

**Commission on Aging  
Minutes  
December 19, 2019**

**Location:** Tandoori Nights Restaurant, 106 Market Street, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878

**Time:** 11:30a– 1:30p

<b>Members Present</b>	<b>Alumni Members</b>
Jean Dinwiddie, Chair	Austin Heyman
Stephanie Edelstein, Vice-Chair	Isabelle Schoenfeld
Beverly Rollins, Secretary	
Revathi Vikram, Budget Finance Advisor	<b>Guests</b>
Amoke Alakoye	Elisse Barnes
Neal Brown	
Barbara Brubeck	
Amy Harbison	
Richard Jourdenais	
Miriam Kelty	<b>Liaisons</b>
Morris Klein	
Karen Maricheau	
Ruby Moone	
Edgar Rivas	<b>Staff</b>
Deborah Royster	Odile Brunetto, Department of Health & Human Services
Barbara Selter	Shawn Brennan, Department of Health & Human Services
Mary Sweeney	Tremayne Jones, Department of Health & Human Services
Tho Tran	Marcia Pruzan, Department of Health & Human Services
Marsha Weber	
Arthur Williams	
Ryan Wilson	
<b>Members Absent</b>	
Mort Faller	
Arunima Ghosh	
Nanine Meiklejohn	
Karon Phillips	
Monica Schaeffer	
Odessa Shannon	
Hillery Tsumba	
Janice Zalen	
Syed Yusuf	

## Welcome/Chair's Remarks

Chair Jean Dinwiddie welcomed all members to the CoA's holiday party.

---

## AAA Director Updates

Acting Chief Odile Brunetto delivered the following updates:

- County Executive Marc Elrich recently held a special forum for older adults at Leisure World. HHS staffer, Shawn Brennan, attended. The event marked the first time that this type of forum was held during the daytime. Several older adult attendees spoke of the benefits of the programs offered by the County's recreation department and stated that the County needs more of them. Dr. Brunetto publicly thanked Mr. Elrich for his support of the programs. He noted that he was upset that the budget for older adult programs was cut at the recreation centers. Recreation Department director, Robin Riley, also attended the daytime forum and was happy to hear all of the comments.
  - Montgomery County's Senior Center Plus program is moving to the White Oak senior center in January. It will be offered two days a week. Transportation will be provided.
  - Dr. Brunetto has been contacted by the County Mental Health Advisory Committee asking whether the CoA would like to partner with it regarding the topic of older adult suicide prevention. A number of CoA members volunteered to be ambassadors with the Advisory Committee.
  - The County Council has started a new Senior Fellows Program and is looking for retired individuals to work with the County Council members. The deadline to apply is January 3, 2020.
  - The County Recreation Department director is interested in having "one-on-one" conversations with senior center patrons and staff are working on coordinating them. Dr. Brunetto feels that these sessions should not be held until March because of the weather. CoA members may want to participate and should notify Dr. Brunetto if they do.
  - The *Older Americans Act* reauthorization is moving forward in Congress. It was recently passed by the Senate with a bigger budget. It will come up for reauthorization again in 2026.
  - December is when the CoA says goodbye to commissioners whose terms expire. The announcement for applications for new CoA members will be posted in January. Two commissioners are leaving and eight are eligible for a second term. Dr. Brunetto will notify the CoA when the announcement for applications is posted.
  - Phil Smakula of the Department of Recreation proposed a CoA tour of new senior center facilities, including the one in Wheaton. The County can arrange a bus to take the CoA members to the different facilities. The question was raised on whether one of the CoA meetings could be held at the Wheaton Center and Chair Dinwiddie responded that she will put the question on the CoA meeting agenda to be discussed at its January meeting.
-

## **Commission on Aging Business**

### ***Introduction of 2020 Officers***

Chair Dinwiddie reported that the CoA's officers for 2020 are:

Chair: Jean Dinwiddie

Vice Chair: Amoke Alakoye

Secretary: Beverly Rollins

Treasurer: Ryan Wilson

Health and Wellness Committee co-chairs: Neal Brown and Marsha Weber

Aging in Community Committee co-chairs: Nanine Meiklejohn and Monica Schaeffer

Public Policy Committee co-chairs: Stephanie Edelstein and Ryan Wilson

### ***Approval of November CoA minutes***

CoA members approved the November minutes.

### ***Budget and Finance Report***

Commissioner Vikram reported that at the end of November the CoA's treasury had a balance of \$5,586.31. Chair Dinwiddie noted that the Executive Committee voted to use money in the CoA's treasury to cover any shortfall arising from the CoA's holiday party.

### ***Report on December 6 Meeting with Director of Montgomery County's Public Information Office***

Communications Task Force Co-Chair Amy Harbison reported that a few CoA members had a recent meeting with Barry Hudson, Director of Montgomery County's Public Information Office. During the meeting the members looked at marketing procedures aimed at older adults, which was helpful to the PIO. The meeting helped that office to think about older adults and how they live in different situations. Commissioner Harbison noted, however, that the CoA still needs to figure out how best to work with the PIO and how to create a strategic plan for reaching older adults. The CoA needs to make sure that the messages are furthering the CoA's mission. CoA members will hold another meeting with the PIO at the end of January. That office has agreed to help with the CoA's public forum in March.

### ***Volunteers Needed***

Chair Dinwiddie noted that CoA volunteers are needed for the following:

**2020 Public Forum.** CoA members are to contact Chair Dinwiddie if they wish to volunteer to help with the forum. The topic will be racial justice and social equity and it will be held on March 18 in Gaithersburg. Commissioners Arthur Williams and Barbara Selter volunteered to serve on the planning committee.

**Interview Panel.** Commissioners Miriam Kelty, Marsha Weber, Karen Maricheau, and Deborah Royster agreed to serve on the interview panel of CoA applicants.

**Liaisons to the County Mental Health Advisory Committee Suicide Prevention Group.** Commissioners Barbara Brubeck, Edgar Rivas, and Arunima Ghosh volunteered to work as liaisons.

### ***Speakers for 2020***

- January 23, 2020: Robin Riley, Recreation Department Director
- February 27, 2020: Thrive Montgomery 2050
- March 26, 2020: Councilmember Will Jawando
- April 23, 2020: Jack VanDerhei, Social Security Trust Fund

Dr. Brunetto suggested that the CoA may want to invite HHS staffer, Lylie Fisher, to speak at its May meeting to discuss caregiving issues.

### ***Recognition of Retiring Commissioners***

Chair Dinwiddie noted that two CoA members are retiring at the end of December: Syed Yusuf and Revathi Vikram. Chair Dinwiddie and Dr. Brunetto presented Commissioner Vikram with a certificate of appreciation for her service and dedication, and a certificate will be mailed to Commissioner Yusuf who could not be present at the meeting.

### **Committee Reports**

#### ***Aging in Community***

Committee member Dick Jourdenais reported that committee members brainstormed about a variety of issues at their last meeting. Members agreed that they do not need to take further action on the food security issue, and they are continuing to look at the matter of affordable housing. The committee recently received an update from the County marketing manager about the Ride Flex program, noting that ridership is increasing every month and there are plans to make the program more readily available. Committee members are also considering the topic of senior employment, especially as it relates to age discrimination.

#### ***Health & Wellness***

Committee co-chair Neal Brown reported that the committee is now in a learning process around the issue of hearing impairment and how it affects social isolation. Audiologist David Barwell spoke at the committee's last meeting. Committee members are scheduled to meet with representatives from the Hearing Loss Association of America on January 7, and in February they will meet with representatives from the Johns Hopkins' research organization, Access HEARS.

### ***Public Policy***

Commissioner Ryan Wilson reported that at the last committee meeting the members discussed the CoA's November Legislative Breakfast, recent CoA letters to legislators, and issues expected to be addressed during the upcoming Maryland General Assembly session.

### **Adjourn for Holiday Luncheon**