

**Communications Committee Meeting
Minutes
January 22, 2024**

Attendees

CoA

Jean Dinwiddie, Co-chair
Beverly Rollins, Co-chair
Virginia Cain
Stephanie Edelstein
David Engel
Yvette Monroe
Kendell Matthews
Kathleen McGinness
Barbara Selter
Marie Sloan
Mary Sweeney

Alumni

Marcia Pruzan
Eddie Rivas
Marsha Weber

Staff

Jennifer Long, Aging and Disability Staff
Carol Smith, Connector

Guest

Chris Doyle

Roll Call

Jean Dinwiddie took roll and asked for approval of the November 2023 minutes. The minutes were approved.

Library Liaison Program

Jean began by saying that we need liaisons for the Twinbrook library. David Engel reported that at his library, Gaithersburg, everyone is very nice and he has provided several copies of the CoA factsheets and the Life Transitions as We Age document. He said that even though he placed a

ton of these documents in the library, when he returned two weeks later they were all gone. He suggested that we test providing the Life Transitions document at some of the different libraries. Jean stated that she only hesitates to do that because of the cost of reproducing them. 2,500 have been printed.

Marsha Weber reported that at the Olney library the older adult information has been moved to make room for tax information. Stephanie Edelstein suggested that maybe the CoA should make information available regarding taxes; information about getting help with tax preparation and other important information. She said that at her library (Long branch) the librarians seem clueless on where older adults can get information. It might be a training situation at the library; they need more staff. Eddie Rivas asked whether Longbranch has material in Spanish. Jennifer Long responded that it has the Spanish sell sheet and the multi-lingual factsheet. She said that the Long Branch library may need bilingual staff and that may be why they are understaffed.

Jean asked whether we should get the Life Transitions document in every library; are there enough in stock to allow for ten at each library? She noted that the public can find a link to it on the CoA's website. Stephanie suggested that this document also be placed on the library's website. Jean responded that she will ask Chief Librarian, Anita Vassallo, to put the link on their website. Marie Sloan commented that we should put ten of the documents at each library. Chris Doyle asked whether there are other venues where they should be placed. Marcia Pruzan responded that they are being given out at the Ambassador programs. David suggested sending five to each library and Jennifer said that she may be able to do that. Barbara commented, however, that we should save some for the Public Forum that will be held in the Spring. Jean noted that we should also find out how much it would cost to provide that many copies to all of the libraries.

Eddie asked whether the documents have been distributed to senior centers and nutrition centers. David responded that the reason the CoA did not chose distributing them at senior centers over libraries is because they can be placed in certain areas in the libraries, and we know how many are being taken. He suggested that we keep 200-250 for the Public Forum. If we can control which libraries to distribute them to then we will know where we are putting them and see what the feedback is. We should limit the distribution to the libraries and not place five at EVERY library. Jean noted that she will let Anita Vassallo know that the CoA will be sending packages to the libraries. Marcia said there are three major events during the year where the document should be made available, including the Public Forum. Eddie commented that they should be made available to individuals who need them – folks visiting the libraries may already be knowledgeable on these issues. He believes the senior centers should get priority.

In closing, Jean stated that if the liaisons feels that their library should get copies of the Life Transitions document, they should let Beverly Rollins and Jean know and they will ask Jennifer to send them five booklets.

Ambassador Program

Marcia reported that she and Odile did a presentation at the Clara Barton Center in December, and they were asked some good questions. All of the attendees stated that they learned something. David and Marie reported that they had a good session at Coffield earlier in January. They said, however, that although the event was given no publicity some folks showed up and were very interested. Participants noted that they want more senior activities in the recreation centers and were disappointed that after COVID a lot of program time was taken away from older adults and given to younger people. Marsha and Odile reported that they went to Longwood Center and folks there were also very interested. It was stated that logistics for these programs need to be better and information should be posted and available about when the presentations are being done. Individuals visiting the centers do not seem to know when programs are going to happen; there does not seem to be a list of where and when the programs are going to happen. Program logistics seem to be hit or miss.

Jean asked Connector Carol Smith whether there is a way our program can partner with their activities. Carol said that she sometimes does outreach in the libraries; just recently she visited one and sat outside the office and provided County information. Marsha commented that there seems to be a lot of confusion with who is going out to the libraries because so many different people are visiting them; e.g., the County Connectors, the CoA's library liaisons, and a few AARP volunteers. Marsha said that she would like clarity on who is going to the libraries. Jennifer responded that the AARP folks are providing older adult information and there is some overlap with what they are doing and with what the CoA's library liaisons and ambassadors are doing. Beverly asked what documents the AARP is providing. David responded that they are giving out a lot of AARP information and also signing individuals up to join AARP. He suggested that possibly the CoA could put some CoA and County literature on the AARP table.

Jean noted that things seem to be going well with the Ambassador Program. Marie, Kathleen McGuinness, Jean, and Beverly plan to meet again soon to discuss and work on it. Marsha said we should find out where County Recreation Specialist, James Berardi, sends out the notices. Individuals at ALL County recreation and senior center sites should know where the presentations are. Also, we should find out what Mr. Berardi is saying in his emails about the Ambassador presentations.

Jean asked Kathleen whether she could check to see whether the CoA can do a presentation in her community. Marcia noted that she is looking for a date in mid-late February to do one in her community. Kathleen asked whether the CoA will pay for meeting space and Jean responded no. The suggestion was made that Jeanine Tursini who does arts for the aging may be able to set up some presentations for us. Marsha said that possibly Housing Opportunities Commission staffer, Stephanie Moore, could help us. Beverly stated that she sent a note to Pazit Aziz about holding presentations in the Villages but has not heard back yet.

Website Update

Beverly reported that several things need to be updated on the CoA's website and she asked Tremayne to do it. Beverly noted that she also sent an email to the Executive Committee members asking them to update their committee's meeting minutes and agendas.

50+ in Montgomery County Update

Jean noted that the current and upcoming 50+ programs include:

- January program – Andrew Friedson, Council President
- February program – AAHP and MCPS (Black History Month)
- March program – Life transitions with Marsha Weber and Marcia Pruzan

Jean stated that the tagline will likely include “Longevity Ready Montgomery” to align with the State's Multisector Plan.

She reminded everyone that the 50+ Planning Committee meets the first Friday of each month at 1p.

Brainstorm for Committee Projects for 2024

Jean said that maybe we should just keep doing what we are doing; we have enough on our plate. Marcia said that we need to find out how CoA documents will be printed. Jean responded that supposedly the CoA has a \$10,000 budget with the Public Information Office but no one seems to know for sure.

Adjourn

Action Items

- Identify/recruit library liaisons for the Twinbrook library.
- Make information available at the libraries regarding taxes; material about getting help with tax preparation and other important information.
- Ask Anita Vassallo to place a link to the Life Transitions document on the Montgomery County libraries website.
- Liaisons will identify which libraries should receive copies of the Life Transitions document and let Jean and Beverly know. Jennifer will have five of them sent to the identified libraries.
- In the future, if it is decided to send the Life Transitions document to each library we should investigate how much it would cost to duplicate them. We also need to save some of the documents for the annual public forum and the Ambassador Program.
- Inform Anita Vassallo that the CoA will be sending packages of documents to the libraries through the “Pony” system for the Library Liaison Program.
- Identify CoA and County literature and place it on the AARP table at their monthly events in Gaithersburg and Wheaton.

- Find out where County Recreation Specialist, James Berardi, sends out the Ambassador presentation notices and also find out what he is saying in his emails about the presentations. Individuals at ALL County recreation and senior center sites should know where the presentations are.
- Kathleen will check to see whether the CoA can do a presentation in her community.
- Contact Janine Tursini (the person who does Arts for the Aging) to see whether she can set up dates for Ambassador presentations.
- Contact Housing Opportunities Commission staffer, Stephanie Moore, to see whether she can set up dates for Ambassador presentations.
- Follow up with Pazit Aziz about holding Ambassador presentations in the Villages.
- Find out how CoA documents for the libraries and the Ambassador presentations will be printed. Supposedly the CoA has a \$10,000 budget with the Public Information Office but no one seems to know for sure.