

MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
COMMISSION ON AGING  
MEETING SUMMARY MINUTES

January 24, 2019

<b>Members Present</b>	<b>Members Absent</b>
Amy Harbison	Miriam Kelty
Jean Dinwiddie	Karen Maricheau
Revathi Vikram	Ryan Wilson
Barbara Brubeck	Stephanie Edelstein
Neal Brown	Monica Schaeffer
Beverly Rollins	Syed Yusuf
Phyllis Rand	
Alan Kaplan	
Tho Tran	<b>Alumni Members</b>
Mort Faller	Charles Kauffman
Marsha Weber	Isabelle Schoenfeld
Ruby Moone	
Hillery Tumba	<b>Guests</b>
Richard Jourdenais	Stacy Spann, Executive Director, Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County
Amoke Alakoye	Matthew Losak, Executive Director, Montgomery County Renters Alliance
Nanine Meiklejohn	
Deborah Royster	<b>Liaisons</b>
	Marcia Pruzan, Senior Age Friendly Fellow
	<b>Staff</b>
	Shawn Brennan, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
	Tremayne Jones, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services

**Welcome and Introductions.** Chair Jean Dinwiddie led self-introductions of attendees and welcomed guest speakers, Stacy Spann and Matthew Losak.

**Mr. Stacy Spann, Executive Director of the Housing Opportunities Commission (HoC) of Montgomery County**

Mr. Spann joined Montgomery County's HOC in February 2012. Prior to that, he was the Executive Director of the Howard County Housing Authority in Columbia, Maryland. He drafted and implemented Howard County's Affordable Housing Strategic Plan which doubled the size of the County's housing unit portfolio and engineered the County's first mixed income development. Mr. Spann also served as the Assistant Commissioner of Development Finance in Baltimore from 2004 –2006 where he managed and oversaw 5 offices, including the Community Development Block Grant, the Office of Home Ownership, and the Office of Project Finance.

Mr. Spann holds a BA degree in Business Administration from Morehouse College and a Master of Public Administration in Advanced Management and Finance from the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs.

Mr. Spann stated that the HOC uses a mixed model for affordable housing and receives only a small percentage (4 percent) of its \$250 million budget from Montgomery County. The HOC measures demand by its waitlist; residents apply for a housing choice voucher and then their name is placed on it. The waitlist now holds the names of over 37,000 individuals, and a substantial number of those persons do not live in Montgomery County (only about 20,000 of those persons actually qualify). The HOC directly manages about 7,000 housing choice vouchers and is estimated to be an \$80 million-dollar program. About 94 percent of those vouchers go to local landlords.

Mr. Spann noted that Montgomery County does not offer enough affordable housing; however, its program is still considered one of the best in the country. Landlords cannot discriminate against individuals who present the vouchers because the County stands behind them. The County does not use traditional public housing and is planning to build 2 new facilities in the near future.

The HOC owns all of its properties and manages some of them, although it is getting out of the management business. Over the last 4 years it has started partnering with contractors to develop several new properties. This development process can take up to 2.5 years.

**Matt Losak, Executive Director, Montgomery County Renters Alliance**

Mr. Losak has over 25 years of community activism. Most recently, his work has focused on building an active and organized voice for renters in Montgomery County, including the County's Tenants Work Group and establishing the Montgomery County Renters

Alliance. The Alliance is the first non-profit organization in the County and the State that is dedicated exclusively to advancing renters' rights and security. Previously, Mr. Losak worked with the AFL-CIO, the U.S. Department of Labor, the Peace Corps, and the White House. The Renters Alliance advocates for policies that increase rental housing affordability, stability, and quality; and it builds community within apartment complexes.

Mr. Losak stated the number of renters in Montgomery County is growing. In 2007 about 23 percent of the population rented their living quarters, today that number is about 40 percent. There is a crisis in the availability of affordable housing and because of this crisis there is a major trajectory of older adults entering rental housing; more and more older adults are becoming severely cost-burdened because of the cost of housing. Older women are especially vulnerable because they usually have less income and resources than older men.

Mr. Losak asked the CoA to support MC 22-19, the "Just Cause Eviction Law." He noted that, among other things, it would stabilize communities by not allowing landlords to not renew leases without just cause. In addition, older adults would be less likely to face the dilemma of having to find new housing after several years of residence because a lease was not renewed.

**AAA updates.** HHS staff member, Shawn Brennan, provided the following updates:

- Proposed budget cuts are pending the County Council's approval. The salary subsidy for adult daycare staff will be delayed until contracts are in place in FY19.
- Between FY18 and FY19 the Adult Protective Services (APS) caseload is up 20 percent with regard to financial exploitation and senior abuse. Other staff within DHS are assisting with APS investigations.
- Two replacement long-term care ombudsman positions have been filled; one by an individual who previously worked in the program and the other by an individual who was previously working part-time and has now been converted to full-time. There is still a part-time position available.
- For the first time, aging and disability service items made it to the County's legislative priorities list, including the developmental disabilities supplement and the County's desire to seek Medicaid waiver funds.

## **CoA Business**

**Approval of Minutes.** The minutes from the December 2018 CoA meeting were approved unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report.** Commissioner Vikram reported the CoA account has a balance of \$5,412.31.

**FY20 County Executive January budget forums.** Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich will hold 5 budget forums to seek input from residents regarding fiscal year 2020 operating budget priorities. The forums will take place in different locations throughout Montgomery County. CoA member, Stephanie Edelstein, spoke at one in Silver Spring on January 16, and briefly summarized the CoA's budget priorities. The next forum will take place on Thursday, January 31, 7 p.m., at the Black Rock Center for the Arts located at 12901 Town Commons Drive in Germantown. County Executive Elrich will announce his recommended FY20 operating budget on March 15.

**CoA Committee Co-chairs.** The following commissioners will chair the CoA sub-committees:

- Aging in Community–Nanine Meiklejohn and Monica Schaeffer
- Communications and Community Outreach–Hillery Tsumba and Amy Harbison
- Health and Wellness–Alan Kaplan and Neal Brown
- Public Policy–Mort Faller and Ryan Wilson

**Public Forum Meeting.** The CoA will hold its annual public forum on March 19, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Silver Spring Civic Building. This year's topic is older adults in the County's diverse racial, ethnic, and LGBTQ communities. The public is invited to hear from County Executive Elrich and speak with leaders representing a number of Montgomery County's communities.

**Proposed work plan for CoA studies.** During the months of January and February each committee will decide on its focus, and by June issue a 1-2-page report to the full CoA. Once the reports have been submitted CoA members will decide whether more research is needed on that topic. A goal is to determine whether the CoA could develop a general topic it can focus on that all of its committees can contribute to. A vote was taken and a unanimous decision was reached to adopt this work plan.

**CoA annual report.** Alumni Commissioner Isabelle Schoenfeld and Commissioner Edelstein are working on the 2018 annual report and hope to have it completed by February 28.

**Neal Potter Award judges.** Commissioners Miriam Kelty, Phyllis Rand and Karen Maricheau have volunteered to serve as judges for the Neal Potter Award.

**Review of the CoA brochure.** Each committee will review the CoA brochure and give comments for suggested revisions. Jean Dinwiddie will take the lead on this project.

**Meetings with Council Members to introduce the CoA and highlight the CoA briefing book.** The briefing book has been sent to all Council members and to the County Executive with a copy of the letter that was sent to Council member George Leventhal outlining the CoA's FY20 priorities. The CoA chair's plan is to request meetings with County Executive Elrich, Council Chair Nancy Navarro, and Special Assistant to the County Executive, Chuck Short. CoA members interested in visiting with their Council member were encouraged to do so (and to inform the CoA chair). The CoA Executive Committee has drafted language that can be used in an email meeting request.

**New Commissioner Interviewing Committee.** Commissioners Alakoye, Kaplan, and Edelstein have volunteered to serve on the committee that will interview prospective new CoA members.

### **Committee Reports**

- *Aging in Community*–The committee recently heard presentations from representatives from the County government and several non-profit organizations, including the Montgomery County Food Council. The County congregate meal program has expanded from 10 sites to 40 but still only has 3 full-time staff. The program collects a lot of data, but it lacks the staff capacity to evaluate the data. According to the HHS program manager for Food Security, the most at-risk group includes seniors. HHS trains volunteers to help individuals prepare SNAP applications and coordinate with the Food Council. More outreach is needed to educate the community on services available.
- *Health and Wellness*–The committee is preparing a report on the needs of older adults who do not qualify for Medicaid but cannot afford necessary services, including Assisted Living, and is looking at ways to get more money for existing programs, more services, and eliminating waiting lists. The committee should have a full report by March that will further define the population and present some additional options for the “gap” population. The committee's next step is to come up with recommendations for this “gap.”
- *Public Policy*–The committee is looking into a number of items including:
  - Following the status of the Transportation Services Improvement Fund bill in the County Council.
  - Continuing to pursue the proposal for a State-wide Association of

Maryland Commission on Aging (AMCOA). The committee recently received a positive response from the City of Baltimore's Commission on Aging. In addition, it has received a few other replies to the letter that it sent to other CoA's throughout the State and most of them have expressed interest in the idea. Some, however, including Howard County's CoA, are prohibited from lobbying without getting prior approval from their County government.

- Researching the Senior Scams Prevention Act (S. 3522), a bill introduced in the U.S. Senate. This Act would establish a Senior Scams Prevention Advisory Council to create materials to educate employees of retailers, financial-service companies, and wire-transfer companies on how to identify and prevent scams that affect seniors.
- Monitoring bills filed in the General Assembly and identifying those that impact older adults in the County and on which the Commission would want to comment.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by  
Beverly Rollins, Secretary