

**Commission of Aging**

**May 27, 2021**

9:30 am – 12:00 pm

**Virtual via Zoom**

**Members Present**

Barbara Selter, Chair

Edgar Rivas, Vice Chair

Janice Zalen, Secretary

Richard Jourdenais, Budget Officer

Jean Dinwiddie, Past Chair

Wayne Berman

Neal Brown

Joyce Dubow

Arunima Ghosh

Morris Klein

Nanine Meiklejohn

Maritza Rivera

Beverly Rollins

Monica Schaeffer

Ann M. Serafenas

Katie Smith

Hillery Tsumba

Marsha Weber

Arthur Williams

Ryan Wilson

**Members Absent**

Ruby Moone

Karon Phillips

Tho Tran

**Alumni Members**

Chuck Kauffman

Rev Vikram

**Liaisons**

David Engel, GROWS

Monique Gardner, African-Amer. Health.

Stephanie Moore, MC HOC

Marcia Pruzan, Age-Friendly MC

Betty Ring, Sr. Fellow for Sidney Katz

**Speakers**

Stuart Butler, Brookings Institute

**Staff**

Patrice McGhee Director, AAA

Shawn Brennan, DHHS

Tremayne Jones, DHHS

Tina Purser Langley, H&W Comm.

## **Welcome – Barbara Selter, Chair**

Chair Barbara Selter welcomed everyone and took roll of attendees.

## **AAA Director Updates – Dr. Patricia McGhee, Director of AAA**

1. The MD Department of Aging (MD DoA) is hosting three town halls on their draft FY 2022-2025 State Plan on Aging. as follows: yesterday, today at 2 pm and June 1 at 6 pm. The plan can be reviewed on the State web site. MD DoA also is conducting a survey with a (new) deadline of June 30<sup>th</sup>. All members are asked to complete the survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JQDTV2>.
2. 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.
3. Interviews are underway for the Program Manager 1 vacancy (Erin Smith's previous position).
4. Senior Center Re-openings: Holiday Park, Damascus and Gaithersburg Senior Centers are scheduled to re-open on June 14. Masks may be required, especially of unvaccinated individuals. Jewish Council on Aging is resuming transportation. Meal services are planned. There is no planned rollout of senior programming at community centers.
5. Vaccination Efforts: In-home vaccinations to persons who are homebound have begun, with County nurses administering the vaccine on weekends.
6. County Council is voting on the FY 22 budget today.

## **Guest Speaker: “Rethinking Care for Older Adults”, Stuart Butler, Brookings Institute and Visiting Fellow, Convergence Center for Policy Resolution**

The Convergence Center for Policy Resolution and the Hartford Foundation brought together experts from around the country for three two-hour sessions to think about the future and the experts determined three things:

1. The current business model for most nursing facilities is problematic because they serve both post-acute and long- term- care residents—two very different kinds of people. Ramifications are that people who would prefer to live at home are in nursing facilities because of Medicaid payments. An alternative business model for nursing facilities is needed.
2. There is an enormous opportunity for more home-based care, e.g., medical and social services hubs within a community. We need more systematic efforts to make home-based care more viable. John Hopkins has a good program in which a three-person team (occupational therapist, nurse and handyman) visit homes to determine how to make it safe for the individual to live at home. Modern advances in technology also make it easier for people to be safe, e.g., “hospital at home” programs. A strong development of social networks is also important, e.g., villages.
3. We need to rethink the care-giving workforce. We should be looking at team-based approaches and see workers as integral parts of care teams.

Mr. Butler suggested the following focuses for the future:

1. Payment system: traditional long-term stay nursing facilities need to be more financially stable, but also the payment system should encourage smaller homes. Could Medicare Advantage address housing costs or otherwise have a stronger long-term care component? The Waiver Program provides opportunities to states.
2. Create a better trained, better paid work force: Overhaul both federal and state activities in this area. Change licensing requirements so workers can do more things and the team model would be more effective.

Mr. Butler suggested the following for the County level:

1. The American Rescue Plan (ARP) contains \$12.7 billion dollars for home-and-community-based services. The County should encourage the State to apply for these funds. (Editor's note: The CoA already wrote to the Department of Health with this request.)
2. Montgomery County should examine work force licensing and move to universal worker licenses. The County should work with the State on this.
3. Change zoning building codes to encourage smaller mixed age facilities.
4. Senior Villages potentially will be extremely important parts of caregiving systems. Some villages are aligning with hospitals to reduce the rate of readmissions. Villages are a powerful tool in the future that should be a link for medical and care systems with persons at home.
5. Use local county management boards to work in the long- term care area.
6. Look at technology in terms of how facilities use it and how to use it to keep individuals in their homes. Have a plan to look at what technology can do. Get up to speed re technology (ARP money can be used.)

## **Commission on Aging Business**

### ***Approval of April Minutes***

Minutes were approved.

### ***Budget Report***

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

### ***Recommendations from Subcommittee on Status of COA Account***

Wayne Berman reported that given legislative and county mandates, the Subcommittee recommends that the Commission draws down its money and closes out its account. A motion to accept the Subcommittee's recommendation was approved.

### ***COA Letters***

- Wayne Berman wrote a letter to Councilman Katz describing issues regarding affordable housing and the 3000 number. This letter resulted in a meeting with Odile Brunetto and the 3000 staff and CoA representatives Monica Schaefer, Barbara Selter

and Mary Sweeny, regarding the 7-300 response to affordable housing questions. The Commission's concerns and suggestions were well-received and Odile Brunetto, 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 Commission approved a motion to accept this letter.
- 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. The Commission approved a motion to accept this letter.

### ***Vaccine Commercials***

Commissioners Tho Tran, Edgar Rives, Barbara Selter and Alumnus Rev Vikaram taped recordings in several languages to promote COVID vaccines.

### ***Update on Commissioner Recruitment***

There will be four reappointments and four new Commissioners. There are twelve applications for the four open positions and interviews will, hopefully, take place soon.

### ***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. Both reports will be posted on the Commission's web site.

### ***Schedule for Strategic Planning and Budget Priority sessions in July***

The strategic planning session will be held on July 15. At that time, the Commission also will rank potential topics and speakers for future meetings. The budget priority session will be held on July 22. The EC will discuss budget priorities at its June meeting.

### ***Community Action Board Advocacy Training***

Barbara Selter thanked Maritza Rivera for encouraging the Community Advocacy Institute to hold advocacy training for Commission members. The Executive Committee recommended that the first session focus on letter-writing and training on county council member meetings. This is an optional meeting though everyone is strongly encouraged to attend.

### ***Austin Heyman "Find the Good and Praise It" COA Award and Recognition Program***

Wayne Berman provided a brief overview of this new program. He noted that there is a lot of good work occurring in the County that support programs for older citizens. The CoA will recognize this good work with certificates and possibly letter from the County Executive. We

will be looking for innovators, persevering individuals, risktakers, etc. and will recognize them twice a year at CoA events and possibly also on an ad hoc basis at CoA meetings. All Commissioners are encouraged to help find these “nuggets.” Hopefully, this can kick off in September with the first award(s) being presented at the Legislative Breakfast in October. Please send comments on the paper describing this program to Wayne Berman or Barbara Selter by June 10.

### ***Hears Research Project***

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 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. The CoA wrote a letter in support of this Project in Montgomery County.

Barbara Selter noted that while the Commission would like to support ACCESS Hears in Montgomery County, there is no clear jumping off point for the Commission to provide its support. Potentially, the Hears Research Project can be the jumping off point for ACCESS Hears.

### ***Update on Task Forces***

**Social Isolation (SILOS) Task Force:** Barbara Selter thanked Co-chairs Maritza Rivera and David Engel for their outstanding job with the Public Forum. David Engel thanked many individuals for their help and reported that 220 people were registered for the event with 140-160 signed on for a long time and 87 individuals on for the entire event. The video-recording is available on You Tube. There likely will be a de-briefing on June 8. While the heavy lifting is done, their work is not over. All are asked to complete the evaluation form.

**Task Force on Dementia, Policing and Racial Equity:** Jean Dinwiddie reported that the Task Force has received feedback from the Public Policy Committee and from Dr. Patrice McGhee. The Task Force work group will meet soon to review these recommendations.

### ***Committee Reports***

#### ***Health and Wellness Committee (HWC)***

Neal Brown reported that the HWC continues its work on home-based care and is considering developing a paper or possibly developing a pilot program. The HWC will determine its next steps at their next meeting. Marsha Weber added that they will focus on how the CoA can have an impact in the County.

#### ***Aging in Community (AIC)***

Wayne Berman reported that the Committee is working on food insecurity, noting that help is particularly needed up-county. In addition, the Committee is planning 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.

### ***Public Policy Committee (PPC)***

Co-Chair Ryan Wilson reported that the PPC discussed transportation issues and the potential for ride-on and metro busses remaining free. The PPC is monitoring the Transportation Improvement Fund. In addition, it reviewed letters drafted and sent by the Commission as described above and reviewed the report and recommendations of the Racial Equity Task Force. Finally, Mr. Wilson reported that the Governor signed the MD Safe Act that allows private rights of action if advantage is taken of vulnerable adults.

### ***Communications Committee (CC)***

Co-chair Jean Dinwiddie reported that *Seniors Today* is in need of a name refresh. All Commissioners are asked to send suggestions to Jean Dinwiddie by next Tuesday. An evaluating panel will choose the top 5 and then the CC will make the final selection. The theme for the June *Seniors Today* is “Serving Diverse Communities in the Public Sector.” The July theme will be “Serving Diverse Communities in the Private Sector.” The August theme is “Faith Leaders.”

The speaker at the next CC meeting will be Mary Anderson, PIO, speaking about how to partner together.

Beverly Rollins reported that the CC is determining how to get information on available supports and services to older adults, as well as how to increase viewership of *Seniors Today*. Also, the new CEO member orientation booklet, which is about 10 pages, is almost finalized. Once completed, the CC will begin work on a handbook for all Commission members.

Beverly Selter thanked Jean Dinwiddie and Beverly Rollins for the excellent work they are doing to enhance the CoA’s communications efforts. Ms. Selter then explained that the CoA is instituting a Buddy System and asked for four volunteers who would buddy up with the four new members. The following four individuals volunteered: Hillery Tumba, Marsha Weber, Janice Zalen and Barbara Selter.

### **Upcoming CoA Meetings—Confirmed and Potential Speakers**

- June 24, 2021 – Affordable Housing – Design for Life (DFL) – Someone from Department of Permitting Services; and Dean Packard, President, Universal-Communities.
- July 15, 2021 – Strategic Planning Session
- July 22, 2021 – Budget Priority Session
- September 23, 2021 – Medical Day Care (Barbara Selter is working on speakers.)

### **Liaison Reports**

- Marcia Pruzan: MC participated in a regional age friendly meeting. The County talked about home-sharing and crimes against adults. Unfortunately, because the program cost money, attendance was not as high as it might have been.
- Betty Ring: Commended the Public Forum.

### **Action Items**

(These action items are based on a review of the minutes)

1. All Commissioners are asked to complete the MDoH survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JQDTV2> by June 30.
2. All Commissioners are asked to 1) review and comment on the paper describing the *Austin Heyman "Find the Good and Praise It" COA Award and Recognition Program* and 2) begin looking for potential candidates for the award.
3. All Commissioners who registered for the Public Forum are asked to complete the evaluation form.
4. All commissioners are asked to send suggestions for new names for *Seniors Today* to Jean Dinwiddie or Barbara Selter by June 1.

### **New Business**

- Barbara Selter reported that the Asian American Health Initiative will be appointing a new liaison to the CoA.
- Wayne Berman reported that he attended a Vision Zero listening session that had a great many bicycle advocates and few seniors on the call. It is important that we try to better participate in Vision Zero.

**Meeting Adjourned.**

