

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

Date: June 13, 2023
9:30 am to 11:30 am

“Age-Friendly Montgomery and CoA Budget Priorities Discussions”

Call to order: Meeting called to order at 9:30AM

Commissioners In Attendance: Wayne Berman (co-chair), Laurie Pross, Joyce Dubow, Mona Grieser, Mary Sweeney, Barbara Selter,

Staff: Pazit Aviv, MoCo; Peter Flandrau, MoCo; Shawn Brennan, Age-Friendly Montgomery; Gemmena Murchison, MoCo

Guests: Sara Fought, Jewish Council for the Aging; Joan Green, Founder, Innovative Speech Therapy

Opening Remarks from the Co-Chair: Wayne and Betsy welcomed everyone and reviewed the agenda that featured a discussion of Age-Friendly Montgomery by Shawn Brennan and discussion of ideas to present for the FY 25 CoA Budget Priorities.

Approval of the Minutes: The May 9, 2023, meeting minutes were reviewed and approved with minor corrections offered by Mary Sweeny and Laurie Pross

DEBRIEF AND DISCUSSIONS:

After some brief background remarks on Age Friendly, Wayne introduced Shawn Brennan who spoke about Age Friendly Montgomery, its purpose, goals, and activities.

Shawn presented an overview of the Age-Friendly Montgomery initiative. Age-Friendly Montgomery County is an initiative to enhance the County as a wonderfully diverse Community for a Lifetime--a place where all residents can age, thrive to their full potential, and contribute as a powerful resource in making our County a better, stronger, more inclusive community for everyone. The initiative was championed by former County Executive Ike Leggett who believed that Montgomery County has a demonstrated record of commitment to meeting the needs of its active, vital senior residents as well as those who are more vulnerable. Building on that record, in December 2015, the County enrolled in the World Health Organization/AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities. The County joins more than 140 Age-Friendly communities across the country, as well as those in more than 20 nations around the world. These localities are committed to ensuring that they are well designed, livable communities that meet the needs of residents of all ages. Montgomery County also has enrolled in the Dementia Friendly America initiative to address the needs of persons with cognitive impairments and their caregivers. These two programs complement, strengthen, and enhance one another and together will benefit the entire community.

The County Executive leads this effort, together with the County Council, residents across the County, community and faith-based organizations, businesses, and other stakeholders. Together, these community leaders offer critical input into planning for an Age-Friendly future that is designed to meet the changing needs of all County residents, with a focus on our rapidly growing and diverse older population.

An Age-Friendly Advisory Group comprised of public and private leaders oversees the efforts of ten workgroups in addressing domains considered essential to an age-friendly community. Based on information gathered from the Age-Friendly Montgomery Survey, community focus groups and other sources, the work groups have established strategic plans in key domains, as listed below, to improve resources and services. The Age-Friendly Domains and Missions include:

1. Civic and Social Involvement: To encourage and support vital living for all older adults in Montgomery County by providing opportunities for physical, mental, and social interaction.
2. Communication and Outreach: To distribute and publicize recognizable, understandable, timely, and accessible information on County and public resources and services for older adults.
3. Elder Abuse Prevention: To protect elderly adults from maltreatment, physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation of every type through education, intervention, and prosecution.
4. Employment: To promote the equitable recruitment and training of workers aged 50 and older to enhance their employability and to benefit employers.
5. Health and Wellness: To bring together government and community partners to expand and promote health and wellness awareness, resources, and activities for adults 55+ that help maintain or improve physical, cognitive, and emotional health. List continues back Age-Friendly Montgomery County, MD
6. Home and Community-Based Services: To provide Montgomery County residents with coordinated, personalized, community-based support allowing them to age safely and with dignity in their communities.
7. Housing: To ensure that Montgomery County older adults will have choices of dwelling types to meet the changing needs and preferences of this population. The County will support initiatives to assist older adults to age in place, downsize, choose rental housing, or home ownership. Further, the County will support housing with supportive services so that older adults can remain in their communities.
8. Planning, Outdoor Spaces, and Buildings: To “change the way we age” by enabling older adults to “stay active, to the fullest extent possible, within all areas of life; physical, spiritual, emotional, intellectual, vocational, social, and environmental.
9. Senior Public Safety: To provide physical, financial, technological protection and safety for older adults.
10. Transportation and Mobility: To provide public and private transportation and mobility systems that enable older adults to go safely where they want to go, when they want to go.

Many of these domains overlap with CoA Committees like Aging in Community Committee, H&W, PP, and Communications

The keep up to date with Age Friendly programs, everyone is welcome to read the monthly article in the Beacon; weekly news; the Age Friendly website; (www.montgomerycountymd.gov/senior); as well as attending periodic summits.

In closing Shawn invited the Committee members to get involved in the Age Friendly domains. She cited the need for citizen leadership, building on examples of Jean Dinwiddie (Communications) and David Gamse (Employment). Shawn also indicated that she has volunteered to serve on a planning committee to strengthen coordination with the State, especially with regards to the development of the Secretary of Aging’s new Multi-sector Plan.

BUSINESS MEETING:

As part of the business meeting, the following budget and policy suggestions were offer for the AIC wants to put forward for consideration for FY 25.

1. Sponsoring a technology pilot program that looks at the use of technology to help reduce staffing costs for HCBS. The program would include remote care and remote monitoring to help care givers become more efficient. Link to workforce compensation. Need to train caregivers in technology.

2. Need to address housing related to HOC issues. (Mary) Community needs to better understand and access the HOC. Suggest a study to look at and enhance the structure of the HOC. Invite the Exec Director of HOC to speak.
3. Gather leadership and stakeholders in the world of technology to leverage the benefits of technology. A training program to help older adults. Train the trainers' programs, for example at the Rockville Senior Center.
4. Support the newly developed Hub-and-Spoke concept.
Revise / Amend the County Building Codes to advance Universal Design. Identify the true costs of not doing Universal Design.
 - a. Meeting with developers, building industry, etc.
 - b. Meeting with County Council
 - c. Meeting with Community Leaders. Work with UMD to prepare a report.
5. A Housing Navigator is needed. Marketplace sites are hard to access. Needed for affordable housing. To help low-income seniors find options for affordable housing.

At a special subsequent AIC meeting, held on July 13th, these budget items were revised to submit the following items for consideration at the CoA budget meeting being held on July 27th:

1. **Smarter Care Technology Project:** Program Formulation and Pilot design \$250,000
2. Implementation Subsidy **Hub and Spoke Model for Villages:** \$100,000
3. Provide **gap-filling (last-minute) transportation services to older adults and residents with disabilities.** FY 25: Fund at \$120,000 / year
4. Establish a **safety, accessibility, and customer service training program** for all Montgomery County taxicab drivers. FY 25: Fund at \$190,000 / year
5. Creating an **ElderTech Advisor** and Teacher Network to advance technology adoption among seniors in Montgomery County.

UPCOMING MEETING: The next AIC meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 12 at 9:30 am. The planned focus of this meeting will be to learn more about the Housing Opportunity Commission (HOC) in the County.

MEETING ADJOURNED: Motion and seconded to adjourn meeting at 11:40 am