

Commission of Aging

April 22, 2021

9:30 am – 12:00 pm

Virtual via Zoom

Members Present

Barbara Selter, Chair
Edgar Rivas, Vice Chair
Janice Zalen, Secretary
Richard Jourdenais, Budget Officer
Jean Dinwiddie, Past Chair
Wayne Berman
Neal Brown
Joyce Dubow
Arunima Ghosh
Miriam Kelty
Morris Klein
Maritza Rivera
Beverly Rollins
Monica Schaeffer
Ann M. Serafenas
Katie Smith
Marsha Weber
Arthur Williams
Ryan Wilson

Members Absent

Nanine Meiklejohn
Ruby Moone
Karon Phillips
Hillery Tsumba
Tho Tran

Alumni Members

Stephanie Edelstein
Austin Heyman
Chuck Kaufman

Liaisons

David Engel, GROWS
Monique Gardner, African-Amer. Health.
Denise Israel, MC DOT
Sabah Jamal, Guest
Lori Marks, Link Generations
Amos Matthews; Greater Stonegate Village
Kendell Mathews; Greater Stonegate Village
Leslie McMaster, Guest

Stephanie Moore, MC HOC

Patrice McGhee Director, AAA

Marcia Pruzan, Age-Friendly MC

Shawn Brennan, DHHS

Speakers

Tremayne Jones, DHHS

Leah Bradley, Empowering the Ages

Aditi Merchant, Big and Mini

Staff

Welcome – Barbara Selter, Chair

Chair Barbara Selter welcomed everyone and took roll of attendees.

AAA Director Updates – Dr. Patricia McGhee, Director of AAA

Senior and Recreation Center Openings

Senior Centers were to reopen by the end of April or have a roll-out plan. Rockville plans to begin outdoor activities in July. Gaithersburg will open June 7.

AAA proposed a phased roll out for recreation centers. Two recreation department sites are being used as vaccination sites and one is an emergency shelter. Some recreation centers will be holding summer camps. There will be no senior center openings where there are summer camps.

COVID Vaccinations

On April 12, a mass vaccination site opened on the Montgomery College campus. Planning to vaccinate home-bound citizens continues to be a priority. All assisted living facilities have received their first doses, and second doses will be completed by next week. 85% of the 65+ population have had at least one vaccine. Dr. McGhee will provide dashboard information to Ms. Selter who will then send the information to the Commission.

Older Americans Act

Older Americans Act celebrations are next month. Please notify Dr. McGhee if you are aware of activities so AAA can help advertise them.

Committee Reports

Health and Wellness Committee (HWC)

Co-chair Neal Brown reported that the HWC continues to focus on the need for more home-based services to allow people to live at home. The Committee heard from two speakers, Hirsch Isen, In-home Aide Service (IHAS); and Marla Lahat, Home Care Partners. Home Care Partners provides light care in Gaithersburg and Rockville. IHAS provides services to 200 people throughout the County. Both programs get good

reviews, but are very limited. HWC also discussed the Access HEARS program and determined that follow-up activity is too large an endeavor for the Committee.

Aging in Community (AIC)

Co-Chair Monica Schaeffer reported that the AIC is developing action steps on affordable rental housing. They divided the issue into 1) regulatory and funding issues, and 2) access. Regarding access, they noted that the operators at 311 and 7-3000 when asked, responded that there is no affordable housing. The AIC will work towards operators providing a more helpful response. Regarding regulatory and funding, the AIC may write letters supporting County Executive Elrich's new housing opportunity funds. Also, the AIC is tracking Will Jawando's bills relating to eviction. Co-Chair Wayne Berman added that the AIC will bring up transportation at the full Commission's budget priority discussion. The May Committee meeting will be on food insecurity.

Public Policy Committee (PPC)

Co-Chair Ryan Wilson reported that the PPC monitored the general assembly wrap-up, the nursing facility surveyor issue, and helped with the preparation for County Council visits. Co-Chair Morris Klein reported that \$10 million dollars from the American Recovery Program was added to the Medicaid program for 400 additional home- and community-based waiver slots. Although this is good news, it does not solve the problem of the long waiting list for home-and community-based waiver services under Medicaid.

Communications Committee (CC)

Co-chair Jean Dinwiddie reported that the CC divided their workload, with co-chair Beverly Rollins heading up work on new handbooks and Jean Dinwiddie in charge of *Seniors Today*. All Commission members are asked to watch *Seniors Today* on YouTube. Co-chair Beverly Rollins explained that the CC is working on a new member orientation book that will be ten pages and a larger member handbook. Arthur Williams suggested that Katie Smith participate in an African-American Subcommittee meeting (second Tuesday of the month) to talk about *Seniors Today*.

The CC also is working on how to get information on County resources to more county residents. The Committee likely will send out press releases and are compiling a distribution list. The CC requests that all Commission members relay to Jean Dinwiddie, Beverly Rollins or Chuck Kaufman the names of organizations, associations or other groups that should receive this information.

Guest Speakers: Social Isolation and Loneliness of Seniors

Leah Bradley, Empowering the Ages

The definition of an intergenerational programs (IGP) is planned and ongoing activities that purposefully bring together different generations to share experiences that are

mutually beneficial. Because of the pandemic, which has been difficult for both old and young alike, IGP's are more critical than ever. The potential role for the CoA:

- Recognize that loneliness and isolation are issues.
- Help create an inclusive, welcoming and supportive community so older people don't move away.
- Work with local intergovernmental leaders to address issues of equity.

Ms. Bradley noted that Austin Heyman, CoA Alumni, created Interages in 1986, which is the longest running IGP in the country.

Empowering the Ages focuses solely on connecting people. Initiatives during the pandemic include Sharing Smiles, Notes and Concerts where individuals are connected by email and mail nationally and internationally and youth-led concerts are live-streamed into homes; Crossing Paths; and School Ambassadors. Additional resources include Quick Quotes (weekly motivational quotes) and Where's My Bench? for older adults to rest safely when walking outside. Ms Bradley may be reached at Leah@empoweringtheages.org.

Aditi Merchant, Big and Mini

Big and Mini bridges generations to create life changing connections. It is a web platform that connects older adults and college students virtually. Participants call one another weekly and develop beautiful friendships. There are 3,100 users from 50 states and 32 countries (1,300 matches). It recently added some group activities. It may be found at <http://bigandmini.org> or contact@bigandmini.org.

Commission on Aging Business

Approval of March Minutes

Minutes were approved.

Budget Report

Budget Officer Richard Jourdenais reported that there were no expenditures this month. There is \$4,895.11 in the Commission's account. Barbara Selter noted that a subcommittee was formed to determine how to disburse CoA funds.

Commission on Aging Letter

Edgar Rivas wrote a letter on behalf of the CoA in support of the federal HCBS Access Act. He will coordinate with Shawn Brennan to forward it in required email format.

Commission Member Recruitment, Reappointment Reminder, and Process for Replacement of Retiring Commissioners

Commission members whose terms expire on January 2021 should submit applications and write letters asking to be reappointed. Commission members whose terms expire on January 2022 do not need to do anything. Richard Jourdenais and Monica

Schaeffer will be retiring at the end of this year and will be eligible for the CoA Retirement Group.

The Commission By-laws state that commissioners should remain on the Commission until they are replaced. Going forward, the CoA will request that retiring commissioners remain until replaced.

Budget Hearings

Ms. Selter reported that at the budget hearing she attended, most people were in agreement with the budget priorities. The CoA did not testify, but submitted its budget priorities to the County Council.

Reports on County Council Visits to Date

- Hans Reimer: Dick Jourdenais and Barbara Selter met with Hans Reimer who was supportive and interested in the nursing facility survey issue and our budget priorities. Mr. Reimer talked about new loan funds for affordable housing, which is one of his priorities.
- Thomas Hucker's Staff: Janice Zalen and Barbara Selter met with Jill Ortman-Fouse and Sarah Wolf, of Tom Hucker's staff, who were supportive of our budget priorities and interested in the nursing facility survey. Restructuring the police to ensure that mental health workers deal with mental health issues is a top priority for Mr. Hucker. Mr. Hucker will be interested in receiving a copy of the report of the CoA Task Force on Dementia, Policing, and Racial Equity once it is available.
- Andrew Friedson: Joyce Dubrow and Barbara Selter met with Andrew Friedson who was supportive and aware of the nursing facility survey issue. He noted that his district has the highest proportion of older adults and that there is food insecurity in his District.
- Will Jawando's staff: Beverly Rollins met with two staff from Will Jawando's office who were supportive. Mr. Jawando has sponsored two housing bills. The staff members suggested that the CoA review former County Executive Leggett's Senior Agenda and provide a briefing to Council members on the status of the items on that agenda.
- Craig Rice: Beverly Rollins and Marsha Weber met with Craig Rice, who was supportive. He talked about transportation issues. Mr. Rice would like to see more information disseminated to the public regarding County programs for older adults.
- Gabe Albornoz: Arthur Williams and Hillery Tsumba met with Gabe Albornoz who was supportive and asked to be connected with the Health and Wellness Committee.
- Evan Glass: Wayne Berman, Mary Sweeny and Barbara Selter met with Evan Glass who was supportive. Mr. Glass' is particularly interested in a strong social safety net and transportation. The CoA's suggestion of a senior navigator for housing was met with enthusiasm.
- Nancy Navarro: Richard Jourdenais and Hillery Tsumba met with Ms. Navarro who was supportive. She noted that the nursing home issue, which Gabe Albornoz is working on, has jurisdictional issues that must be considered. She would like to see permanent food centers.
- Sidney Katz: Visit planned for the following day.

Barbara Selter reported that several Commission members suggested that the CoA conduct more frequent visits with the Council. Ms. Selter will bring this issue to the Executive Committee who will make a proposal to bring back to the Commission. Chuck Kaufman suggested that the County Executive be included in this effort.

Reminder to Sign Up for Public Forum

All Commissioners were reminded to sign up for the public forum. To date, there are 112 registrants.

Update on Task Forces

Social Isolation (SILOS) Task Force: Co-chair Maritza Rivera reported that Save-the-Date flyers went out and a press release was being finalized. A dress rehearsal is planned.

Task Force on Dementia, Policing and Racial Equity: This task force has met regularly to finalize its report. The recommendations are ready to go to the Public Policy Committee.

Upcoming CoA Meetings—Confirmed and Potential Speakers

- May 27, 2021 – Rethinking Care for Older Adults – Stuart Butler, The Brookings Institute, speaking on the Convergence Center for Policy Resolution and Hartford Foundation
- June 24, 2021 – Affordable Housing – a small work group is determining speakers
- Summer 2021
 - EC Strategic Planning and Future Topics – a small work group is designing this session and a date will be available soon.
 - CoA Budget Priorities Session – date to be determined soon.

Liaison Updates

- Denise Israel, MC Department of Transportation (DoT): DoT is running free Ride-on buses to the Shady Grove Mass Vaccination Site. Front door entry has begun, but free service will remain through June 30.
- Monique Gardner, African-American Health: a black primary care network was developed and they are working on black education programs, pushing COVID vaccines, developing public health materials with HHS staff, and partnering with the Housing Opportunity Commission to develop educational materials.
- Marcia Pruzan, Age-Friendly Montgomery: there will be a regional age-friendly meeting on May 4-5 that will cover regional issues on May 4, and May 5 will have speakers on home-sharing and on crimes against seniors and vulnerable adults. There is a registration fee for this meeting.
- Lori Marks, Link Generations, reported that she is pleased to be representing intergenerational programs at the CoA's Public Forum.

New Business

- Edgar Rivas suggested that the CoA pay close attention to the MD Department of Aging as it develops the state plan because it is using 2016 data that may no longer be accurate.
- Arthur Williams announced that Reverend Dr. Ruby Moone, a CoA member, was admitted to the MD Women's Hall of Fame.
- Monica Schaeffer reported that the Age Friendly meeting has been rescheduled to the end of June.
- Barbara Selter noted that Age Friendly is hosting roundtables on April 27, July and October targeted on the HCBS workforce. Ms. Selter will forward the agenda to all.
- Katie Smith has information on federal level action that she will send out.

Adjourn

Action Items

(These action items are based on a review of the minutes)

1. Barbara Selter will forward vaccination dashboard information to the CoA once she receives the information from Dr. McGhee,
2. All Commission members are asked to notify Dr. McGhee of Older American Act celebratory activities so she can help advertise them.
3. All Commission members are asked to watch *Seniors Today* on You Tube.
4. All Commission members are asked to relay to Jean Dinwiddie, Beverly Rollins or Chuck Kaufman the names of organizations, associations or other groups that would find information for older adults useful.
5. Katie Smith is asked to participate in an African-American Subcommittee meeting (second Tuesday of the month) to talk about *Seniors Today*.
6. Edgar Rivas will coordinate with Shawn Brennan to forward letter to Congress in required email format.
7. Commission members whose terms expire on January 2021 should submit applications and write letters asking to be reappointed.
8. Upon its completion, Barbara Selter should send a copy of the CoA Task Force on Dementia, Policing, and Racial Equity Report to Thomas Hucker.
9. HWC Co-chairs should connect with Gabe Albornoz per his request.
10. Ms. Selter will bring to the EC, the suggestions to have more county council meetings during the year and possibly including the County Executive.
11. Commission members are asked to register and attend the Public Forum.
12. Barbara Selter will send Age Friendly roundtable agendas to all.
13. Katie Smith will forward information on HCBS workforce to Barbara Selter.

