

**AGING IN COMMUNITY COMMITTEE
OF THE
COMMISSION ON AGING**

Date: December 14, 2021
9:30am-11:30 am

“Preparation of AIC Program Listing and Work Plan for 2022”

In Attendance: Monica Schaeffer (co-chair, AIC), Wayne Berman (co-chair, AIC), Barbara Selter, Nanine Meiklejohn, Richard Jourdenais, Marsha Weber, Mary Sweeney, Laurie Pross, Betsy Carrier, Mona Grieser, Sibio Ncube, Joyce Dubow

Staff: Pazit Aviv, MoCo; Marcia Pruzan, Age-Friendly Montgomery;

Guests: Sara Fought, Jewish Council for the Aging; Barbara Brubeck, Goodwin House at Home, Austin Heyman

Opening Remarks from the Co-Chairs: Wayne and Monica welcomed everyone. Everyone had a chance to introduce themselves. Wayne reviewed the agenda and focus for the meeting “Preparation of AIC Program Listing and Work Plan for 2022”. The focus of this meeting was to prepare a table that lays out planned monthly programs, actions, and responsibilities for the four principle topic areas to be addressed by the AIC in 2022 – Housing, Transportation, Technology, and Food Insecurity. In addition, other topics addressed in the discussion included Shared Housing, Design for Life, Villages, and Senior Fellows / Senior Employment.

Approval of the Minutes: The minutes of the November 9th meeting were approved.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSIONS: “Preparation of AIC Program Listing and Work Plan for 2022”

At the beginning of the meeting, the Committee expressed a strong desire to have the January 2022 meeting focus on an overview of data and statistics about Montgomery County’s older adult population and how this demographic uses the services and programs offered by the County. The data and statistical overview would reflect the principle topic areas for the Committee - Housing, Technology, Food Insecurity, and Transportation. Pazit agreed to present this data Overview in January. She asked that the Committee members get her any specific questions or areas where information is needed by December 22nd, in order for her to have sufficient time to research and prepare for the meeting.

Much of the remainder of the meeting was devoted to organizing the AIC Program for 2022 around the four principle topic areas for the Committee - Housing, Technology, Food Insecurity, and Transportation. It was decided by the Committee that working groups needed to be formed to tackle the topic areas. The working groups were formed and some keys issues to address under each Principle Topic area were identified. The following working groups and issues were identified:

Topic #1: Housing:

- **Working Group: Laurie Pross, Mary Sweeney, Nanine Meiklejohn and Mona Grieser (with support from Barbara Brubeck and Sara Fought)**
- **Some Issues / Activities to be Considered by this Working Group in 2022:**
 - Learn more about the Rental Assistance Program (RAP) and advocate for more RAP \$\$, rent increase caps

- Data (rent increase, where people live etc., older adults who rent, who uses Rental Assistance Program (RAP) and is it equitable,
- The status and usage of universal application (universal app) in Maryland
- Communication (311 and 3000 training, JCA Helpline, Market Place), Create briefs on specific programs (RAP)
- Affordability (different levels of affordability),
- HIF advocacy
- Missing middle housing (Nanine and Mary will frame the issue(s) and find a speaker on the topic)
- Learn about what County Council members are doing and their interests

Topic #2: Technology:

- **Working Group: Wayne Berman, Barbara Selter, Mona Grieser, Betsy Carrier, Siboncube, Laurie Pross,**
- **Some Issues to be Considered by this Working Group in 2022:**
 - Find apartment complexes that are willing to participate in a technology pilot
 - Advocate for senior-friendly customer service
 - Wait to see what American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds will do regarding technology
 - Work on ways to Expand broadband, cell, and computer use among older adults
 - Identify ways for the use of technology to enhance medical care and monitoring while people remain in homes with information sent back to care managers
 - Learn from DC's program to provide technology and broadband to older adults
 - Learn about the current research and activities of AARP and other groups.
 - What are other cities doing?
 - Learn about what County Council members are doing and their interests

Topic #3: Food Insecurity:

- **Working Group: Joyce Dubow, Karon Phillips**
- **Some Issues to be Considered by this Working Group in 2022:**
 - Learn more about the larger programs/initiatives to see how COA can join in
 - Frame the role of Intergenerational Community Gardening
 - Learn more about how the SNAP runs in the County
 - Learn about what County Council members are doing and their interests
 - Work with COA Communication Committee regarding SNAP public information

Topic #4: Transportation:

- **Working Group: Wayne Berman**
- **Some Issues to be Considered by this Working Group in 2022:**
 - Learn about what County Council members are doing and their interests
 - Wait for updates on use of ARPA funds decision and take it from there,
 - When appropriate, provide input to the County on the COG grant to develop travel training videos and retrofit a bus as a training bus (currently on hold due to pandemic).
 - Follow-up of DOT / DHHS /Taxicab Commission survey of residents 65+ and those with disabilities. The focus of the survey is obtaining input on taxi services from 65+ residents and those with disabilities. (Ask Shawn about how County is reaching residents?)
 - Promote the pedestrian audit toolkit to let pedestrians audit their local sidewalk, give feedback to County.
 - Follow up on transportation services available (Connect-a-Ride, same day taxi access, MC DOT's free taxi rides for COVID testing and vax (DOT funded), FLEX (now have

call in system), Flash system, transportation to recreation and senior centers, Medicaid transportation

- Advocate on the use of TSIF funds for transportation for the disabled.

Other Topics to work on in 2022:

- Design for Life (DFL):
 - Get an update on DFL from MC Dept. of Permitting and Betsy Leucking
 - Get report from Virginia town know to have implemented a requirement for DFL.
 - Betsy Carrier, along with others on the Committee to facilitate effort on DFL
 - Identify and frame the DFL implementation issues
- Villages
 - Get periodic updates from Pazit on the villages in the County
- Senior Fellow Program Older Adult Employment
 - Monica (with assistance from Marsha Weber) to facilitate update of Senior Fellow Program / Senior Employment activities.
 - Coordinate with Age-Friendly Montgomery

The Committee decided that an effort needs to be made by all working groups to get to know what the various County Council Members and their associated County Council Committees are working on related to our four principle topic areas - Housing, Transportation, Technology, and Food Insecurity. The Working Groups would frame the activity and periodically report back to the Committee.

Barbara Selter mentioned that a working group would be established to review the THRIVE 2050 Plan and provide COA feedback to Council President Gabe Alborno. The working group will be led by Wayne Berman. AIC Committee members are encouraged to review the THRIVE 2050 Plan and participate in this working group. Barbara will find out when Council President Alborno wants the feedback, as well as the type of feedback.

UPCOMING MEETING: The next AIC meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 11, 2022 at 9:30 am. Pazit Aviv will be our presenter and will give an overview of data, statistics, and information that will be relevant for the AIC Committee's work in 2022. We will also be formulating the first iteration of a table that lays out planned monthly programs in 2022 for the AIC

MEETING ADJOURNED: 11:40 am

ADDENDUM
RAW NOTES

Aging In Community—Discussion/ideas for 2022

Improved outreach and communication overriding issue for all topics discussed below.

Topic 1: Housing (Nanine)

- Availability-advocate for additional budget
 - HIF budget (need for additional units)
- Regulatory
 - Regulatory -zoning change to permit smaller units “Missing Middle Housing”
 - Regulatory- rent limitations within transit rail stations
 - County rent guidelines-extension of pandemic limits
 - Pandemic Rental assistance program
 - Protection from eviction
- Advocate for safety in bathroom design in reconstruction of older properties
- Communications
- Potential Ideas
 - Monitor budget
 - Rental assistance-learn more about different RAP programs
 - Rent limitations – information/data about pattern of rent increases in county from County Council (rent guidelines)
 - More demographic data about older adult and other rent-burdened
 - Monitor bills, attend Council sessions
 - Review THRIVE 2050 and other reports from planning Department re older adult renters

Housing-Mary Sweeney

- Improved communication between HOC and other entities providing services to HOC seniors. (Partnerships to keep older residents in current housing?)
- Better way to communicate available housing options for older adults in County. Comprehensive one-stop (Oregon) Universal application model-Maryland?
- DHCA’s Marketplace online source—follow up on needed changes?
- Contact JCA -information on affordable housing. (Senior Help Line); challenge is availability of enough affordable housing.
- DHCA has staff devoted to eviction prevention.

Home Sharing: Challenges:

- Disconnect between what renters and landlords want.
- Communications --
- Technology
- Better training needed for 7-3000 number and the 311 number, to provide improved assistance to callers.

RECOMMENDATION: COA should send letter to Council supporting Increased HIF Funding

Topic 2: Technology

- Ultra Montgomery-Mitsi Herrera-get broadband to residents
 - Expand broadband and computer use
 - Expand Main Street program for young adults and people with disabilities
 - Senior Planet

- Data re low income, no access to broadband, no computers, etc. (new federal bill would increase use of broadband)
- Use of smartphones
- Access fees
- Privacy

Technology: Barbara

- Connected Home Living Model -use of technology as enabler to provide important services
 - Use of technology to enhance medical care and monitoring while people remain in homes with information sent back to care managers
 - Reduction of social isolation as care coordinators provide help with social determinants of health.
 - Leverage limited supply of home care coordinators, supply affordable home care with fewer hours of in-person home care.
 - Need for in-home care providers to provide shorter hours of care due to technology
 - Both quality and affordability enhance via technology in combination with needed services (results: reduced hospital stays and readmissions, reduced Medicare penalties related to readmissions, also allowed remote follow up of those discharged during covid who were reluctant to have people come into homes)

Discussion: Mona

- Skeptical of tech marketed to seniors because many don't have WIFI or access; subsidy offered too small.
- would like to see improved bathrooms for all senior housing.
- Make Montgomery County pilot test to see results of putting tech into homes.

Barbara S: important to provide wraparound service needed for use of technology provided;

Barbara B: need to anticipate nursing shortage --technology part of solution

Barbara S: need to address shortage of home care workers--tech only one tool, and older adults becoming more open to its use (COVID example of older adults engaged with tech.)

Mona: nursing shortage is in part due to how nurses are treated in hospitals. System broken.

Topic 3: Food Insecurity - Karon

Senior Nutrition Program – Older Americans Act-

- Currently has budget to sustain through 2022, including new program manager, electronic reporting, data integrity
- Participate in Food Security Task Force, other public/private partnerships
- Issue: Need to identify people in upcounty who may be eligible and connect to senior nutrition program

Manna Food Center:

- Mobile kitchens, food pantry, community food rescue programs, assist SNAP recipients,
- Challenges: Transportation, languages, specific needs of older adults, different ethnic preferences
- Why is SNAP enrollment lower than it could be?
- COA—recover food before it becomes waste?
- Barbara:
 - Food security is a need throughout county, even in more upscale communities
 - Meals on Wheels has been doing well-checks on adults to whom they deliver meals—will report at next meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

Follow up on data re older demographics of adults being served by programs

Topic 4: Transportation (Dick)

Thrive 2050: update of County master plan—transportation areas to be addressed

AREAS: Safe network for biking walking, world class transits system, Driving alone, Advanced communication networks

Follow up Needed: Age-Readiness Plan?

Sam Oji, DOT overview of transportation services available (Connect-a-Ride, same day taxi access, JCA's free taxi rides for COVID testing and vax, FLEX (now have call in system), Flash system, transportation to recreation and senior centers, Medicaid transportation

Sara Fought JCA, programs: Connect a Ride, escorted transportation, village rides, elder buses

Follow up needed:

- Need for improved Communication for residents
- COA would like to be part of COG grant to provide travel training on retrofitted bus--on hold due to pandemic.
- DOT / DHHS /Taxicab Commission survey of residents 65+ and those with disabilities. The focus of the survey is obtaining input on taxi services from 65+ residents and those with disabilities. (Ask Shawn about how County is reaching residents?)

VISION Zero: Making sidewalks and streets safer for walkers—goal to reduce traffic deaths, fatal and severe crashes. Saving lives preventable and not expensive. Older adults vulnerable

Pedestrian Safety Master Plan, to make walking or “rolling” safer and more accessible via better design, etc. Developed pedestrian audit toolkit to let pedestrians audit their local sidewalk, give feedback to County.

Issues: What to do about nighttime driving?

Other December/future agenda Items

- **Senior Fellows Program** – COA doesn't do much about employment for 50+; council and executive have different programs. Council now has 7 fellows, stipend for meals and transportation. Asked for consideration to change name. Exec program now has fellows in HR, DHCA, OCP, DHHS; we've learned that sister counties have full time Age-Friendly staff.

Discussion

- Need more information about how this program is run. Are departments willing to take on more senior fellows?
- Team up with Age-Friendly employment work group, which focuses on resources for older job seekers, educating businesses on benefits of hiring and maintaining older workers, and on ageism in the workplace.
- Senior employment in general may be future topic;
- Villages (Pazit) – villages would like some budgetary/priority requests
- Design for Life

Process for coming year:

At December meeting, planning for 2022: Develop a table, decide who will take responsibility for which topic over the year, and identify specific outcomes where known.