

**Communications Committee
April 19, 2021
Minutes**

Attendees

Jean Dinwiddie, Co-chair
Beverly Rollins, Co-chair
Arunima Ghosh
Austin Heyman, CoA Alumnus
Chuck Kauffman, CoA Alumnus
Barbara Selter, CoA Chair
Katie Smith
Revethi Vikram, CoA Alumnus

Staff

Jennifer Long, Department of Health and Human Services
Joelle Modderman, Public Information Office
Tracy O'Connor, Public Information Office

Guest

Stuart Rosenthal, *Beacon Newspapers*

Co-chair, Jean Dinwiddie, began the meeting by calling roll and reminding everyone of the Zoom meeting rules. She then asked for a vote on the March meeting minutes and Stuart Rosenthal corrected them by noting that the publication is not the *Bethesda Beacon* but *Beacon Newspapers* or the *Greater Washington Beacon*. The Committee approved the minutes with that correction.

Seniors Today Discussion

Jean Dinwiddie stated that the guests and topics for the May show have been determined: Stuart Rosenthal will discuss the *Beacon Newspapers'* role in getting information out to older adults; Montgomery County Recreation Department Director, Robin Riley, will discuss the County's recreation programs; and Lorna Forde from Manna Food will talk about food insecurity. The show is scheduled to be taped on April 25 and the topic will be older adult well-being.

Barbara Selter asked whether the program will again feature publicity for the upcoming CoA Public Forum. Jean stated that she will ask David Engle whether he wants to do draft another public service announcement graphic and do a voice over. She noted that he may want to include more information in a PSA about the Forum speakers.

Jean also noted that the first *Seniors Today* Planning Group meeting will be held on Friday, May 7, at 1p. Joelle Modderman commented that she is concerned that questions in the next show's proposed script may be too long and she suggested that they be shortened. Jean and Katie Smith noted that they will look into it.

New CoA Member Orientation Book

Beverly Rollins stated that she is currently looking at preparing an orientation book for new CoA members. This document will be used to acquaint the new members to the CoA and the County. She stressed the importance of preparing the orientation book now before the new CoA members are selected and come on board. Ms. Rollins also suggested that the Committee could prepare a general CoA handbook to be given to all members.

Items that were recommended to be part of the orientation book included:

- A chart showing the Montgomery County government structure
- 1 page of who's who in Montgomery County government
- A list of commonly used acronyms
- Do's and don't's for the Commission members (this is what the Commission does and what is required such as joining a committee)
- Information on HHS and how the CoA interacts with it
- A description and timeline of the CoA's calendar; what happens each month
- Information about the CoA's committees
- Protocol for visiting/meeting with the County Executive and County Council members
- Practical guide of how the Commission works
- A welcome letter from the CoA Chair
- New member "Buddys" (current CoA members who will serve as mentors to the new members)
- A provision that attending meetings is mandatory
- A provision that joining a committee is mandatory

It was suggested that the orientation book be no longer than 10 pages and that it be basic information to get the new members acquainted with the CoA and how it works. The number of charts should be limited. It was also suggested that the book be available both as a hardcopy and online as a Google doc.

Barbara stated that she will poll the current CoA members to see who will volunteer to be a new member "Buddy." Beverly noted that she will begin working on the new orientation book and will get a prototype out to the Committee members before the next meeting.

CoA Publicity Efforts

Beverly opened the discussion regarding how to get information out to the public about programs offered to older adults in Montgomery County. She asked that today serve as a brainstorming session on how the CoA can do this. Items discussed included:

- The *Beacon Newspapers* currently run a full-page ad promoting the Age-Friendly departments and what they are doing. It was suggested that if the CoA and the County offices kept the *Newspapers* and each other apprised of what activities and actions are taking place then more older adults in the County can be reached.
- It was suggested that the Public Information Office currently has too much work on its plate and that the CoA and HHS should try to do as much of the work as possible and share weblinks and Google docs with the PIO as much as possible.
- A list of relevant senior-media should be developed for the CoA to send press releases. The press releases should be issued on a regular basis.

Committee members brainstormed a number of media sources including:

- The Villager
- Senior News
- Seniors Today
- County Council publications
- The Veterans' Commission
- Other County Commissions, including the Commission of People with Disabilities
- My MC Media (Jordan Lindsey)
- YouTube
- Organizations that provide outreach to members of diverse populations.

It was suggested that Mary Anderson in HHS be contacted regarding entities that can be included on the CoA's press release list. Jennifer Long stated that she will also supply some names.

Jean noted that two CoA activities need press releases now including something for the upcoming Public Forum and the next episode of *Seniors Today*.

Chuck Kauffman volunteered to draft a list of publications that the CoA can send press releases to. Committee members were asked to get names to him by Wednesday, April 28.

Adjourn