

Commission on Aging
Executive Committee
May 20, 2021
Virtual via Zoom

Attendees

CoA Members

Barbara Selter, Chair
Jean Dinwiddie, Past Chair and Co-Chair, Communications Committee
Edgar Rivas, Vice Chair
Janice Zalen, Secretary
Richard Jourdenais, Budget Officer
Neal Brown, Co-Chair, Health and Wellness Committee
Marsha Weber, Co-Chair, Health and Wellness Committee
Monica Schaeffer, Co-Chair, Aging in Community Committee
Beverly Rollins, Co-Chair, Communications Committee
Ryan Wilson, Co-Chair, Public Policy Committee
Morris Klein, Co-Chair, Public Policy Committee

Guests

David Engel, Co-Chair, Task Force on Social Isolation and Loneliness of Seniors

Staff

Patrice McGhee, HHS
Shawn Brennan, HHS

Welcome—Barbara Selter, Chair

Chair Barbara Selter opened the meeting with a roll call of meeting attendees and a welcome.

AAA Report—Dr. Patrice McGhee

After complimenting the CoA on its Public Forum, which Dr. McGhee called a “dynamic and phenomenal event,” she provided the following update:

- The County Council will be voting on the budget on May 27.
- The MD Department of Aging (MD DoA) will be hosting three town halls on the draft Maryland Department of Aging FY 2022-2025 State Plan on Aging. as follows: May 26 at 10 am, May 27 at 2 pm and June 1 at 6 pm. To register, go to:

<http://bit.ly/MDOAVirtualTownHall> or call 410-767-4170. MD DoA also is conducting a survey in order to hear from all jurisdictions. The survey may be found at <https://aging.maryland.gov/Pages/StatePlanonAging2.aspx> . All EC members are asked to complete the survey by the June 4 deadline.

- The MC Area Plan was released on May 7. Final submission is due on June 7. This is the one-year re-write and not the four-year plan. The County has a short-term contract with Dr. Erin Smith to help with the Area Plan.
- Interviews are underway for the Program Manager 1 vacancy (Erin Smith's previous position).
- Senior Center Re-openings: Holiday Park, Damascus and Gaithersburg Senior Centers are scheduled to re-open on June 14 for pre-registered activities. Currently, whether congregate meals will resume has not been confirmed. While the MD DoA strongly recommends proof of vaccination, they are not requiring it. The Senior Centers are awaiting MC rules pertaining to proof of vaccination.
- Vaccination Efforts: In-home vaccinations to persons who are homebound have begun, with County nurses administering the vaccine on weekends.

Commission on Aging Business

Approval of April EC Meeting Minutes

Committee members approved the April meeting minutes.

Approval of Agenda for March CoA Meeting

Committee members approved the draft agenda, with minor changes.

Budget Report

Budget Officer Richard Jourdenais reported that there is \$4,895.11 in the account today. There were no expenditures this month.

Discussion of CoA Funds – Report from Subcommittee

Richard Jourdenais reported on the work of the Subcommittee and, after a brief discussion, the following motion was approved with one abstention:

Motion: The money currently in the account will be used to support the Austen Heyman Award for Inspiring “A Community for a Lifetime in MC” until that money has all been spent.

CoA Letters and Meetings

- Edgar Rivas wrote a letter to the County Council recommending that the County not

invest in *Community for Life*, a state program that provides supports and services to help people to age in place, due to concerns about program cost, viability and sustainability, among other concerns.

- Monica Schaefer reported on a very productive meeting with David Salem, HHS; Patrice McGhee, HHS; Shawn Brennan, HHS; Barbara Selter and Mary Sweeny, CoA; regarding the 7-300 response to affordable housing questions. The Commission's concerns and suggestions were well-received and Odile Brunetto, HHS, agreed to pursue six items including the possibility of an affordable housing navigator.
- Joyce Dubow wrote a letter to the County Recreation Department regarding the re-opening of Senior Centers. The EC approved the following motion regarding this letter:

Motion: The EC approves of the letter and it will go to the full Commission for CoA approval.
- Potential Letter: The EC discussed the pros and cons of submitting a letter to the MD Department of Health requesting that the Maryland Medicaid office apply to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services for American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 support to strengthen access to home and community-based services (HCBS) for Medicaid beneficiaries. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that a letter is a good idea and that Edgar Rivas would draft the letter.

Update on Commissioner Recruitment

Applications will be forwarded this week. There are 4 re-applications and 12 new applications for 4 spots.

Update on Annual and Quarterly Reports

Barbara Selter thanked Beverly Rollins and Jean Dinwiddie for completing and submitting the Annual Report for 2020. Janice Zalen was thanked for completing the first Quarterly Report of 2021.

Topics for Advocacy Training

With Maritza Rivera's encouragement, the Community Advocacy Institute will hold advocacy training for the Commission and would like the Commission to select topics for this training. After a brief discussion, the following motion was approved:

Motion: The first session of advocacy training will include letter-writing and training on county council member meetings. If deemed needed, the Commission will pursue a second training session.

Schedule for Strategic Planning and Budget Priority sessions in July

The strategic planning session will be held on July 15. The budget priority session will be held on July 22. The EC will discuss budget priorities at its June meeting.

Hears Research Project and Next Steps

David Engel explained that the Hears Research Project is interested in distributing 300 over-the-counter hearing devices to three jurisdictions in MD for a study to provide evidence on ACCESS Hears' success. Montgomery County (MC) might be one of the three sites. This would start a hearing program where none currently exists. Initially, it would not cost the county any money though at some point a volunteer would be needed to work on the program. Hears Research Project requested that the CoA send a letter of support for this program to be established in MC. After much discussion, the following motion was proposed:

Motion: The CoA supports the Hears Research Program and will write a letter of support, but with the condition that the distribution of hearing devices is based on economic need.

Mr. Engel checked with the Project and learned that the program could not be based on economic need at this time. After more discussion, the motion was amended as follows:

Amended Motion: The CoA supports the Hears Research Program in MC and will write a letter of support by the deadline of May 24. This motion passed with one dissension.

Update on "Find the Good and raise It" COA Award and Recognition Program

Although Wayne Berman was not present to discuss this program, it was agreed that he would send a revised draft of this program with a deadline for the EC to comment on criteria and process.

Update on Task Forces

- The Task Force on Racial Equity, Dementia Services, and Policing: The Final Report of this Task Force was reviewed by the Public Policy Committee who still had concerns about the document and its recommendations. Ryan Wilson agreed to edit the document and send the edited version to the Task Force, and copy the Public Policy Committee.
- Task Force on Social Isolation and Loneliness of Seniors: It was agreed that this Task Force would continue in order to conduct follow-up work from the Public Forum.

Committee Reports

Communications Committee (CC): Jean Dinwiddie reported that the CC is planning to change the name of *Seniors Today*. Please send suggestions to Jean Dinwiddie by the end of the month. Beverly Rollins reported that the new member orientation booklet is almost complete.

Health and Wellness Committee (HWC): Marsha Weber reported that the HWC continues its work on home-based care, which is a very broad area. The Committee is trying to narrow down the subject to a few areas in which they can have an impact.

Aging in Community Committee (ACC): Monica Schaeffer reported that the Committee continues to work on food insecurity. In addition, it has planned the speakers for the June 24 Commission meeting. The theme of this program is *Design for Life* in which accessibility is a part of ordinary living. The confirmed speakers are Jessica Fusillo, Community Outreach Public Relations Manager, Department of Permitting Services; Gail Lucas, Department of Permitting Services; and Dean Packard, President, Universal-Communities.

Public Policy Committee (PPC): This Committee reviewed letters drafted and sent by the Commission as described above and reviewed the report and recommendations of the Racial Equity Task Force.

Action Items

- All Executive Committee members are asked to register for and attend one town hall on the state plan on aging. (See above for registration information.)
- All Executive Committee members are asked to complete the MD DoA survey (see above for link to survey).
- Barbara Selter will bring the letter on senior center re-openings to the full Commission for its approval.
- Edgar Rivas will draft a letter requesting that MD apply for ARP funds
- David Engel will forward a letter of support for ACCESS Hears to Barbara Selter.
- Ryan Wilson will edit the Report of the Task Force on Racial Equity, Dementia Services, and Policing and will forward the edited version to the Task Force and copy the Public Policy Committee.
- All Executive Committee members are asked to send suggestions for a new name for *Seniors Today* by the end of May.
- Wayne Berman will send a revised draft of the “Find the Good” program with a deadline for the EC to comment on criteria and process.