

**AGING IN COMMUNITY COMMITTEE
OF THE
COMMISSION ON AGING**

Date: September 13, 2022
9:30am-11:30 am

“Villages – Update of Activities in the County and Future Directions”

In Attendance: Mary Sweeney (co-chair, AIC), Wayne Berman (co-chair, AIC), Barbara Selter, Marsha Weber, Mona Grieser, Sibö Ncube, Joyce Dubow, Betsy Carrier, Eddie Rivas, Austin Heyman.

Staff: Pazit Aviv, MC AAA; Shawn Brennan, MC AAA

Guests: Sara Fought, Jewish Council for the Aging; Marcia Pruzan, Age-Friendly Montgomery;

Opening Remarks from the Co-Chairs: Wayne and Mary welcomed everyone back from the summer break and thanked Betsy Carrier and Pazit Aviv for arranging today’s meeting topic and discussion regarding Villages. Everyone had a chance to introduce themselves. Wayne and Mary then reviewed the agenda with the meeting’s featured topic on “Villages – Update of Activities in the County and Future Directions”.

Approval of the Minutes: The minutes of the June 14, 2022 meeting were approved.

PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS:

Wayne introduced Pazit and Betsy by saying that during the recent process of developing budget priorities we identified that the AIC should be the “home” for discussing issues about local Villages. Pazit Aviv and Betsy Carrier then made a presentation about local Villages, their current operations and a “hub and spoke Village model” that is being explored to support the administrative needs for many Villages. The presentation is attached.

Highlights of the presentation included the following information:

- There are currently 30 active Villages and six in development in Montgomery County.
- There is a great deal of variability among Villages, re: their size, dues structure, and whether they have staff etc.
- During the height of COVID Villages adapted to meet the needs of members and addressing issues surrounding social isolation.
- In general the local Villages have made a significant cost effective contribution to help seniors age in place.

Some of the Village founders are facing burnout and Villages rate as their most pressing concern leadership succession. To explore ways to address this issue some Villages have met with an organizational consultant and the Village coordinator to seek solutions to the problems of administration and succession. One option that has been explored that could possibly provide more administrative support is the “hub and spoke” Village model.

This Village concept is one where there is a central 501c3 Village corporation, surrounded by local Villages that provide volunteer services and events. Conceptually this model should reduce

the administrative services that spoke Villages need to perform. To gather additional information about this concept Pazit has surveyed local Villages and conducted phone interviews with the 8 hub and spoke models across the country that have been identified by the Village-to-Village network (VtV). From this initial information that has been collected, Betsy and Pazit will be analyzing what might be useful and relevant in Montgomery County and what the next steps might be in this exploration. Betsy and Pazit will be reporting back to the Committee on their finding in November or December.

Commissioners had questions about how this arrangement might work including whether spoke Villages might lose control, how would the board be structured, how many spokes could a hub support, and the role of the County Village Coordinator etc. Barbara Selter asked how the CoA could be most helpful. At this point, the concept of hub and spoke is in the early stages of exploration so it is too early to tell. The challenge will be lining up the budgeting and advocacy time lines for Villages and the CoA. At a minimum the CoA can:

- Write letters to County Council members strongly supporting the Village concept
- As part of the orientation of county council members the CoA can discuss the benefits of the Village model
- As part of the legislative briefing include mention on the Village model
- As this conversation continues we need to clarify if there is a legislative ask. This question needs to be shared with the public policy committee.

Eddie mentioned that there are some state dollars for aging and 20% have been set aside for Villages. Pazit, Betsy, and Eddie will be following-up on the status of this appropriation of dollars, including the timing, process and availability.

OTHER COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Wayne described how one of the AIC's budget items was additional support for the County Broadband office. There are three things needed to help get computers to older residents in Montgomery County:

1. Access to devices
2. Low cost internet services
3. Training and coaching

Staff reported that it was not yet known whether the County was going to get additional computers. It was suggested we follow-up on this, and learn more about the possibility of a special appropriation for contractors or staff to provide training. There was discussion as to whether this item was selected as a budget or advocacy priority for the CoA and that the rankings for budget priorities were being reviewed by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will clarify what the budget priorities are for the upcoming year. Depending on the outcome of this discussion, the issue of a special appropriation for broad band will be referred to the Public Policy Committee for follow-up.

UPCOMING MEETING: The next AIC meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 10, 2022 at 9:30 am. The focus of the meeting will be on Rental Housing in Montgomery County - status and action.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 11:05 am