

Communications Meeting Minutes May 17, 2021

Attendees:

Jean Dinwiddie
Barbara Selter
Rev Vikram
Tracy O'Connor
Joelle Modderman
Jennifer Long
Katie Smith
Austin Heyman
Chuck Kaufman

Review of Minutes:

Jean Dinwiddie, Committee Co-chair, asked for a motion to accept that the minutes accurately reflected the content of the meeting. Barbara Selter submitted the motion, Rev Vikram seconded the motion, and the motion was passed to accept the minutes.

Update on Vaccination Videos:

Members of the Committee reported on the session to record Vaccination Videos. The videos were produced in English, Spanish, Hindi, and Vietnamese. Jean Dinwiddie suggested that the Commission be able to use the videos as interludes between interviews on *Seniors Today*. Rev Vikram suggested that the videos be played at Senior Centers. She also suggested that *Seniors Today* have a short message on when Senior Centers will be reopening, and what procedures will be in place to participate in Senior Center activities.

Seniors Today Meeting Report:

The regular *Seniors Today* Planning Group meeting is scheduled for the first Friday of the month. At the last meeting, the attendees decided that each *Seniors Today* program would have a theme. The next program theme for the June program will be "Serving Diverse Communities." Representatives from the County health organizations who will be invited include Arlee Wallace from the African American Health Program, Betty Lam from the Asian American Health Initiative, and Gianina Hasbun from the Latino Health Initiative. The July program will continue the theme with representatives from the Muslim American Senior Society, Chinese American Senior Services Association and the International Association for Indigenous Aging. For the August program, *Seniors Today* will continue with its focus on serving diverse communities, inviting faith leaders who serve diverse communities.

The *Seniors Today* Planning Group also discussed the idea of doing a survey to determine what older adults would like to see on the program. Members of the Communications Committee agreed that such a survey would be very helpful.

The members of the *Seniors Today* Planning Group discussed a name change for the program. The Public Information Office stated that making the change would not be difficult, but that getting consensus on an acceptable name might be challenging. Some suggested name changes included: Aging Healthy, Aging Well, Active Older Adults, and the Future of Aging. Others suggested that a name that implies “Drop By” or “Chat” would be good. Jean Dinwiddie indicated that she wanted to come up with a list of 3-4 names that could be voted upon by the larger CoA meeting in June. Jean asked that Committee members send their suggestions to her, so that she can compile a list by June.

New Member Orientation Booklet and Commissioner Handbook:

Prior to the meeting, Beverly Rollins sent out a draft Orientation Booklet and a List of Topics to be included within the Commissioner Handbook. Jean Dinwiddie indicated that there already would be changes to the draft New Member Orientation Booklet because the Strategic Planning Task Force was working on changing the Vision and Mission Statements that would be included in this booklet. Marcia Pruzan suggested that wording about inclusion should be moved up toward the beginning of the booklet and that there be a statement included that addresses collaboration with Age Friendly Montgomery. Rev Vikram suggested that the New Member Orientation Booklet be organized in chronological order, with a “user’s guide” to activities that Commissioners would need to engage in on a monthly basis. Rev wanted the guide to be practical and address the responsibilities of Commissioners (e.g., mandatory commitment of each Commissioner to participate on a committee, other work/activities likely to be needed from Commissioners).

Additional discussion ensued as to the difference between the New Member Orientation Booklet and the Commissioner Handbook and what content made sense to put into each of these documents. Ultimately, the group decided that there should be two products: (1) New Member Orientation Booklet, which should be no longer than 10 pages, summarize the roles and responsibilities of Commissioners, and have summaries of how the Commission works and who gets what documents; and (2) Commissioner’s Handbook, which provides more detail of the topics touched on in the New Member Orientation Booklet and that provides important documents such as the Commission on Aging Bylaws, more detailed work flows, and administrative procedures from the County on things such as submitting expense reports. Many of the documents currently in the loose-leaf notebook that is given to new Commissioners by County staff when they join the Commission should continue to be included in this Commissioner’s Handbook. There was some follow-up conversation as to whether the Commissioner’s Handbook should be available online, given to Commissioners in paper format, or both. The Committee made no decision yet on the format of this Handbook.

Applications for Commissioner Positions:

Shawn Brannan reported that there were four applications for re-appointment; these individuals do not need to be interviewed. There were eleven applications for four open positions on the Commission from new applicants. These eleven applicants will all be interviewed. There was some follow-up discussion about why the number of Commissioner applications was down this year, but it was decided that the smaller number of applications was more workable.

Development of Contact List:

Chuck Kaufman reported that he was working on putting together a list of contacts (e.g., media, publications, individuals, and so forth) for the Communications Committee to use to distribute information to the older adult community. Katie Smith suggested that as a start, the Communications Committee should use the list of Public Forum attendees. She further recommended that the Committee send out a survey to this list of Public Forum attendees to ask them: (1) What do they want to hear about? and (2) What is the best way to reach them? Austin Heyman suggested that the Committee seek information from the County on what they are currently doing to disseminate information. It was also suggested that the Committee send out an email to current Commissioners to get the names of their individual contacts to put on the Contact List. The Committee members agreed on these strategies and suggested that the contact list be used to help identify groups that might be interested in getting speakers from the Speakers Bureau to promote the available services and activities available to the older adult community.

Additionally, Austin Heyman suggested that the CoA work more closely with other Commissions and Boards such as the Human Rights Commission, the Commission on Disabilities, and other related entities. Chuck Kaufman suggested that the communications use the term “your” Commission on Aging to make communications more intimate. Austin Heyman suggested that the Committee look into using more radio communication, as that was a favorite choice the last time a survey was taken about favorite communication mediums, Jennifer Long and Joelle Modderman suggested that there was no County radio per se, but that there were podcasts being developed by Aging and Disability Services and the family caregiver program. They urged the Committee to look into using podcasts more frequently as a mode of communication.

Digital Sign Opportunity:

Joelle Modderman told the Committee about the use of digital signing in County buildings and senior centers. She suggested that the Committee prepare some messages that could be added to the rotation of messages currently available through the Digital Signing system. Joelle volunteered to look at the parameters surrounding use of the Digital Sign system and report back to the Committee. The Committee thought that would be a very effective communication mode.

Motion to Adjourn:

The meeting was adjourned after a motion and second to adjourn was passed by the Committee.