

**Commission on Aging**

**September 23, 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

Virginia Cain

Betsy Carrier

Joyce Dubow

David Engel

Nkiru J. Ezeani

Mona Grieser

Morris Klein

Kendall Matthews

Ruby Moone

Sibo Neube

Laurie Pross

Beverly Rollins

Monica Schaeffer

Katie Smith

Mary Sweeny

Hillery Tumba

Marsha Weber

Arthur Williams

Ryan Wilson

**Members Absent**

Arunima Ghosh

Nanine Meiklejohn

Karon Phillips

Tho Tran

**Alumni Members**

Austin Heyman

Chuck Kauffman

**Liaisons**

Denise Isreal, DOT,

Monique Gardner, African-Amer. Health

Arlee Wallace, African American Health

Jim Resnick, Fire and Rescue

Marcia Pruzan, Age-Friendly MC

Betty Ring, Sr. Fellow for Sidney Katz

Beth Shuman, Senior Legislative Aide,  
Councilmember Gabriel Albornoz

Arlee Wallace, African-Amer. Health

**Speakers**

Gabe Albornoz, Council VP

Asha Hamilton, DHHS

Linda McMillan, Sr. Leg. Analyst

Tremayne Jones, DHHS

Lindsay Lucas, Budget Analyst

**Guest**

**Staff**

Afshin Abedi, Loving Care Medical Day Care

Odile Brunetto, DHHS

Patrice McGhee Director, AAA

Shawn Brennan, DHHS

**Welcome – Barbara Selter, Chair**

Chair Barbara Selter welcomed everyone, took roll, and introduced the new Commission members. Ms. Selter then asked Commission alumni Charles Kaufman to speak about two recently deceased individuals, Miriam Kelty and Jerry Morenoff who had been Commission members and extremely active volunteers, particularly in helping the senior community in Montgomery County.

**AAA Director Update – Dr. Patricia McGhee, Director of AAA**

1. This month is Fall Prevention Month and Governor Hogan proclaimed this week “Fall Prevention” week. Many fall prevention activities are scheduled.
2. The Fourth Annual Active Aging Week is October 4 – 10. One of its signature events, “Go, Grow and Get Active” is scheduled for October 6 at Brookside Gardens.
3. The MD Department of Aging (MDA) is awaiting approval of its state plan.
4. The AAA Plan one year rewrite was approved, but is still in draft. It will be forwarded to the Commission Chair once it is finalized.
5. Erin Smith’s position was filled by Asha Hamilton who began work on August 30, 2021.
6. Medicaid-funded programs have returned to normal in-person service and clients are welcoming the services. COVID protocols are followed.
7. MC government buildings are open and receiving clients.
8. Two AAA programs received National Association of Counties awards.
9. Enrico Lachica. will present information on nursing facilities surveys conducted by the State.

**Increasing Collaboration on CoA Budget Priorities with Guest Speakers Gabe Albornoz, MC Council VP; Linda McMillan, Senior Legislative Analyst; and Lindsay Lucas, Budget Analyst**

**Councilman Gabe Albornoz:**

Councilman Albornoz thanked the Commission for its diligent work and noted that the Commission played a major role in the development of two successful senior summits. He stated that the Council listens closely to the advice and concerns of the CoA. He then made the following points:

- MC's vaccination rates are among the highest in the country because of its infrastructure, alliances and hard work. The County learned lessons about disparities and weathered the COVID storm better than many.
- Three ramifications of the virus that the County needs to attend to are: 1) Everyone's mental health, which will require enhanced support including adult medical day care 2) Significant retention and recruitment issues in the health field; and 3) Housing, particularly as the federal resources are used up.
- We will need to be more intentional in the intersection of aging and planning and we need a multigenerational lens, along with an equity lens.

**Linda McMillan:**

- This is a good time to be talking about budget priorities.
- In FY22, the County provided a record \$89 million in housing initiatives.
- Seniors are eligible for certain HOC senior housing production funds as well as other projects.
- The County invests in funds for Natural Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH).
- Council unanimously enacted ZTA 21-02, *Independent Living Facility for Seniors or Persons with Disabilities – Residential Zone Standards*, which will allow multiple building types for independent living facilities for seniors or persons with disabilities.
- Council continues to be concerned about housing burden of low-income seniors.

**Lindsay Lucas:**

- The topic of budget priorities is very timely because September 30 is the kickoff for looking at the budget. By receiving our priorities early, Ms. Lucas is able to reach out to other analysts.
- This year, there will be hybrid (virtual/in-person) budget forums that Commission members should attend.
- In the Fall, information is collected and in December the budget is submitted to OMB. Then OMB dives deep and asks lots of questions.

**Points made During the question -and -answer session:**

- Councilman Alboroz is “bullish” on adult medical day care. The County's minimum wage is higher than Medicaid payment and the county needs to help providers with this difference. He is impressed that drivers are trained to be caring to the clients and that the food tends to be culturally appropriate and nutritious.
- Councilman Alboroz agreed that there is a need to help people who speak indigenous languages in Montgomery County (he referenced efforts of the International Mayan Defense League) and this need will become stronger as we get more immigrants from Afghanistan.
- According to Councilman Alboroz, there were two committee sessions held with State employees to receive updates on the nursing facility survey situation prior to the transition. He said there should be another. There might be money to fund an impact study. He will talk with HHS to see if they have money or if they have federal money. This is too important and must be gotten right.
- Linda McMillan noted that the nursing facility survey situation is an ongoing issue with the executive branch and negotiations are continuing. The County is continuing to fund

the County staff though what they are legally able to do now is very limited.

- Gabe Alboroz stated that he would be happy to work with Monica Schaeffer and the Commission on expanding the Senior Fellow Program and suggested that he and Monica meet to brainstorm.
- The two-year budget cycle is on hold.
- Percentage rates of MC residents who are vaccinated are: 90% for those over 65 and 83% of eligible individuals.
- Gabe Alboroz stressed that it is important to meet the needs and to underwrite costs of adult day care, but also to support other long term care options. The county must be flexible in providing support where needed, but must prioritize individuals in imminent danger.

## **Commission on Aging Business**

### ***Approval of September Minutes***

Minutes were approved.

### ***Budget Report***

Richard Jourdenais, Budget Officer, reported that after two \$50 donations, the amount in the Commission account is \$4,795.11. His subcommittee will meet about the disposition of these funds.

### ***Chair Report Updates***

- The Community for Lifetime Award group continues its work and will make a presentation at the October meeting. Art Williams suggested that we give the first Award in memoriam to Patrice O'Neil who was very active in Montgomery County Education for thirty years. Wayne Berman will talk with Art Williams off-line about this.
- The Community Action Board provided excellent training that may be available on video soon. It is highly recommended that those commissioners who missed the training watch the video.
- The new orientation materials were distributed to the new commissioners who were also assigned buddies. The video recording of new member orientation is available on the COA website. One more volunteer buddy is needed for the newest commissioner, Mona Greiser. Jean Dinwiddie volunteered to be her buddy.

### ***Request for Participants for Nominating Committees and Recreation Board***

The following individuals agreed to be on the Nominating Committee: Morris Klein, Joyce Dubrow and Katie Smith.

Kendell Matthews volunteered to be the Commission liaison to the Recreation Board. Janice Zalen agreed to be her back-up.

### ***Committee Participation***

It is the responsibility of all commission members to attend at least one committee's meetings though every commissioner is welcome to belong to more than one committee. All Commissioners are asked to select one or more committees that they will be part of and to notify the appropriate committee co-chair by November 1. The co-chairs are:

Health and Wellness: Marsha Weber and Neal Brown

Aging in Community: Monica Schaeffer and Wayne Berman

Public Policy: Ryan Wilson and Morris Klein

Communication: Beverly Rollins and Jean Dinwiddie

### ***Assisted Living Regulations***

Draft regulations were issued by the MD Department of Health and Zoom meetings are being held on these regulations. The first Zoom session was attended by Nikki Enzani on September 19 and she also plans to attend the next meeting on October 19. Additional meetings will be held on November 16 from 1 – 3 and December 16 from 1-3. Ms. Selter will send information on how to sign up for these meetings.

The draft regulations are divided up into three parts, with each of the first three meetings focusing on a part. The fourth meeting in December will review the entire document.

### ***Approval of Documents***

- TSIF Letter that will be sent to transportation officials was approved;
- Social Isolation Fact Sheet was approved and David Engel was thanked for his work;
- The Operations Handbook was approved with a thank you to Beverly Rollins for her work;
- Report from the Task Force on Racial Equity, Dementia Services and Policing was approved. It will now go to the Communications Committee to determine distribution.

### **Committee Reports**

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

HWC Co-Chair Marsha Weber reported that home-based care is its major focus and that they are currently defining specific areas in which to focus. HWC is exploring what neighboring jurisdictions are doing and the possibility of collaboration. Barbara Selter noted that the Age-Friendly Committee on Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) is focusing on direct care workers. On November 4, they are holding an open meeting to develop recommendations. Ms. Selter will send information on this meeting and she stressed the importance of collaboration.

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

Wayne Berman reported that about 20 people attended AIC's last meeting to learn about Vision Zero and Pedestrian Safety Master Programs. MC developed a Safety Tool Kit that allows people to relay safety problems. Wayne Berman will obtain and distribute this Took Kit. Monica Schaeffer reported

that the AIC's next meeting will focus on housing models, home sharing, etc. November and December will be planning meetings for the AIC.

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

Co-Chair Ryan Wilson reported that the PPC will focus on the assisted living regulations at its next meeting. He also announced that the date of the Legislative Breakfast is December 9 and asked that all Commissioners put it on their calendars and plan to attend. Co-Chair Morris Klein reported that the PPC discussed HCBS at its last meeting and will continue to focus on this issue. He will send out a link to a Justice in Aging study on the difficulties involved with HCBS.

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

Co-chair Beverly Rollins reported that both Jean Dinwiddie and Katie Smith are working hard on *Seniors Today* and that they will reveal its new name on its October show. The CC has many other action items including updating the briefing book in time for the legislative breakfast.

### **Liaison Updates**

- Denise Isreal, Department of Transportation, reported:
  - On July 19, Flex-on-Demand started a call center in response to a large demand for it. Customers can call 240-301-3842 or still use the App to request pick-up within designated service areas.
  - The federal mask mandate on transit remains in effect until January 18.
  - Ride-on and other busses in MC remain free.
  - DOT instituted a new program in which they provide free transportation for people with disabilities or 65+ for COVID testing and for vaccinations and the taxi waits to return the customer home. To use this program, one calls the JCA to get a free taxi code. DOT is busy promoting and advertising this program.
  - Shawn Brennan noted that free bus transportation was important advocacy objective of the CoA and that Commissioners should try the Flex-program and send feedback to DOT.
  - Some taxi drivers have received training on how to be caring. Anytime Taxis has a particular focus on serving older adults and residents with disabilities.
  - There are only two flex service areas right now, but the 29 corridor is being considered as a future addition to the program.
- Marcia Pruzan, Age - Friendly: The CoA and Age-Friendly have overlapping interest and should work together. Currently, Age-Friendly is working with AARP on engaging older adults and with George Washington University Center for Health Humanities and Engagement on an October 27 seminar. Ms. Pruzan will forward the link.
- Betty Ring, Sidney Katz' office, a senior resources fair was held on line and was well attended. There will be another forum in November.

## **Invited Speakers for Upcoming Meetings**

- October 28, 2021 – Medical Day Care – Elizabeth Barnes, Maryland Association of Adult Day Services and Afshin Abedi, Loving Care Maryland
- November 25, 2021 – Primer on HCBS Programs in MC, Jennifer Long, DHHS. The date for this meeting will change in order to avoid Thanksgiving.

## **New Business**

- Shawn Brennan reminded new Commissioners to email her if they have any questions.
- Monica Schaeffer stated that the Stanford University Center for Longevity will be rolling out a map in October that goes from birth to late life and provides a broader way of looking at aging. This map is not free. Monica, Eddie and Barbara will discuss this off-line.
- Commissioners would like an updated roster with the new members. Shawn will check with Tremayne.

## **Meeting Adjourned**

### **Action Items**

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

1. Monica Schaefer and Gabe Alboroz may meet to “brainstorm.”
2. All Commissioners are asked to select one or more committees that they will be part of and to notify the appropriate committee co-chair by November 1.
3. Commission members who missed the Community Action Board training should watch the training video once it becomes available.
4. Barbara Selter will send information on the November 4 meeting of the Age Friendly Committee on Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS).
5. Wayne Berman will obtain and distribute the Safety Tool Kit.
6. All Commissioners should save the date, December 9 for the Legislative Breakfast.
7. Morris Klein will send out a link to a Justice in Aging study on the difficulties involved with HCBS.
8. Marcia Pruzan, Age-Friendly, will forward a link to an October 27 seminar.
9. All commissioners should consider using the Flex-on-Demand program and sending feedback to Denise Isreal, DOT.
10. Monica, Barbara and Eddie will talk re Stanford University Center for Longevity map.
11. Shawn will check with Tremayne about updating the roster of Commission members and distributing this updated roster.

