

**Commission on Aging
Minutes
November 21, 2019**

Location: North Potomac Community Center, 13850 Travilah Road, Rockville Maryland

Time: 9:15 am– 12:00 pm

Members Present	Alumni Members
Jean Dinwiddie, Chair	Pat Lesnick
Stephanie Edelstein, Vice-Chair	Isabelle Schoenfeld
Beverly Rollins, Secretary	
Revathi Vikram, Budget Finance Advisor	Guests
Amoke Alakoye	Councilmember Evan Glass
Neal Brown	Secretary Rona Kramer
Barbara Brubeck	David Engel
Mort Faller	Elisse Barnes
Richard Jourdenais	
Miriam Kelty	Liaisons
Morris Klein	Phil Smakula, Department of Recreation
Ruby Moone	Karen Tan, Asian American Health Initiative
Karon Phillips	
Edgar Rivas	Staff
Deborah Royster	Odile Brunetto, Department of Health & Human Services
Monica Schaeffer	Pazit Aviv, Department of Health & Human Services
Barbara Selter	Tremayne Jones, Department of Health & Human Services
Mary Sweeney	Marcia Pruzan, Department of Health & Human Services
Marsha Weber	
Arthur Williams	
Ryan Wilson	
Members Absent	
Arunima Ghosh	
Amy Harbison	
Odessa Shannon	
Janice Zalen	
Syed Yusuf	

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Jean Dinwiddie welcomed attendees and guest speakers Council member Evan Glass and Rona Kramer, Maryland Secretary of Aging.

Speaker

Councilmember Glass, has been fighting for the people of Montgomery County for more than 15 years. During that time, he has engaged with all levels of the county, from organizing neighborhood associations and serving as non-profit leader to advocating for small-business growth and championing effective government.

When Evan saw that thousands of his neighbors were walking to the Metro on unsafe sidewalks and crosswalks, he helped form the South Silver Spring Neighborhood Association. He successfully advocated for new infrastructure and pedestrian safety initiatives during his six years as president.

Council member Glass was concerned that developers were building the county's downtown areas without enough green space and that Pepco was aggressively cutting down trees, so he helped found Conservation Montgomery. As a founding board member, he successfully fought for passage of county-wide environmental regulations that protect the tree canopy and expand green spaces throughout Montgomery County.

Council member Glass commitment to his community and strong work ethic comes from his childhood. Raised in a household by a single mother who worked two jobs to provide for her family, Evan saw how hard his mother struggled. He quickly learned that women weren't always treated fairly or given the opportunities they deserve. That experience continues to inform his views on the need for social justice today.

Council Member Glass is the lead sponsor of Bill 34-19, the Taxation - *Development Impact Taxes - Affordable Housing-Housing Impact Fairness Act*. The bill was introduced on October 15, 2019 and a public hearing is tentatively scheduled for December 3, 2019 at 7:30p The bill would alter the applicability of the development impact tax for public school improvements; establish an excise tax on certain demolitions and renovations of single-family homes; and specify the use of certain tax revenues for affordable housing initiatives. The bill closes a loophole in the collection of impact fees so that all new housing structures will contribute to the growing infrastructure needs, specifically increasing school capacity and providing more resources for affordable housing programs.

Council member Glass addressed the audience on the passage of the County's Racial Equity Bill that passed unanimously on November 19, 2019. Council President Nancy Navarro spent more than a year crafting the legislation. The bill will establish a countywide racial equity program by mandating equity impact statements for all new bills and budget measures. It will also require county offices to submit plans for reducing inequality and create a new Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice within the executive branch. The bill mandates racial equity training for all county employees and establishes an advisory committee with seven county representatives and eight public members. The county has public members on more than two dozen additional boards and commissions, many of which specifically direct that members should not receive compensation. Council Member Craig Rice plans to pursue legislation to require funding for all public committee members, leveling the field for other volunteers.

The bill was amended Tuesday to require that public members of the racial equity advisory committee live in Montgomery County — one of several last-minute changes to legislation that President Navarro described as an "instrument" for systematically eliminating deep-rooted inequalities.

The most significant amendments broadened the bill to include equity initiatives prioritized by other council members. Councilmember Rice, who serves on the council's Health and Human Services committee, amended the definition of social justice to include freedom from health disparities — a move President Navarro said would appease community advocates who felt health was not fully addressed in the bill.

Council Member Evan Glass, the first openly gay member of the County Council, also broadened the definition of social justice to cover “sex, including on the basis of gender identity or orientation,” at the urging of several local LGBTQ advocates.

The U.S. Supreme Court is considering whether the pivotal Civil Rights Act of 1964 — which outlaws discrimination based on race, religion, national origin and sex — protects the rights of gay and transgender citizens. The lack of clarity in the word “sex” has led to arguments on whether it can be interpreted to include sexual orientation and gender identity — an internal sense of gender which, for trans people, often does not match the gender they were assigned at birth.

The final bill spans a dozen pages and directs legislators to consider racial equity and social justice at almost every level of government. But local advocacy groups, who heavily influenced the final version of the legislation, still worry that the policy lacks teeth to affect lasting change.

The new bill was influenced by similar policies across the country, including in nearby jurisdictions such as Fairfax County, Va., where leaders adopted their own social and racial equity plan in 2017.

A recent budget analysis projected that the new Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice would cost roughly \$1.9 million over the next six years. The full economic impact of the bill has yet to be calculated by the county’s Office of Legislative Oversight.

Councilmember Glass has also participated or sponsored the following:

- **Equity**—Sponsored the Montgomery County Pay Equity Act, banning the County from requesting a job applicant’s salary history. Equal work deserves equal pay.
- **Transportation**—Led the effort to expand the Kids Ride Free Program to provide transportation every day of the week at all hours of the day for students under the age of 18.
- **Environment**—Supports the implementation of the Climate Mobilization Plan.
- Served as founding member of Conservation Montgomery, an organization dedicated to the creation of urban green spaces.
- **Homelessness**—Secured additional funding for Progress Place, a heavily used shelter in the county.
- Participated in the annual Point in Time homeless count as part of a larger effort to eradicate incidences of homelessness in Montgomery County.
- **LGBTQ**—Launched a series of Pride events all over the county for the first time in county history.
- Is working to ensure the Montgomery County Police Department equally protects all members of our society including LGBTQ+ residents.
- Hosted the Council’s first annual International Transgender Day of Visibility.

Speaker

Rona Kramer, Secretary of Department of Aging is a lifelong resident of Montgomery County. Secretary Kramer was elected to the Maryland State Senate, representing District 14, Montgomery County in November 2002 and served for eight years. In January 2015, Secretary Kramer was appointed by Governor Larry Hogan to the position of Secretary of the Maryland Department of Aging.

Secretary Kramer addressed the audience on Maryland Senior Call Check Program. Maryland is the first state in the county to start a free, opt-in telephonic service to check on Maryland’s older residents, all across the state. This free service will place an automated daily call to older residents at a regularly scheduled time. If the call is not picked up after three attempts, the service will call an alternate person

on the older person behalf to check on them. To qualify for program service the older resident must be 65+ and have an active landline phone or cell phone. For more information on how to sign up please visit aging.maryland.gov or contact 1-866-502-0560.

Secretary Kramer also addressed Community for Life and Maryland Assistive Technology Equipment Reuse to the audience. The Maryland Community for Life (CFL) is a creative and unique program that provides a package of services for homeowners and renters. Developed for older adults living independently in their own homes, the Maryland Community for Life program delivers key services designed to navigate predictable home maintenance, transportation, and community access needs in a cost-effective and supportive manner.

For a monthly fee, members receive, at a minimum, the following services:

1. Basic home repair and maintenance by a community "Handyman", a list of vetted contractors, and contract review
2. Transportation trips
3. Regular contact with a "Service Navigator" to help coordinate access to services and to assist with any needs that may arise

The Maryland Assistive Technology Equipment Reuse (MATR) is a project in partnership with the MD Technology Assistance Program (MDTAP). MD Tap is a program of the Maryland Department of Disabilities that allows for consumers to see and try the latest technologies. The Maryland Technology Assistance Program (MDTAP) is a program of the Maryland Department of Disabilities. The mission is to enhance the lives of all Marylanders with disabilities, older Marylanders and their families by helping support access to assistive technology (AT) devices and services that may not be covered by insurance companies or for those who cannot afford to purchase.

AAA Director Updates

Dr. Odile Brunetto, Acting Chief, Aging and Disability Services provided the following updates:

- The Montgomery County Council unanimously approved pulling \$203,484 from cash reserves to fund supplemental senior citizen programming at the Wheaton Library and Community Recreation Center. The appropriation was introduced this month by Council President Nancy Navarro, who described the services as "vital" to vulnerable seniors in the county. With the funding, the County Recreation Department can hire a new coordinator for senior programming and add variety of activities.
- Germantown Community Recreation Center will begin offering lunch in January 2020. The menu will include vegetarian lunches.
- The County Executive will hold a budget forum at Leisure World n December 9th at 1:30pm. This forum is open to the public.

Commission on Aging Business

Approval of October 2019 COA minutes were unanimously approved.

Budget Report Commissioner Revathi Vikram reported the COA currently has a budget of \$5,059.31.

Upcoming Events

November 22, 2019, meeting with Human Resource Director Darryl Gorman.

December 6, 2019, second meeting with Public Information Office Director Barry Hudson.

December 19, 2019 the Commission on Aging December meeting will take place at Tandoori Nights in Kentland at 11:00 am followed by the Holiday Luncheon.

“Save the Date” on March 18, 2020 there will be a Public Forum more details to come at a later time.

Committee Reports

Aging in Community–Monica reported on Bill 34-19 Housing Impact Fairness Act. Guest speaker Leslie Marks spoke to the committee stating that according to the Council of Governments, the County needs 23,100 low-cost housing units by 2030. The Bill is aimed at deriving revenue for new school construction (from impacting taxes) and affordable housing (for exercise taxes) by charging an impact fee on all newly rebuilt single family homes-also known as “tear downs.”

Monica discussed the newly created MPDU Work Group by DHCA and Montgomery county Planning Board. The purpose of the work group is to explore how to implement the MPDU law in new senior communities that provide services in addition to housing. The challenge is that a senior may qualify for an affordable unit under the MPDU law but is unable to afford to pay for the services that are part of the community services and amenities.

Guest speaker Jim Stowe, Director, Montgomery County Office of Human Rights attended November’s Aging in Place meeting and spoke to the audience on Age discrimination and senior employment. Mr. Stowe provided general information to the audience on OHR and its role in combating age discrimination

Health & Wellness–Neal reported on the “Senior Gap” document and the list of resources that was presented to the legislators at the Legislative Breakfast on November 14th.

Public Policy–Mort reported on the outcome of the Legislative Breakfast

Meeting Adjourned at 12:00pm