

**Minutes for Commission on Aging
November 30, 2023
Convened by zoom
9:30 A.M.- 11:45 A.M.**

Attending the meeting:

COA Members

1. Wayne Berman
2. Linda Bergofsky
3. David Engel
4. Barbara Selter
5. Marsha Weber
6. Arunima Gosh
7. Austin Heyman
8. Beverly Rollins
9. Bob Levy
10. Nkiru Ezeani
11. Jean Dinwiddie
12. Betsy Carrier
13. Kate Stein
14. Kathleen McGuinness
15. Kendel Matthews
16. Laurie Pross
17. Marcia Pruzan
18. Mary Sweeney
19. Mona Grieser
20. Morris Klein
21. Norman Goldstein
22. Rena Eichler
23. Ryan Wilson
24. Siboncube
25. Virginia Cain
26. Yvette Monroe
27. Ric Ricciardi
28. Marie Sloan
29. Katie Smith

Guests

- Stepanie Moore, MoCo HOC
- Stacy Sigler, Dept of Rec
- Phoebe Shih, Asian American Health Initiative
- Tonya Gilchrist, Commission on People with Disabilities
- Faisal Khan, MCDOT
- Shane Rock, JCA
- Paul Moss, Partners in Care MD
- Gerard Etienne, JCA
- Betsy Luecking, MoCo Staff for Commission on People with Disabilities
- Elizabeth Lang, MCPL
- Jim Resnick, MCFRS
- Tina Purser Langley, MoCo AAA
- Josi Makon, HHS Older Adults Behavioral Health
- Karen Goss, Commission on People with Disabilities
- Kathleen Dennis, JCA
- Kwo-Hwa Wang, public
- Patrice McGhee, MC AAA
- Peter Flandrau, MC AAA
- Shawn Brennan, MC Age-Friendly
- Christine Hong, Services to End and Prevent Homelessness
- Tremayne Jones, MC AAA
- Fatima Aura, The Kelsey Group
- Joe Knackstedt, DC DHCD

David Engel, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:30 A.M, and welcomed all the commissioners and guests. The new commissioners introduced themselves.

Midway through the meeting Peter stated that questions can not be asked using the zoom chat function. At the next meeting he will clarify how the chat function can be used.

DIVISION UPDATE: Dr. Patrice McGhee, Division Chief, provided an update. She thanked all the individuals who helped plan, played a role during, and/or attended the Summit on Aging. An initial debrief has been held. The debrief is the start of a series of in-depth deep dives spearheaded by the Innovations Department. They will compile what was learned and determine next steps toward an updated Senior Agenda.

Report on Federal Fiscal Year
End/ OAAPS

- Older American Act (OAA) FFY reporting is due to Maryland Department of Aging (MDOA) by Sept 30- end of year.
- Older American Act Performance System (OAAPS) reporting data is being entered.
- Data and Performance Manager will be compiling performance matrix from each OAA program to upload to the system under the direction of Maryland Department of Aging (MDOA).

Report on Key AAA Positions

- Actively being moved through the hiring process: AAA Director, Caregiver Manager and 3 Long-term Care Ombudsman (LTCO)
- Vacancies remaining: Support Planning Agency (SPA) supervisor, Assessment, Evaluation and Review Services (AERS) Community Health Nurses (CHNII) and AERS Nurse Manager.

LIAISON REPORTS:

Aging and Disability: Tina Purser Langley reported that to date there has been a very successful rollout of ACCESS HEARS. ARPA Funds are being used to make the hearing devices available to eligible individuals. Since March 2023 there have been 425 inquiries, 185 individuals have gotten devices, and 47 will get devices. There has been increased publicity in English and Spanish about the devices. There is one more year of ARPA funding and then CoA will advocate for County funding to continue the program.

Asian American Health Initiative: Phoebe Shih reported there has been a working group and presentations on end-of-life care and palliative care. The goal has been to educate the community about these issues.

Department of Transportation: Faisal Khan reported on \$2 million that is being used to conduct a study of the rapid transit and an upgrade of the bus system. Currently there are Flash buses on Route 29. With this service buses are scheduled to come very frequently. The Flash bus system will be expanded to Route 355. Current use of buses is increasing and is at 83% of pre-Covid ridership. The Department is studying the options to improve the “Call and Ride” program. There are service issues related to lack of taxis and inadequate training of drivers.

JCA: Gerard Etienne reported there are difficulties finding enough drivers for the Call and Ride Program. Kathleen Davis reported that JCA is recruiting volunteer for schools for tutoring and the foster grandparent program.

Services to End and Prevent Homelessness: Christine Hong reported on local statistics regarding homeless in Montgomery County, one-half of the homeless are over 45 years old. Being homeless has a severe impact on one’s health. She is putting in her budget a position for a health aid(s) as it is important to have aids in shelters to help provide case management for health care issues. Ms. Hong will give a more detailed presentation to the CoA in January.

Fire and Rescue: Jim Resnick shared information about a recent fire in Gaithersburg that occurred in an older adult’s home. In January, Fire and Rescue is adding two additional fire safety educators. They are also partnering with “Big Box” stores to provide fire safety information.

Department of Recreation: Stacey Sigler reported on Senior Programs and activities at Senior Centers. This is a very busy time of year for Senior Centers with holiday programs.

Age Friendly: Shawn Brennan reported that she was working with the Office of Innovation to maximize what was learned at the Forum on Aging. Shawn is also developing a short flyer that will explain the “Age Friendly” program.

GUEST SPEAKERS ON UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Fatimah Aure, MPP Director, Field Building Capacity, The Kelsey Building Opportunities Through Inclusivity

The Kelsey Group pioneers disability- forward housing solutions that open doors to homes and opportunities for everyone. They have developed Inclusive Design Standards that include 300+elements. The elements reflect design choices, building features, development strategies, or operational policies that support accessibility and inclusion.

The Inclusive Design Standards came from project specific needs for a set of strategies and tools, beyond code, to support cross-disability access and inclusion. The Inclusive Design Standards (Design Standards) aim to equip designers, builders, and developers with guidelines

and frameworks for disability-forward housing creation.

Building codes are baseline standards are driven by local, state and federal municipalities design and construction requirements to ensure safe & resilient structures. These are perceived by some as “enough” to meet the needs of vulnerable populations

Universal Design is for Architects and Developers. Universal design is used for designing the built environment to be usable to the greatest extent possible regardless of a person’s age, ability, or status. It is a philosophy when approaching home design accessibility (use of and access to the built environment) for all people/ users.

The Kelsey Design Standards are for Architects, Developers, Disability Organizations, Municipalities. It is a new framework for creating disability-forward, inclusive communities, a tool for a home-creators with a set of options and ideas to offer better experience for residents accessibility and inclusion (sense of belonging). All their information is free and open source.

The Kelsey Design Standards are:

- Cross Disability to support access and inclusion for the broad and diverse needs of people with disabilities.
- Multidimensional to address the many elements of housing development, design, and operations that impact accessibility and inclusion.
- Implementable and Expandable to provide standards that can be clearly and swiftly adopted into projects and policies while evolving and expanding over time.
- Value Creation where disability-forward design supports better, more efficient, equitable, building development.

The Design Standards are NOT:

- Code Requirement - Designed to work alongside your locality and funding specific design requirements
- A Replacement for engaging individuals with lived experiences in within your local community - rather they include requirements and strategies for doing so
- Complete - This is a first version with revisions planned for 2023 as well as new tools to support their use.

Joseph Knackstedt, Deputy Manager of Community Development, D.C. Department of Housing and Community Development

Mr. Knackstedt described how his Department has integrated the Kelsey Standards into their RFPs for affordable housing. They use a scoring system for evaluating RFPs for multi-family affordable housing where points are given for meeting various universal design guidelines. Use of these guidelines were introduced in 2021. Currently 5% of the

constructed affordable units have incorporated universal design elements. The Lisner in Northwest DC on Connecticut Avenue and the 6th Street Development in Northeast DC near Gallaudet have incorporated universal design into 100% of the units.

A question was raised whether any of these specific universal design program can apply to single family homes. This program applies to multi-family housing only. DC has the highest per capita investment in the country for affordable housing; however, there still is a waitlist.

Joesph commented that Virginia is the most comprehensive state for incorporating universal design into their affordable housing; 100% of their new affordable housing incorporates universal design.

At the conclusion of the presentation Betsy Luecking, Outreach Coordinator, Montgomery County, described the history and use of the Design for Life Program in Montgomery County. DFL Tax Incentive Program encourages development of housing options that accommodate a wider range of accessibility needs. This program helps County residents remain in their homes as physical needs change. It encourages construction of housing and renovations that meet diverse accessibility needs for occupants. There was discussion about how often the program was used and whether it could be more consumer accessible if there were fewer permitting requirements for small projects, and whether there was some alternative for consumers having to be out of pocket for the renovation.

OLD BUSINESS

Approval of September CoA minutes, Motion for approval from Kendell and Seconded Wayne. Minutes Approved.

David Engel provided a Chair's Report:

- On October 12 David presented before the HHS Committee CoA's two budget priorities. David listened to much of the testimony from other commissions and heard many priorities that were similar to the CoA's.
- Kudos to those organizations involved in revitalizing the previous Hillwood Manor into the Colonnade on the Creek. At a cost of \$38 million, MHP with help from DHCA, MD CDA, and other financial partners, they revitalized 96 units of 1,2-,3-, & 4-bedroom affordable housing. The building is located in Takoma Park. The average cost per unit was \$395,000. MHP seems to be an important resource for developing affordable housing stock.

- Harvard University released an important report titled: “Housing America's Older Adults 2023 report.” A presentation about this report can be found at <https://www.npr.org/2023/11/30/1215460460/housing-seniors-affordable-harvard-report-baby-boomers>.
- David thanked Ryan Wilson and Marcia Weber for their dedicated service on the CoA.
- Thank you to Shawn Brennan, the Montgomery County Recreation Department and many others who helped make the Summit on Aging a success. Of the 108 survey responses returned to date, 95 people responded very satisfied and somewhat satisfied that the Summit helped to foster conversations and inspire action. 88 responded that they were very satisfied and somewhat satisfied with the Keynote Address. Recognizing that the breakout sessions were split up among attendees, the attendees provided very favorable responses to the breakouts.

Feedback and takeaways from participants:

- Residents are not aware of services. More knowledge needed on all subjects as many did not even know some of the programs for residents existed!
- Recommendations require funding.
- Seniors and senior-serving organizations should not be an afterthought. Our numbers deserve equivalent attention and resources as other age cohorts.
- Management of Senior Communities need specialized training in the needs of this senior housing population and a dire understanding of Elder Abuse. Must be certified!

Actionable ideas:

- reinstate the Understanding Aging Education Program (Leslie Marks)
- reinstate the Dementia Friendly Initiative
- reinstate Senior Fellows program
- Create a one-stop shop for resident contact input
- County Executive and County Council endorsement of Age-Friendly and the Multi-sector plan for Aging
- Homecare Workforce Task Force Implementation Manager
- Need to have another summit sooner rather than later.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Aging in Community:
 - Wayne reported on the presentation about the Randolph Road affordable housing development. In December there will be a further presentation about the financing of the project.
 - At the December meeting the committee will also hear an update from Somer Cross about recommendations from the County housing task force.
 - AIC is setting up a housing and technology work groups to do a deeper dive on these topics. The housing work group will have their first meeting on 12/10.
- Health and Wellness
 - Marcia spoke about the importance of the CoA and committees, and gave as an example the advocacy about the Access Hears program. This helped to form the program.
 - At the last meeting Judy Levy presented background information and a summary of the AMSS Roundtable on Mental Health among seniors. In recent years this organization has held a number of events that focused on mental health, which has emerged as an issue of primary and urgent concern. There will be follow-up discussion and presentations on mental health issues.
- Communications:
 - Beverly reported that the Ambassador program had a successful launch
 - Library program is accomplishing its goals. David did send a letter to the head of Montgomery County library and has not received a response
 - 50+ in January program will be on volunteering
 - The committee will be reviewing Montgomery County's Senior website
- Public Policy:
 - Morris reported on the Legislative Breakfast that is scheduled for December 7 from 9-10:30.
 - He thanked Ryan for his service.

NEW BUSINESS

- Treasurer's Report- Nikki reported at the balance in the commission's account is \$2074.61. We spent \$390 to print the briefing book that was distributed at the Summit on Aging. There are copies remaining for future distribution.
- No speaker is planned for the December meeting which will be a social gathering of the commissioners to be held at Holiday Park Senior Center at noon. A buffet lunch will be served. The Community for a Lifetime Awards will be announced.
- In January, Christine Hong from the county program Services to End and Prevent

Homelessness (SEPH) has been invited to address the commission. We are seeking speakers for February and beyond.

- The Nominating Committee consisting of Wayne, Betsy, and Joyce proposed the following slate:
 - Chair: David Engel
 - 1 st Co-chair: Yvette Monroe
 - 2 nd Co-chair: Wayne Berman
 - Secretary: Laurie Pross
 - Asst. Secretary: Arunima Ghosh
 - Treasurer: Nkiru Ezeani

The new officers assume their duties effective January 2024.

Meeting was interrupted and then adjourned at 11:30