

**COMMISSION ON AGING
MEETING SUMMARY MINUTES**

September 18, 2014

Members Present	Members Absent
Miriam Kelty	Song Hutchins
Jerry Morenoff	Noelle Heyman
Charles Kauffman	Sally Shea
Arva Jackson	Tammy Duell
Sue Guenther	Lance Kilpatrick
Rudolph Oswald	Fred Burke
Barbara Multz	
Morton Davis	Liaisons
Jack Sprague	Phil Smakula, Department of Recreation
Sam Korper	Austin Heyman, Office of Community Partnerships
Spencer Schron	
Syed Yusuf	Guests
DaCosta Mason	Debbie Feinstein, Chief, States Attorney Office
Paul Del Ponte	Robert Hill, Deputy Chief, States Attorney Office
Revathi Vikram	John Honig
Myrna Cooperstein	Sarah Gotbaum
Judy Levy	
Grace Whipple	Staff:
Isabelle Schoenfeld	Odile Brunetto, Director Area Agency & Aging
Doris Chapman	Tremayne Jones, Office Services Coordinator

Chair, Judith Levy opened the Commission on Aging's (COA) meeting at 9:00 a.m. Judith thanked the Commission on Aging members for working on the summer studies, she also thanked Arva Jackson, Jerry Morenoff and Jack Sprague for volunteering to serve on the nominating committee.

Judy informed the Commission on Aging about the involvement the COA will have with the County Interagency Fair Housing Coordinating group to make sure that seniors are being heard on issues such as rent and discrimination.

Chair, Judy Levy introduced Debbie Feinstein, Chief, States Attorney Office and Robert Hill, Deputy Chief States Attorney Office. Debbie Feinstein joined the Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office as an Assistant State's Attorney in April of 2000. She is currently a member of the Family Violence Division, where she specializes in the prosecution of felony domestic violence, physical child abuse, and sexual child abuse.

State's Attorney John J. McCarthy is responsible for developing the Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse Task Force for Montgomery County of which Ms. Feinstein who is a member. Abuse of the elderly and vulnerable adults is a widespread problem in Montgomery County. The senior population of Montgomery County is dramatically increasing. By the year 2020, there will be an estimated 280,000 residents over the age of 65 with a growing population of seniors and vulnerable adults, we can expect cases of elder abuse to increase sharply. The Montgomery County Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse Task Force has joined forces to prevent elder abuse, raise public awareness about elder abuse, support legislative efforts to establish stronger and better laws, and aggressively investigate and prosecute those who commit elder abuse.

Ms. Feinstein spoke about CASVA (Crimes Against Seniors and Vulnerable Adults Unit). The State's Attorney Office defines crimes against seniors as any criminal act involving a victim who is 65 years of age or older. Crimes committed against seniors may be physical or financial.

Criminal activity may include:

- Financial exploitation by anyone including family members, caretakers, or fiduciaries;
- Physical abuse or neglect by a spouse, family member, or caretaker;
- Schemes targeting seniors such as confidence scams, phishing scams and investment schemes.

There are Red Flags of Abuse and they are:

Neglect

- Lack of basic hygiene, adequate food, of clean and appropriate clothing
- Home cluttered, filthy, in disrepair, or having fire and safety hazards
- Untreated pressure "bed" sore

Financial Abuse/Exploitation

- Victim suddenly lacking in amenities that victim could afford
- Victim giving uncharacteristically excessive financial reimbursement/gifts for care and companionship
- Unusual bank activity
- Change in spending habits
- Unpaid bills

Physical/Sexual Abuse

- Inadequately explained fractures, bruises, welts, cuts, sores or burns
- Unexplained sexually transmitted disease
- Insufficiently explained burns, cuts, wounds, black and blue marks, bruises or welts
- Unusual injuries
- Dirty, unshaven, unpleasant odor
- Undernourishment, dehydration
- Untreated medical condition Behavioral Signs
- Confusion, forgetfulness
- Anger
- Depression
- Fear, helplessness, shame Social Signs
- Isolated, little outside contact
- Violence or drug abuse
- Family with personal problems
- Unable to speak freely

Chair, Judy Levy introduced Robert Hill, Deputy Chief State's Attorney Office. Robert Hill addressed the Commission on Aging members on the upcoming changes in the Legislative. Mr. Hill stated that there are 22 members in the House Judiciary and 7 of the 22 will be gone when new officers take place in the new session. Mr. Hill addressed his concerns with HB 0866, a bill that would authorize the State's Attorney to file a petition to freeze assets of a defendant charged with a specified financial crime involving a vulnerable or elder adult--under specified circumstances---as well as other related authorizations. Mr. Hill stated that Democratic Kathleen Dumais, Vice Chair of House Judiciary Committee would be interested in sponsoring such a bill. Mr. Hill discussed having a Court Appointed Advocate for the elderly and vulnerable victims like CASSA. CASSA is a court appointed advocate appointed by the Circuit Court but run by volunteers. He also discussed creating a registry or background check on people who work in a nursing facility. There was hesitancy about creating a registry due to the tendency of too many registries already in place.

Brief Business Meeting:

The COA members unanimously approved minutes from June meeting.

COA ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

Treasurer's Report:

The current balance as of is \$ 1,848.94

Planning Retreat:

Judy spoke to the COA members about the success of the first Planning Retreat that was held on September 17th at the Rockville Library. Judy will meet with a workgroup and make recommendations based on what was discussed at the Planning Retreat.

Summer Studies:

The Commission on Aging will vote on the recommendations of the two summer studies that were conducted this summer.

COA member Revathi Vikram addressed the COA on behalf of COA member Noelle Heyman about the Caregiver Summer Study. The 2013 Summer Study identified the most significant challenges faced by family caregivers, educated Commission members about these challenges and developed a number of recommendations including ‘an expansive investigation by the Commission on Aging’s Health and Wellness Committee to gather information related to existing legislation, resources, and programs in order to establish a baseline of knowledge specific to this issue’. Following the 2013 Summer Study, the Health and Wellness Committee continued to focus on the caregiving issue and supported the COA recommendation to fund a Caregiver Coalition Coordinator position. It was determined, at that time that a caregiver coordinator would be better equipped to conduct an investigation and map caregiver resources.

The following recommendations were made:

Our high level recommendations:

- Montgomery County HHS approved FY15 staffing support for a Caregiver Coalition—a part time Senior Fellow (caregiver coordinator) position. HHS will recruit for this position once it is established in the County Human Resources System. While we greatly appreciate funding for the Senior Fellow position, we strongly recommend funding for a full time permanent caregiver coordinator position.
- The caregiver coordinator will share with Commissioners (for feedback and insights) plans to develop a public-private Family Caregiver Coalition or Council charter and options for creating an effective, efficient and sustainable operating infrastructure for said Coalition or Council.
- The AAA Staff or the Montgomery County Caregiver Coordinator, when hired, will investigate the possibility of working with Alzheimer’s to enhance Montgomery County caregiver support. Determine if there is an opportunity to utilize their caregiver support communications for County residents (perhaps co-opted branding on the Montgomery County website and other materials).
- The Commission on Aging should invite the CEOs of the 5 local hospitals to 1) share findings from the Stakeholder Forum and the CoA Family Caregiver Summer Studies, 2) learn about the “Community Plans” for each hospital, and 3) identify opportunities to work together to support the needs of caregivers and those for whom they care.
- The Montgomery County Caregiver Coordinator, when hired, should work with the Weinberg Foundation in developing an initiative/model for Montgomery County that would help coordinate family caregiver services and qualify for support funding from the Foundation

COA member Charles Kauffman addressed the COA members on the summer study titled: The Need to Improve Advocacy for Older Adults in Montgomery County Planning. Montgomery County's rapidly growing older adult population will soon include 20% of the County's residents. However, it is questionable whether senior needs, will receive adequate attention in the County's planning process over the next 20 years. Currently, the County's Master and Sector plans call for massive mixed-use, residential and commercial urban complexes located at highway and public transit hubs, i.e. White Flint, Westbard, Kensington, Chevy Chase Lake, and the dozen others.

The following recommendations were made:

Our high level recommendations:

- The COA should advocate for inclusion of a "Senior" Section in all Master Plans and Sector Plans.
- The COA should expand the Senior Agenda, using resources cited in this report (e.g. the World Health Organization (WHO) Checklist of Essential Features of Age Friendly Cities) and other resources. This would ensure comprehensive coverage of all the key features of an Age Friendly County and will guide the County Council, County Departments, Planners, Developers, and Advocates in making the County a more livable community for older adults
- The COA should recommend that a high-level staff position be created on the County Planning Board to advocate and promote senior issues.
- The COA should recommend the County Executive and County Council coordinate to have a representative from the planning Board on the Senior Sub-Cabinet, engaging fully as a member with senior County Department Heads.
- The COA should provide leadership and strong advocacy for older adults in the planning process by building relationships and strategic partnerships with the government, for-profits and non-profits sectors.
- The COA believes that Montgomery County should become a WHO Aged Friendly City (County) because it is a comprehensive approach to ensure that the needs of older adults and everyone else in the community are met. Therefore, COA should advocate with the County Executive/Council that a task group be formed to explore the steps and resources involved in Montgomery County joining the WHO Age Friendly Cities program.

COA FY16 priorities

Priorities must be submitted by October 7th to Mr. Leventhal's office

- Planning Board-Full time position
- Caregivers Supports-Full-time Coordinator
- Foster Care Small Group Home Providers/Payment increase Multi-year Initiative
- Pool of start up funds for Villages expenses
- Respite Care subsidy for Older Adults
- Additional Full-time positions for Police/APS/State Attorney
- Adult Day Care subsidy increases

COA committees are asked to discuss the 2 summer studies recommendations. COA members will vote on adoption of recommendations in October 2014.

Public Policy Committee Fall Legislative Breakfast-DaCosta Mason and Rudy Oswald

The Legislative Breakfast which will take place in November. No date has been set for this meeting at this time. Rudy suggested that the COA start with ideas on what they should advocate for such as legislature support for caregivers and paid sick leave for the caregivers. Chair, Judy Levy stated that the chairs from each committee should make recommendations for the legislation at their October meetings.

Committees report:

Public Policy-DaCosta Mason and Rudy Oswald: no report due to cancellation of June's meeting.

Aging in Place-Noelle Heyman and Miriam Kely

Transportation: RideOn buses now have "Connect-a-Ride" signs posted inside. Cross walks still require standardization and resolution of visibility issues. The location of the "stop" line varies, overgrown bushes impeded visibility.

Housing: Monitor the numbers of permits issued. Affordability was at top of mind. Discussion about the possibility of rehabbing current older buildings not in use for Senior housing. New England states are beginning to rehab older buildings with success. AIM is beginning to think about affordable housing for seniors. AIPC wondered about current tax incentives for developers and discussed the fact that Design for Life is a voluntary program. Emergency Preparedness was discussed in terms of fire safety in high rise buildings. HOC transition is overseen by Christopher Donald. Villages/NORCs: Pazit Aviv shared an update on her recent work: a meeting of the BCC Villages (9) last week to help Villages learn more about their neighbors and to introduce the possibility of working together to conserve resources, Health and Wellness Committee visited the Muslim Community Center and Mona's program during their meeting earlier this month, cities of Rockville, Gaithersburg and Damascus now have villages forming as well. Noted: in some culturally diverse areas the term "village" won't resonate as well as "extended family" might, advocating for availability of County space for Villages. NORCs and their needs were discussed as was outreach to NORCs to determine assistance we might provide.

Legislative/Public Policy: no funding for Community for a Lifetime. Tax relief program for seniors—what is the status? Do people need help completing the applications? Who manages this process? Also, is it time for a professional update on the Towson Study—funding would be needed, our advocacy could help.

Health and Wellness-Grace Whipple and Tammy Duell

Odile Brunetto introduced Emily Glazer who will act as the Health and Wellness Committee's staff liaison. Healthy Montgomery liaison Sam Korper updated the committee on Healthy Montgomery's behavioral health task force co-chairs have requested a COA representative to join the task force. Commission on Health liaison Marcia Pruzan updated the committee Marcia stated that Commission on Health wrote a letter of support for the COA's data task force. Continuing to focus on food insecurity and pursue accreditation for the County's health department. Sam advised that in approximately two (2) weeks a letter will be sent to key individuals/organizations including COA members requesting task force participation.

Recreation Department Update:

Presentation provided by Phil Smakula. Montgomery County Government operates five (5) senior centers and twelve (12) active aging programs. The active aging programs offer senior programs and activities two (2) days per week usually at community centers and churches. There is a strong focus on seniors during the school day. Health and wellness is the primary focus of senior centers. Partnerships have been established with all local hospitals. The hospital provides instructors and class registration assistance and the senior center or active aging program provides space and program promotion. Wide variety of activities for example, there are 120 softball teams for seniors in the County. Off-site activities can be appealing for individuals who do not want to go to a senior center. The County provides free curb-to-curb transportation if you opt to go to the senior center that is closest to your home. Plan to offer evening hours at Holiday Park Senior Center in the new fiscal year.

Challenges faced by senior centers:

1. Staffing limitations – 1 full-time director who is responsible for programming and the facility; limited part-time and supplemental staff. Not clinical staff does not complete physical or cognitive assessments.
2. Seeing high volume of individuals who need adult day care and/or more support than can be provided at a senior center
3. Group homes are dropping people off and leaving-Senior center staff has no or little information about many of these individuals. Medicaid changed group home reimbursement structure several years ago. If clients attend adult day care, the group home receives less reimbursement for the client (disincentive to refer to adult day care programs).
4. Caregivers and others are dropping people off and leaving them for extended periods of time-staff members do not know how to contact caregivers, concerns about wandering.
5. Broad client age range (55-85+ years)-if individuals can't participate in the activities, they sit in the center's lobby for long periods of time. This can create a negative "first impression" for vital older adults.
6. Senior center staff is not sure how to approach these issues/

Communications and Community Outreach-Barbara Mulitz and Reuben Rosenfeld

No report to address at this time.

Liaison reports:

Phil Smakula, Department of Recreation liaison reported that Holiday Park now has evening hours on Wednesdays, the center will remain open until 9pm. Beginning in January 2015 Department of Transportation has agreed to offer door to door service to and from Holiday Park on Wednesdays.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Myrna Cooperstein, Secretary