

**Communications Committee Meeting
Minutes
April 18, 2022**

Attendees

CoA Members

Jean Dinwiddie, Co-chair
Beverly Rollins, Co-chair
Wayne Berman
Virginia Cain
David Engel
Eddie Rivas
Marsha Weber

CoA Alumni

Marcia Pruzan

Staff

Jennifer Long, Department of Health and Human Services

Guests

Stuart Rosenthal, *Beacon Newspapers*

Roll Call

Jean Dinwiddie opened the meeting and asked that the minutes of the Committee's March meeting be approved. Prior to the meeting, Odile Brunetto, Chief of the County's Department of Aging and Disability Services, requested a small edit, which was accommodated. The group approved the minutes as written with Ms. Brunetto's revision.

50+ in Montgomery County Update

Jean reported that the May show will feature guests to talk about the benefits of gardening for older adults. Topics such as the Master Gardener Program, communal gardening, adaptive gardening tools, low maintenance gardening, and possibly therapeutic horticulture programs will be discussed. Jean has booked one guest and CoA member, Joyce Dubow, is hoping to book a second. Eddie Rivas suggested that Rochelle Bartholomie, a native plant specialist of Pope Farm in Derwood, be contacted if another guest is needed. Jean noted that the June program will focus on end-of-life care and guests will include Diane Rehm of National Public Radio and Ben Marcantonio, the Chief Operating Officer of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. She stated that the 50+ planning committee has developed a schedule of the

programs for the rest of 2022. In addition, Public Service Announcements have been planned for the May program.

Fact Sheets

Jean reported that the Age-Friendly/CoA Resource Factsheet has been approved by the Executive Committee.

She also reported that Councilmember Sidney Katz has suggested that the CoA prepare a factsheet on in-home care services and discuss what services are included and who pays for them. Eddie stated that he thinks it would be difficult to outline the payment structure in one page. Virginia Cain suggested we could possibly prepare a decision tree that indicates options and how they are paid for. Marcia Weber noted that there are a lot of good resources available that the CoA could discuss but the list would need to be generic and not name any specific companies. David Engel stated that on the County's Senior Site there is an elder care brochure; however, it is a bit difficult to find on the Site. It includes a guide for caregiver and elder care supports. He recommended that the CoA look at the brochure and guides, if and when the CoA decides to make one. He said the factsheet could also be distributed in the County libraries. Stuart Rosenthal reminded everyone that the *Beacon's* Senior Resource Guide has a lot of good information, and that it could include a page on the different types of in-home care services available. Eddie stated that perhaps the CoA could give quick definitions but not give the costs.

Jean suggested that the Committee table this discussion until after the May Public Forum. Stuart offered to donate copies of the Resource Guide for the Forum. Jennifer Long said that she will ensure that the CoA gets 100 copies for the Forum.

Wayne Berman asked about other ideas for factsheets. He suggested the Committee may want to contact Mitsuko Herrera, ultraMontgomery Program Director in the County's Office of Broadband Programs. He said that Senior Planet falls within that office and that there are subsidies for various things that can be used by older adults. Marcia Pruzan noted that the CoA may also want to team up with some of the Age-Friendly groups, such as the one on Technology Involvement. She suggested that the CoA partner with the different Age-Friendly groups to develop more factsheets.

Website Update

David provided a few updates on the County's websites that serve older adults. In March, he submitted a major change to the /Senior page dealing with older adult housing; however, he had to get several revisions made.

David is still having issues with getting updates on all of the County's older adult sites done at the same time. The CoA website does not get updated automatically like the Senior Site does. David said that his solution to-date has been to request monthly updates. David asks Kyung Lee of the Public Information Office to make the changes. Staffer Shawn Brennan is currently working with staffer, Tremayne Jones, to make changes to the CoA's website. The site is not aesthetically pleasing but some work is being done. Shawn is requesting input from David and,

therefore, he hopes that she will continue to work on it. David said that he would like to see notes from CoA meeting presentations included on the CoA site.

Eddie asked whether anyone has addressed how long documents have to be kept on the CoA website. David responded that there is a requirement regarding the number of years documents have to be kept, but he is not sure if they are stored on the website. They might be archived somewhere and not visible. It is likely that some documents are archived and can actually be obtained by request. He does not know whether the archived documents include past CoA reports or just meeting minutes.

Jean asked whether the April version of *50+ in Montgomery County* will be included on the CoA website. A response was made that it would be. Marcia Pruzan asked whether there is information about the number of hits for the CoA website. David responded that Kyung provided him a report indicating the number of hits, but David is not sure whether it is for both the Senior Site and the CoA's site or just for the Senior Site.

David said that he has not gotten to the task of asking for a link to Senior News on the CoA site. Stuart said he would be happy to help if he can.

CoA Ambassador Program/Speakers' Bureau – Brainstorming Session

Jean started the conversation by asking what the goal of this program would be. Should it be about the CoA and how it works? Or should it be about promoting County services for older adults and finding out what older adults' issues are? Eddie asked what the overall purpose of the program would be. Marcia Pruzan stated that she has long-maintained that it is not as important for individuals to know about the CoA as much as it is to talk about the services available to them. Stuart noted that the DC office on Aging used to have this type of program, or still has one. The ambassadors are trained on what services are available; they are a marketing person for the resources that are available.

Eddie stated that he thinks it is important to market the services that the County has to offer, but the word "ambassador" makes him nervous. How would you make sure that the ambassadors all speak in one voice? Jean suggested that the CoA members could be the ambassadors with a prepared presentation to ensure they all speak in one voice. Marcia Pruzan said that she works closely with the DC Age-Friendly group and she could ask them for information. She noted that dispensing the information in different languages will be necessary. Wayne stated that the County will have to train the CoA members, or at least help the CoA develop a training program. Jennifer Long responded that she does not know what kind of level of approval from County officials would be needed for the program. Beverly and Marsha Weber suggested that the Committee consult with the DC people about their program. Wayne also suggested that the CoA could possibly train the trainers.

Jean asked whether this is a program that the Committee wants to pursue? Have the program consist of a brief overview of the CoA, get a brief idea of what the audience wants, and then provide information about that. Jennifer stated that it might be worthwhile to talk to a couple of senior centers to see what they would like to hear about. Marcia Pruzan also suggested asking the

life-long learning centers. David noted that the factsheet that the CoA just created could provide talking points for the program.

Eddie stated that he does not want to see this effort supplant the CoA's request for money for marketing efforts. David suggested that instead of ambassadors the CoA could use the terms "liaison" or "emissary." He also said that the CoA should do a presentation at the libraries to show what the printed materials are.

It was noted that Austin Heyman has some good suggestions for this type of program. Jean finished the conversation by saying that before the next Communications Committee meeting we can get more information about what DC does. Beverly suggested that maybe someone from that organization could speak at next month's meeting. Marcia Pruzan stated that she would ask her friend to speak or refer the Committee to someone who will.

Publicity for 50+ in Montgomery County

Beverly explained that using the Senior Resource Guide as a way to reach older adult communities would be labor intensive because it would involve calling those communities to obtain names, telephone numbers, and email addresses in order to make a database. She asked whether anyone would like to volunteer for that project? David suggested the CoA could post something in the Senior Newsletter that the County puts out because it goes out to 18,000 addresses. He also said that the Councilmembers can publicize it for us. Eddie asked whether a Public Service Announcement about 50+ has been made that could be shown on the Montgomery County channel?

Jean stated that she thinks the uptick in viewers in March may have been because the topic was Villages. Stuart suggested that once a database of the retirement communities is developed the CoA could send reminders out once a month about the show. Virginia suggested that the Committee ask Shawn to have the summer students develop a database based on the Resource Guide. Marcia Pruzan also volunteered to include a piece about 50+ in the newsletter that she sends out weekly.

New Projects Discussion

Best Ways to Communicate with the County's Different Communities to Get the Word Out About Older Adult Programs (Make a List for the County Council)

Councilmember Katz requested the CoA's suggestions on how best to communicate with the different communities of the County regarding different programs available to older adults. Marsha Weber stated that maybe the CoA should suggest that he discuss this with the Office of Community Partnership. David reminded everyone that in the CoA's meeting with Pazit Aviv she talked about this and said that there is not one particular answer. For one thing, the many different languages spoken in the County require translators. Marsha said that this may be a topic for the Senior Summit. David noted that it would be a good topic for a Senior Fellow.

Senior Planning Book for Montgomery County (Chuck Kaufmann's Suggestion)

Jean stated that a book of this type may be beyond the scope of the CoA. Chuck and Barbara Selter advocated for a book that would help older adults with personal planning. Eddie stated that it would require funding and staffing, and it is unclear who would provide that. Jean suggested that the Committee take it off its future project list.