

**Communications Committee Meeting
Minutes
December 19, 2022**

Attendees

CoA Members

Beverly Rollins
Virginia Cain
David Engel
Bob Levey
Kendell Matthews
Barbara Selter
Katie Smith
Marsha Weber

CoA Alumni

Austin Heyman

Staff

Jennifer Long, Montgomery County

Roll Call

Roll was taken and the November minutes were approved. Jean Dinwiddie was not available so David Engel and Beverly Rollins conducted the meeting.

Status of Library Materials

What has been done since the November meeting

At their November meeting, the Communications Committee members agreed that they would work with the County's libraries to get the Department of Aging and Disability Services' Sell Sheet (both in English and in multi-language materials) and the CoA's Resource Factsheet placed in the libraries after January 1, 2023. Jennifer Long reported that she has two of the publications and will contact staffer Shawn Brennan about getting the third publication printed.

Austin Heyman asked whether the libraries have a designated space for older adult materials. Beverly said that at the Committee's November meeting, guest speaker Anita Vassallo, Director of Montgomery County's library system, promised that she will make sure to set up a space for these materials. Austin suggested that we have CoA members visit their local libraries to confirm this. Beverly noted that Ms. Vassallo suggested that the CoA contact the libraries' regional

managers about setting up the areas for older adult materials and also for establishing a liaison system. Beverly stated that she and co-chair, Jean Dinwiddie, will contact Ms. Vassallo again after January 1, 2023 about doing this. Barbara Selter commented that when she worked in the Bethesda library she found it helpful when individuals worked with her. She suggested that the Committee start with baby steps and then later have the individual CoA members become liaisons to their own libraries.

David Engel noted that the library board currently has an opening and that possibly a CoA member may want to become a member. David stated that a Committee member may also want to sit in on a library board meeting to see why older adults were not part of the libraries'3-year strategic plan.

Library system no longer advertising in the Beacon

David and Beverly discussed Stuart Rosenthal's email that he sent to Jean Dinwiddie about the libraries not putting ads in the *Beacon* or its *Resource Guide* any longer. Barbara suggested that the CoA's Public Policy Committee may want to write a letter to the library system regarding this. David asked whether the CoA should write a formal letter or just reach out to Ms. Vassallo. Barbara responded that she thinks the CoA should write a formal letter. David asked whether the Communications Committee or the Public Policy Committee should write the letter.

Marsha said that things vary between libraries; some are more receptive regarding older adult materials than others. She suggested that Jean and Beverly ask Ms. Vassallo about this when they reach out to her about the regional managers. Barbara agreed. Beverly said that she and Jean will ask Ms. Vassallo for suggestions on how to get the ads back in. Austin agreed that an informal conversation with Ms. Vassallo should be the first step.

Committee Discussion of Ambassador Program

Discussion of draft Strategic Plan

In opening the discussion about the plan that Jean and Beverly drafted, Beverly noted that it is an overarching document and a more detailed operational plan will be developed from the strategic plan.

Bob Levey made a suggestion to include a statement regarding corralling younger individuals to support the program, especially in light of the make-up of the current County Council. The Committee adopted his suggestion.

It was recommended that Beverly and Jean approach Patrice McGhee and Odile Brunetto with the draft strategic plan and ask them to consider this in the job description of the new staffer that will be hired using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) monies. Marsha suggested that Patrice and Odile should be provided with a general summary of the strategic plan.

Beverly commented that Montgomery County seems to be the only County in the area that does not have an Ambassador Program. Virginia asked how the Program is funded in other Counties. Beverly responded that she does not know but will ask Marcia Pruzan about it.

David said that hopefully we will find out next month about the ARPA new hire and the status of the Ambassador program.

Age-Friendly Logo

David asked how the CoA logo should be used (or not used) in emails, email signatures, Commission correspondence, and printed documents like factsheets and brochures. The Committee did not think the CoA should use the Age-Friendly logo.

David said that he is working on a factsheet for the Health and Wellness Committee. He is using the same design as the Age-Friendly factsheets, just like the Committee has done in the past. All of the sheets will use the same format so that individuals will know it is a CoA's publication. He used the 50+ logo without the actual words "50+" in the logo.

Website Update

Discussion of redesigning the CoA website

Beverly reported that the County is working on all of its Boards' and Commissions' websites so that they will have a similar appearance. Beverly, David, and Jean were invited by staffer, Shawn Brennan, to look at a first draft of the CoA's new website, and to make comments. Shawn stated that she would inquire on whether CoA members will get to see another draft before the website goes live. Committee members asked Beverly and David to ask Shawn whether the entire Committee could see the test website in January.

David noted that staffer Tremayne Jones has administrative access and can make changes to the website. Beverly suggested that the CoA should appoint a person to work with Tremayne on at least on a monthly basis to ensure the website is kept up-to-date. David reiterated that the website is a work in progress.

Jennifer said that the CoA could possibly place a statement at the bottom of the webpage to allow individuals to "Sign Up for the Senior News" weblink.

50+ in Montgomery County Update

Katie Smith provided the following information:

- December program – discusses mental health and the holidays, including the new 988 Help Line. Guests are Josi Makon, LCSW-C and CoA Alum Rev Vikram, MD.
- January program – will feature County Executive Marc Elrich. Katie said that Mr. Elrich also agreed to meet with the full CoA at one of its monthly meetings.

- February – it will be a hybrid show: it will feature County Council president, Evan Glass, and also discuss older adult fashions.
- March – will discuss the County’s intergenerational programs.

Katie reminded everyone that the 50+ Planning Committee meets the 1st Friday of each month.

Adjourn

Action Items

1. Jennifer Long will contact Shawn Brennan about ensuring that the publications that the Communications Committee agreed should be placed in the County libraries after January 1, 2023 are ready. Those publications include the Department of Aging and Disability Services’ Sell Sheet (both in English and in multi-language materials) and the CoA’s Resource Factsheet. Jennifer reported that she has two of the publications and will contact staffer Shawn Brennan about getting the third publication printed.
2. Beverly Rollins and Jean Dinwiddie will contact Library Director, Anita Vassallo, regarding: 1) where older adult materials will be placed in the libraries; 2) who the library regional managers are; 3) whether some libraries are more receptive about working with the CoA; and 4) why the libraries’ ads in the *Beacon* have been discontinued. They will also ask Ms. Vassallo for suggestions on how to get the ads back in the *Beacon*.
3. At the next CoA meeting, possibly solicit for a member to apply to become a member of the library board or at least ask for a member to sit in on a board meeting to see why older adults were not part of the libraries’ 3-year strategic plan.
4. Beverly Rollins and Jean Dinwiddie will approach Patrice McGhee and Odile Brunetto with a general summary of the Committee’s draft strategic plan and ask them to consider this in the job description of the new staffer that will be hired using American Rescue Plan Act monies.
5. Beverly Rollins will ask Marcia Pruzan whether she knows how the older adult Ambassador Programs are funded in other Counties.
6. Beverly Rollins and David Engel will ask Shawn Brennan whether the entire Committee could see the new CoA test website in January.
7. Determine whether a CoA member should be appointed to work with staffer Tremayne Jones to regularly review the CoA’s website (at least on a monthly basis) to ensure that it is up-to-date.
8. Investigate whether the CoA could possibly place a statement at the bottom of its new webpage that will allow individuals to “Sign Up for the Senior News” weblink.