozeimeh, Adult Guardianship
Sally Shea	Deborah Zuckerman, Adult Guardianship Liaison
Spencer Schron	Karen Maricheau, City of Takoma Park
Reuben Rosenfeld	Shememe Williams, Director White Oak Community Center
Charles Kauffman	Tovah Kasdin, Director, ElderSAFE Center
Miriam Kely	Sarah Gotbaum, Elder Women Alliance
Jerry Morenoff	<b>Staff:</b>
Revathi Vikram	John J. Kenney, Chief, Aging & Disability Services
	Odile Brunetto, Director Area Agency & Aging
	Tremayne Jones, Office Services Coordinator

Chair, Judith Levy opened the Commission on Aging's (COA) meeting at 9:00am.

**Brief Business Meeting:**

The COA members unanimously approved minutes from December 2014

**COA ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:**

**Treasurer's Report:**

The current balance as of is \$ 1,793.09

**Quarterly Meeting with HHS Director and Chairs of Commissions:**

Chair, Judith Levy discussed the meeting that was held on December 15, 2014 with Director, Uma Ahluwalia. Uma Ahluwalia ceded time for Mental Health Advisory Committee (MHAC) to facilitate a discussion with the Boards, Committees and Commissions to identify mental health issues that were of common concern with the purpose of establishing shared advocacy for those issues. Two major issues emerged as major shared concerns during the joint meeting. The first is the need for better-coordinated care and the second is the need for more “specialized” mental health providers (psychiatrists and therapists), such as those who are bilingual (including sign language) and are culturally competent, and those having specialization with specific populations, e.g., seniors, young children, veterans, and those with co-occurring disorders.

**Taxi Regulations Issues:**

Rudy Oswald reported about the meeting that he and Chair, Judy Levy had with Councilmember Berliner. The meeting was held to discuss Mr. Berliner’s proposal to having taxi regulations extended to Uber and Lyft and other similar transportation providers. The Montgomery County Commission on Aging urges the Council to oversee this new app dispatched taxi-like service. These operators are providing a public service that needs appropriate oversight. Seniors have particular interest in having access to vehicles for accessible transportation, affordability of service, and in overall consumer safety.

Uber and Lyft are operating in the County (as they do throughout the world), responding to apps that request transportation from point to point. Currently they are not regulated in Montgomery County. The state of Maryland would have authority over limo services, and the County would have authority to regulate local car service.

The Call and Ride program in the County provides a subsidized or a free ride depending on income to low-income seniors (age 67 and above) and to persons with disabilities. Program participants are provided a card similar to a credit card with funds loaded onto the cards. Taxis now accept these cards for payment. Uber et al should also be required to program their computers to accept such cards in payment for rides.

Consumer concerns include adequate insurance for liability, a requirement for taxis. Similarly there should be oversight of background checks for Uber/Lyft drivers including national and local databases, fingerprinting, and driving records. Standards should be set for acceptance of drivers and be reviewable by an appropriate public agency.

**Guest Speaker:** Deborah Zuckerman, Adult Guardianship Liaison for the Circuit Court of Montgomery County spoke about the Adult Guardianship Assistant Program, a new initiative of the Montgomery County Circuit Court designed to help guardians successfully fulfill their responsibilities. Most people who are appointed as a guardian have never been in this position before. Guardians may not fully understand what they are required to do and it is easy to feel overwhelmed, especially if they have other personal and professional obligations. Additionally, guardians may not be aware of the range of public and private resources that are available to answer their questions and provide assistance. Guardians are not in this alone.

The grant funded Adult Guardianship Assistant Program was created specifically to help ensure that guardians have the knowledge and resources to help them provide the best service possible to the person under guardianship. Ms. Zuckerman discussed how the program works.

- A Court Appointed Visitor will be assigned to a case in which a guardian of the person has been appointed
- The Court Appointed Visitor will meet with the guardian, the person under guardianship and other people involved in the person's daily activities to gather information about the situation.
- The Court Appointed Visitor will help guardians address issues that might be interfering with their ability to fulfill their responsibilities.
- The Court Appointed Visitor will identify services and other resources to help resolve these issues.

Ms. Zuckerman discussed what the Court Appointed Visitor **can** do to help the guardian.

- Make sure guardians know and understand their duties
- Help guardians locate home health agencies
- Help guardians locate respite programs so they can get a break
- Help guardians identify where they can apply for financial assistance
- Help guardians identify housing options

There are things that the Court Appointed Visitor **can not** do such as:

- Give legal advice
- Provide direct services, such as transportation
- Fill out forms or applications
- Complete or file the annual report

**Guest Speaker:** Tovah Kasdin, Director of ElderSafe Center at the Hebrew House

Ms. Kasdin spoke about the ElderSafe Center that accepts referrals from community agencies and programs to provide safe, short-term shelter for older adults who are being abused by an intimate partner, family member, caregiver, or other individual. The ElderSafe Center operates Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and provides the following services to older adults experiencing abuse:

- Safe, short-term shelter (30-120 days)
- Confidential counseling
- Medical Services
- Physical and/or psychological therapeutic services
- Case management
- Community referrals and coordination with partner agencies
- Legal referrals
- Spiritual support
- SAFE discharge

The criteria for admission are:

- 60 years of age or older
- Referred to the ElderSAFE Center by an agency or program

- A victim of one or more of the following types of abuse (physical, sexual, psychological, financial, neglect) or is at risk for experiencing abuse
- In need of temporary shelter and willing to be placed in a temporary shelter
- Persons who are diagnosed “self neglect” are not eligible for this program

### **Updates**

Dr. Jay Kenney discussed the budget issues that the County is facing. There is currently a hiring freeze for FY16 and reduction in services throughout the County. Mr. Leggett will release the FY16 budget on March 15<sup>th</sup>. Governor Larry Hogan’s budget will be released two days after his inauguration; the budget will highlight program cuts in Maryland.

Dr. Odile Brunetto updated the Commission on Aging with the AAA report for January 2015.

### **Enhanced Mobility**

- Council of Government (COG) Grants approved for County HHS/DOT partnership over 2 years/Transportation Resources Promotion/Translation/Volunteer Driver Recruiter
- COG Grant approved for JCA/Vehicles purchases
- County Budget HHS FY15 freeze of positions plus saving plan of \$3 to 4 million in effect
- County Budget HHS FY16, freeze of positions plus 3% reduction. Working on seeking exemptions to freeze.
- Emily Rosenberg, Data Evaluation Manager has resigned. Her position is currently frozen.
- 2 new County Department Directors: Housing and Transportation have been appointed. There is an Acting Director at the Office of Economic Development. The new Secretary on Aging has been appointed by our Governor: Rona Kramer, former Montgomery County Senator
- HOB building maintenance is scheduled for 2015.
- State budget cuts details not known at this time for FY16. Maryland Department of Aging (MDoA) budget hearings in Annapolis February 5<sup>th</sup> and February 9<sup>th</sup>.

### **Committee reports:**

**Aging in Place**-Miriam Kelty discussed the AIPC meeting that was held on January 13, 2015. Guest speaker Yonette Williams, Village Rides Coordinator, presented and led a discussion on the Village Rides (VR) program.

- Aim is to improve quality of life of older persons. Focus is on people with limited mobility
- Collaboration between JCA and Senior Connection
- Funded by federal grant
- 20 member advisory council included representative from 5 participating villages, community leaders and sponsoring agencies
- Developed standards with which all participating organizations with volunteer drivers must comply
- VR supplements other transportation options

- In 2014, VR provided 2700 rides. Most were through Senior Connection's ongoing program
- VR uses electronic scheduling program/database that will allow analysis of number rides, destination, purpose, mileage and other data
- VR working with some operating and some emerging villages. Villages are giving moderate number of rides. Number drivers range from 8-100 but not all have met program requirements yet. VR priority is to increase use
- Work started on strategic plan to continue program after grant funding ends
- Plan is to include more villages and other volunteer driver programs, e.g. programs run by faith-based organizations
- Anticipate new villages will join program in April
- Discussion about moving from pilot program to sustainable program: support will be needed; JCA and Senior Connection will apply for grants that would support different functions for each organization, e.g. ride scheduler for JCA and training activities for Senior Connection

**Communications and Community Outreach**-January's meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather.

**Data Workgroup**-Sam Korper attended the County Stats meeting held on January 21, 2015. Sam has a follow-up meeting with County Stat to look at some issues. Healthy Montgomery will select diabetes to add to the list with Behavioral Health and Obesity as initiative number three. Finally many responded to the Survey Monkey, Sam will prepare a memo that will summarize the responses. Many chose to add additional comments that were insightful.

**Health & Wellness**-January's meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather.

**Public Policy Committee** DaCosta Mason and Rudy Oswald-United Seniors of Maryland will take place on January 28, 2015 in Annapolis. The legislative session will begin on January 14, 2015, three new bills related to elder abuse will be reported on.

Sarah Gotbaum discussed with the COA members Elders Women's Alliance event that was held on Tuesday, January 20<sup>th</sup> at JCA in Rockville. The event focused on the adoption of the Age Friendly program by Washington DC. The Elder Women's Alliance Group suggested that Montgomery County adopt a similar program for pedestrian safety, transportation and affordable housing.

### **Liaisons**

Gail Gunod-Green- Housing Opportunities Commission introduced Mary Phillips who will be the new liaison for HOC.

Karen Maricheau-spoke about a program that is being offered at Takoma Park Middle School. The program called "Difference Makers" is a student run club that works to improve the community and school. The club is run by student officers and a staff as a sponsor. The children volunteer their services to seniors and the community. The mission of Difference Makers is to touch a life, to change a life, to make a difference one step at a time, such as snow shoveling.

Charles Kauffman, Pat Lesnick and Barbara Mulitz will start a COA alumni committee. A survey will be conducted so that the past COA members can continue to share their expertise.

Phil Smakula- Recreation Department–The two positions in the Recreation Department have been frozen. The senior program office has a new phone number which is 240-777-4925.

Arva Jackson represented the COA at a meeting with Legal Women’s Voters; their effort is on Civic Engagement. The emphasis is on the older voters who may not have transportation to vote or that the machines may be too complicated to use. The league wants to use this to change the materials they use so that they can attract more people.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00pm

Respectfully Submitted,  
Isabelle Schoenfeld , Secretary