

**Communications Committee Meeting
Minutes
February 26, 2024**

Attendees

CoA

Jean Dinwiddie, Co-chair
Beverly Rollins, Co-chair
Linda Bergofsky
Virginia Cain
David Engel
Kendell Matthews
Yvette Monroe
Kathleen McGinness
Barbara Selter
Marie Sloan
Katie Smith

Alumni

Marcia Pruzan
Revitha Vikram
Marsha Weber

Staff

Nordea Lewis, Public Information Office
Jennifer Long, Aging and Disability Staff

Guests

Odile Brunetto
Chris Doyle

Roll Call

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

Library Liaison Program

Jean asked the liaisons to share their success stories or their challenges. Marsha Weber commented that at the Olney library the Aged and Disability Unit's "Sell Sheet" does not get picked up very often. She asked whether there is a way to make it more appealing to library

patrons. Jean said that she noticed the same thing at the Damascus library. Jennifer Long responded saying that we do not know whether the area where the sheets are located are heavily trafficked or whether they are just not of interest to the patrons. Linda Berkofsky said that at the Maggie Nightengale library not much information is being picked up. She asked, "Is it because of placement? Or the fact that not many older folks are coming in?" She stated that individuals may not know that the information is available. Linda asked whether the liaisons should talk to the librarians and ask them these questions. Jean responded that it depends on the liaisons' relationship with their librarian.

Marie Sloan asked whether it has been decided to place the Life Transitions document in the libraries. She noted that the libraries have a newsletter where it might be good to place a link to the document. Jean responded that it is now on the library website and we did put copies in some of the libraries.

Virginia Cain said that she plans to visit her librarian this week and on the last visit the librarian asked for some additional flyers. Virginia asked whether staff can send her that information. Jennifer stated that staff is not supposed to print flyers on their own, they have to go through the Print Shop. If staff actually have the flyers then they can get them for her. Virginia asked if she can also get the Life Transitions packet. She noted that she will contact Jennifer directly to get what she needs.

Beverly Rollins asked whether we have gotten permission from the libraries to place other flyers in addition to the original three that the program started with. Jean responded that we have gotten permission from library chief, Anita Vassalo, but we have not sent them yet to be delivered by the library's "Pony System." Linda stated that she would like to see a document from the League of Women Voters placed in the libraries. She would be willing to contact the League of Women Voters to get copies. Or, she suggested, maybe we could send a PDF of the document to our library contacts and have them make copies. Jean responded that Linda, Beverly, and she should discuss this among themselves and figure out how to get this done.

Barbara Selter asked Beverly to send her the list of additional documents that have been suggested be placed in the libraries and she will discuss them with her librarian. Jean suggested that we give this list of additional materials to the librarians and let them decide what they want. Beverly said that she will send an email to all of the liaisons with all of the suggested documents as attachments. The liaisons can print the list and take it to their librarians to see whether they would be willing to stock them.

Marie asked whether getting all of these copies is going to create a budget issue. She noted that the same documents are used for the Ambassador Program. Jennifer said the cost of the documents should not be our first concern because staff may have access to several copies of them. Marie stated that she does not want to run out of documents, especially for the Ambassador Program. We need to ensure that we have sufficient copies for the Ambassador Program especially since that program is taking off.

Ambassador Program

Marcia Pruzan reported on the presentation she and Barbara Selter recently gave at the Wisconsin Condos in Bethesda. She said that nearly 40 people showed up and she has gotten several emails about it. It was a wonderful presentation and she knew several of the attendees. Barbara added that it was a very enthusiastic event.

Marcia noted that she and Odile Brunetto are planning to do a presentation at Leisure World in April and over 100 individuals are expected. At the Wisconsin Condo presentation the Life Transitions folder was very popular. She said the File of Life magnet was also very popular. Jennifer stated that keeping that magnet in stock is very difficult; however, the content of the magnet is online and people can print them out and put them in a plastic bag and tape them to their refrigerator.

Nordea Lewis

Jean introduced Nordea Lewis of the Public Information Office and asked her how we can partner with the PIO to promote the Ambassador and Library Liaison Programs. Nordea responded that the Office can issue press releases and publicize our presentations on social media and the County cable station. Jean asked how much time they will need to do a press release. Nordea responded she would like to have the information at least 3 days before the event. Kathleen McGuinness asked whether the press releases should be done 1 event at a time. Nordea said that in newsletters they could publicize more than one event but the press releases should be done one event at a time.

Kathleen noted that maybe we could also publicize events after they take place. This would be good exposure. She stated that the Ambassador Program is effective but not well publicized. Jean asked Nordea about whether the CoA can have a Facebook page but Nordea did not know the answer. She stated that she could put the CoA events on the County's Facebook page, however.

Katie Smith asked Nordea whether the CoA will need permission from participants if we post them on social media. Nordea responded that if they are participating in a public event we do not need their permission. Kathleen noted that to get around that issue she takes photos of the backs of the audience members' heads and a photo of the speaker. Katie commented that at public events the CoA could also make a disclaimer about using photos on social media.

David asked how the CoA can send information to be posted to the County's Facebook page. Nordea responded that it would be best if only 1 or 2 CoA members contact the staffer who is responsible for the Facebook posts. Her name is Teresa Saavedra and her email address is teresasaavedra.woorman@montgomerycountymd.gov.

Marcia asked who has to approve posts on Facebook media. Odile Brunetto said that many years ago a CoA Facebook page was started but it was not used so it was taken down. If the CoA would get a Facebook page someone would need to manage it.

Odile asked whether an event sponsored by the CoA is considered a public event. Jean responded that she believes it is. Odile agreed with Kathleen that only presenters' photos should be posted on social media.

Odile asked about whether the Committee got any information about applying for an AARP grant to get an Ambassador Program coordinator. Jean said that the Committee contacted the Jewish Council on Aging to see whether that organization could do it but it does not seem to be working out. The Committee has been told that the CoA is not allowed to apply for the grant.

Jean briefly discussed the possibility of using staff from the County Volunteer Office to coordinate the Ambassador Program and stated that staffer Peter Flandrau is looking into it. She also mentioned that we are looking for a County email address to use to publicize the Ambassador events.

Marsha asked whether we are keeping reports of the Ambassador efforts. David added that the CoA will soon be making its budget request and we need data regarding the Ambassador Program and the Library Liaison Program; i.e., how many presentations have been hosted and how big the audiences are, as well as how the library information is being received. He stated that the CoA will need that information for the talking points for the budget priorities it makes for the County Executive and County Council. Kathleen suggested that folks who are involved in the programs should track their volunteer hours. She said that she will prepare a spreadsheet that denotes those hours.

50+ in Montgomery County Update

Jean reported that the upcoming episodes of 50+ will include:

- February program – African American Health Program
- March program – Life Transitions
- April program – Dancing

Jean reminded everyone that the Planning Committee meets the first Friday of each month and will be meeting this Friday, March 1.

Senior App for Phones

Jean stated that at the next Communications Committee meeting we will discuss the possibility of suggesting that the County develop a "Senior App" for cell phones. This would allow older adults to access programs and services by touching a link on their phone.

Adjourn

Action Items

—The library liaisons may want to discuss with their librarians whether the public is picking up the CoA information and if it is not, why?

—The Committee should contact the library's newsletter editor and request that they place a link to the CoA's the Life Transitions document in it.

—Jean, Beverly, and Linda will discuss ways to get copies of the League of Women Voters' document placed in the libraries.

—Beverly will send an email to all of the liaisons with a list of suggested additional documents for the libraries. The liaisons can print and take them to their librarians to see whether they would be willing to stock them.

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—The Committee will put together data regarding the implementation of the Ambassador and Library Liaison Programs. That data will include hours involved, the number of presentations, and the number of audience members. This data will be used to develop talking points for the CoA's budget request. Kathleen McGuinness will develop a spreadsheet to record the hours.