

**Commission on Aging
Meeting Minutes
January 23, 2020**

Location: North Potomac Recreation Center, 13850 Travilah Road, Rockville, MD

Time: 9:45a – 12:15p

Members Present	Alumni Members
Jean Dinwiddie, Chair	Charles Kauffman
Amoke Alakoye, Vice-Chair	
Beverly Rollins, Secretary	Guests
Stephanie Edelstein	David Engel
Mort Faller	Seda Gelenian
Richard Jourdenais	
Miriam Kelty	Liaisons
Morris Klein	Denise Israel, Department of Transportation
Karen Maricheau	Jim Resnick, MCFRS
Ruby Moone	Robin Riley, Department of Recreation
Edgar Rivas	Phil Smakula, Department of Recreation
Monica Schaeffer	
Mary Sweeney	
	Staff
Members Absent	Odile Brunetto, Department of Health & Human Services
Neal Brown	Tremayne Jones, Department of Health & Human Services
Barbara Brubeck	Marcia Pruzan, Department of Health & Human Services
Arunima Ghosh	
Amy Harbison	
Nanine Meiklejohn	
Karon Phillips	
Deborah Royster	
Barbara Selzer	
Tho Tran	
Hillery Tsumba	
Marsha Weber	
Ryan Wilson	
Arthur Williams	
Janice Zalen	

Welcome

Chair Jean Dinwiddie welcomed everyone and led the introduction of the meeting attendees.

Discussion with Recreation Director, Robin Riley

Recreation Department Director, Robin Riley, has been with the Recreation Department for 39 years. She would like the Department to reach out to different groups much like the CoA does and work to help older adults in the community. The Department's current total staff for the older adult programs is 12.

The Department needs advocates for its older adult programs so that the County Council will provide enough funding for those programs. The County's demands are shifting and the Recreation Department's older adult activities do not seem to be considered a critical element in helping to address them. As an example, Director Riley discussed the fact that, during the summer, school facilities are not available and thus older adult programs at the County's recreation centers are suspended so that programs for school age children can be held instead.

The Department is working to address a number of the issues facing the older adult programs. For one, staff are meeting with school officials to work creatively and collaboratively to make Department facilities available for the older adult activities during the summer. In addition, staff are working with organizations around the County, including representatives from the Villages, to see how they can partner to facilitate these programs. Director Riley commented that more senior programs and housing are becoming available.

Phil Smakula of the Recreation Department stated that the Wheaton recreation center has 50,000 visitors a month and is seeing a growing number of older adults with disabilities. There are no good programs or facilities at the senior centers, however, to work with these individuals. The County needs to think about this. The Department needs more programs like Senior Center Plus and it needs to work more with the Commission for People with Disabilities. There is one staff person for 50-200 individuals at the senior centers. With those numbers the Department cannot provide the one-on-one service that many individuals need. And there will soon be a larger population of older adults with disabilities.

He noted that the senior center directors do a great job of securing and coordinating volunteers, and the Department works closely with the County's volunteer center. It also tries to get individuals to volunteer who may be suffering from social isolation or have other needs. In addition, the Department has a couple of intergenerational programs. It is moving toward a blended approach at the new Wheaton center — older adults working with tiny tots.

Director Riley commented that the County has many more older adults who participate in Recreation Department activities than just the individuals who go to the senior centers. The Departments' adult sports programs, such as the Senior Olympics, have many senior participants. The recreation centers offer about 60 hours of availability a week, and this does not include private rentals. The Department's seasonal budget is about \$60,000 which is not a lot. The budget for plantings and keeping pools up, etc. is about \$900,000. That, also, is not a lot.

AAA Director Updates

HHS Director Odile Brunetto provided the following updates:

- The Social Security Administration will celebrate its 85th anniversary with an event at the Silver Spring Civic Center on May 11, 11a-2p. The event, in partnership with Montgomery County, will honor County residents age 100 and older.
- Two new senior lunch sites opened this week: Germantown (45 enrollees so far) and Wheaton (15 enrollees so far). The sites are under the Recreation Department's jurisdiction and the one in Germantown will offer lunches three days a week starting in February and the Wheaton site will offer them two days a week.
- The Wheaton Community Center grand opening was held on January 22, 2020.
- In his January 15 State of the County address, County Executive Elrich twice mentioned his aim to work on issues of importance to older adults.
- The deadline for applications to the Racial Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee is January 31, 2020.
- The deadline for applications to be appointed to the CoA in 2020 is January 20. There are currently three open slots on the Commission.
- Montgomery Planning's Thrive Montgomery 2050 is hosting the following event hearings: Transportation and the Economy (February 11) and Housing (March 3). The hearings will be held 6p-7:30p at the Parks and Planning Commission.
- Governor Hogan released his budget on January 15, 2020. There are a few specific concerns that will affect older adults such as Medicaid cuts.
- On January 12, Dr. Brunetto spoke to the Up-county Citizens Advisory Board about the CoA and also about services provided by HHS's Department of Aging and Disability Services. The Board plans to write a letter to the County Executive to support the building of a VA facility in Rockville; to urge him to convene a Senior Summit; to request demographic data on older adults in the Up-county area; and to request more opportunities for Montgomery College internships in the County.
- The County Council will hold a hearing on January 28 to discuss operating guidelines for the FY21 budget process.
- The recreation center listening sessions that are being convened by the Recreation Department have not been as well-attended as hoped, so staff are planning to revamp them.
- The Age-Friendly Montgomery Advisory Group met on January 22, 2020. A report on the Age-Friendly Montgomery initiative will be issued in a few months.
- Dr. Brunetto stated that, because most traffic fatalities in Montgomery County in the past year have involved seniors, the CoA may want to consider a project to study this issue.

Liaison Updates

Jim Resnick of Training Outreach reported on a new pilot initiative, the Alternate Destination Program, that the County EMS vehicles are conducting. Because the County's hospitals' emergency departments are overwhelmed and emergency calls are taking a long time, EMS staff, after evaluating the patient, will decide on whether the patient can be transported to a non-

traditional facility such as a subacute medical center instead of a hospital emergency department. Another initiative that the County is piloting is taking patients to a triage area in the emergency department instead of to the back of that department where they are usually taken.

Charles Kauffman, CoA Alumni, addressed the meeting and reminded CoA members that after they complete their terms they can join the CoA alumni group.

Phil Smakula of the Department of Recreation reported that a center director has been hired at the new Wheaton recreation center and at the Schweinhaut senior center. The Department is now conducting interviews for a recreation coordinator at Schweinhaut. Recreation Director Riley added that the Department has asked for a budget enhancement to allow for Friday transportation to the County senior centers.

Denise Israel of the Department of Transportation reported that \$693,000 was awarded by the County Council to use for special “travel training safety programs.” Buses will be outfitted for these programs, including a Ride On bus. The programs will be geared for training individuals on how to transport disabled and older individuals. Ms. Israel also reported that the Ride On Demand program is going well.

Senior Fellow, Marcia Pruzan, reported on the Age-Friendly Montgomery initiative, reiterating that all of the advisory groups have provided their input and that a report is almost ready for the HHS Director’s review.

Commission on Aging Business

Approval of December CoA Minutes

Because not enough CoA members were present to constitute a quorum, Chair Dinwiddie tabled the vote on the December CoA meeting minutes until the February CoA meeting.

Budget Report

In Budget Officer, Ryan Wilson’s, absence, Chair Dinwiddie reported that, as of December 31, there was \$5,455.31 in the CoA’s treasury. Seventy-nine dollars was recently used to help fund the CoA’s holiday party.

CoA Meeting Attendance Policy

Director Brunetto reminded CoA members that if they have three unexcused meeting absences within a 12 month period they can be dismissed from the Commission. She will be sending notices to those Commissioners who are in jeopardy of violating the attendance policy. Chair Dinwiddie, also reminded members that all Montgomery County Commission meetings, including the CoA Executive meetings are subject to the *Maryland Open Meetings Act*.

June and July Meetings

The June, 2020 CoA meeting has been changed to June 11, 2020. This meeting will provide an opportunity for Commissioners to hear from County departments and Council members about their budget needs and priorities. A special CoA meeting will be held on July 9, 2020 to allow the CoA to set its priorities for the County's FY22 budget.

Vote on Holding Meeting at Wheaton Recreation Center

Because not enough CoA members were present to constitute a quorum, Chair Dinwiddie tabled the vote on whether to hold a CoA meeting at the Wheaton Recreation Center until the February CoA meeting.

Council Session on Suicide Prevention January 27 at 2p

A number of CoA members plan to attend this session.

Neal Potter Awards

This year's CoA's Neal Potter Awards judges will be Dick Jourdenais, Miriam Kelty, and Karon Phillips.

Interviews for New Commissioners

The interviews for new CoA Commissioners will probably take place in late February or early March, 2020. The interview team will include Marsha Weber, Miriam Kelty, Barbara Selter, Deborah Royster and Karen Maricheau.

March 18, 2020 Public Forum—Save the Date

The theme of this year's public forum is "Racial Equity & Social Justice." The Planning Committee members are Eddie Rivas, Deborah Royster, Amy Harbison, Amoke Alakoye, Hillery Tsumba, Arthur Williams, Arunima Ghosh, Mary Sweeney, Karen Maricheau, Barbara Selter, Tho Tran, and Beverly Rollins. It will be held on March 18, 2020 at the Activity Center at Bohrer Park in Gaithersburg from 10a-2p.

Upcoming CoA Meetings

Topics and confirmed speakers:

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- February 27: Thrive Montgomery 2050 and Nathaniel Massaquoi, Census 2020
 - March 26: Councilmember Will Jawando
 - April 23: Jack VanDerhei, Status of the Social Security Trust Fund
 - May 28: Lylie Fisher, Caregiver Issues
 - June 11: County Council President, Sidney Katz; Rich Madaleno, Office of Management and Budget, and Linda McMillian, Senior Legislative Analyst, Montgomery County Council; FY21 Budget Priorities

Committee Reports

Aging in Community

Co-chair Monica Schaeffer reported that the committee will focus on two areas in 2020: housing affordability and older adult employment. The topic for the January meeting was Affordable/Accessible Intergenerational Housing Models. The next committee meeting will be held on Friday, February 14, 9:30a-11:30a at the Rockville Library, 3rd floor. Committee members will look at the Senior Fellows program and how it can be updated and refreshed.

Health and Wellness

David Engle, a guest on the committee, reported that at the January meeting the committee continued its focus on hearing loss and social isolation. The speaker was Lise Hamlin, from the Hearing Loss Association of America in Bethesda. The next Health and Wellness Committee meeting is on Friday, February 7, 2020. The speaker will be Carrie L. Nieman, MD, PhD, from Johns Hopkins University, the co-founder of Access HEARS. Members will discuss affordable and accessible hearing devices for older adults.

Public Policy

Co-chair, Stephanie Edelstein, reported that the committee is beginning to monitor bills filed in the State General Assembly. To date, 332 bills have been filed in the Senate and 352 in the House. A couple of those bills will affect Montgomery County including bills regarding: “Just Cause” evictions; emotional and pet abuse in the elder abuse guidelines; the time the State can make a claim against an estate for unpaid bills; and a property tax credit for older adults who volunteer in schools or nonprofit organizations. At the County level, the committee continues to follow up on the Transportation Services Improvement Fund. In addition, committee members drafted and sent a letter to the Rockville Mayor and City Council (with Executive Committee approval) in support of a donation of 25 acres on which to develop a VA nursing home.

Adjourn