

CoA Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes - February 18, 2016
9:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

In attendance

Committee members:

Noelle Heyman, Isabelle Schoenfeld, Rudy Oswald, Revathi Vikram, Stephanie Edelstein, Doug Newton, Miriam Kelty, Grace Whipple, David Denton, Barbara Mulitz, Charles Kauffman.

CoA members: n/a

Guests: n/a

Liaisons: n/a

Staff:

Odile Brunetto

The minutes from the December 17, 2015 meeting were approved. (The January 2016 meeting was cancelled due to weather conditions.)

Area Agency on Aging Report

Odile provided an update on the county budget process. County department heads met to discuss budget issues that affect seniors. We will know more on 3/15/16 when the County Executive's budget is released.

The hearing on the state budget is today. The Maryland Department of Aging budget hearing is next week. The MDOA budget includes staff reductions. HB 685 would require the MDOA, in consultation with other state units, to develop a comprehensive plan (including available resources, gaps in resources, goals, and measurable benchmarks) to address the needs of the senior population.

On 3/2/16, the county will hold a kick-off event for the Dementia Friendly Community initiative announced on 12/3/15. The event will take place at Bright Focus Foundation, Clarksburg, from 10am to 1 pm, and will include representatives from county agencies and community partners. It was suggested that dementia care facilities be invited, if they are not already included. While there is national level guidance available, this is a local initiative, intended to identify local needs and build local solutions.

Senior Subcabinet will meet on 3/2/16 at 3 p.m. Noelle will attend. A representative from the county finance department will discuss tax relief programs. (Doug Newton notes that there are several tax relief initiatives pending in the state legislature.)

Lily Fisher is the new caregiver support coordinator.

Report from the Chair

Noelle emphasized that the CoA is a working body, and requested that committee chairs send emails to their committee members about issues relevant to the committee that arise at the Exec. Comm. Meeting.

Noelle has been busy meeting with county leaders to discuss the work of the CoA. One take-away from these meetings is that the CoA should set priorities and work towards measurable goals.

Noelle has also been working with committee chairs on membership recruitment, and contacting CoA members to encourage them to get involved. Membership in committees tends to be fluid, and not all members are as engaged as they could be.

Annual Report: Isabelle reported that it is moving towards completion. Tremayne has a draft.

Summit: Isabelle reported that Marcia Pruzan is working on the report from the Summit.

Senior Agenda: A workgroup met this week to begin developing the strategic plan, based on the summit recommendations. Their goal is to align the recommendations from the summit and the survey, plus recommendations from the Senior Subcabinet workgroups, as well as the Age Friendly Community domains, so as to be consistent as the effort moves forward. The group is trying to get on the 3/2/16 Senior Subcabinet agenda to discuss this.

Noelle described her plan to build on the work of past chairs by developing goals and priorities, and benchmarks for measuring accomplishments. The four primary areas she recommends, based on the survey results and summit recommendations, are transportation, affordable housing, health and wellness, and communication.

There was discussion about how the suggested areas would align with the Age Friendly initiative and the Senior Agenda, or whether they might be limiting. Suggestions and responses included:

- the four areas are broad, and the various topics do align;
- this could be underscored with a redraft of the introduction to the Senior Agenda, to emphasize Age Friendly;
- Age Friendly will also be a promotional tool for branding the county and its resources.

The strategic plan will include priorities, goals and objectives, and performance measures. These will inform the work of the CoA, and its committees. The executive committee will develop a mechanism for measuring accomplishments.

There was also consensus that the summit report needs to be completed. Once we have recommendations, they should to be disseminated in a way that is clear, with a cover letter. In

the past, recommendations, *e.g.*, from summer study, have been disseminated in a way that is under the radar, and as a result they may not have received the attention they deserve.

There was discussion about what we mean by affordable housing – affordable for whom? Also, a suggestion was made that we add “accessible” i.e., affordable, accessible, housing. This will be a topic for AIPC.

There was also discussion about setting and measuring outcomes in areas over which the CoA may not have control. The CoA’s job is to advise the county, to advocate, to educate – we don’t necessarily implement. Should we focus our efforts on the senior subcommittee? The CoA could recommend that the SSC be the implementing body for Age Friendly.

Committee reports

AIPC (Miriam).

The focus is on issues in the senior agenda. The committee has four priority areas, with measurable goals: (1) design for living: increase number of program participants by 300% (only 20 now); (2) pedestrian safety: standardize crosswalk markings, ask villages to identify issues; (3) obtain meeting space in centers for villages; (4) transportation: expand village rides program and ride-sharing.

Communications (Barbara).

Barbara rotates off the CoA at the end of 2016. Stephanie has agreed to co-chair this year, and Aroke Alakoye will join the committee with the view towards co-chairing next year. The committee will discuss how best to focus its efforts on supporting CoA goals.

At another point in the meeting, there was mention of using Seniors Today to do outreach and education on the home modification tax credit, to make more people aware of its existence.

PPC (Doug and Rudy).

Doug, Rudy, and John Honig are monitoring state bills and sharing relevant information with PPC members. Miriam has been reviewing bills related to guardianship.

The CoA, through Committee members, has sent several letters sent recently on federal and state legislation, including at the federal level, support for reauthorization of the Older Americans Act; and at the state level, HB 495 providing for treble damages and attorneys fees for victims of elder financial exploitation in civil court, HB 371 to establish a state tax credit for home modifications that support accessibility, HB 244 to require assisted living facilities to provide residents with 180 notice of closure (bill withdrawn as issue will be addressed through regulation), and HB 262 to increase change the funding formula for senior centers.

In addition, Noelle testified in Annapolis this week in support of the (watered down) CARE Act, and Rudy will testify next week in support of HB 718, to authorize the Attorney General to file a

civil suit against perpetrators of elder financial exploitation. Paul DePonte will testify in support of HB 472 and HB 580, the Healthy Working Families Act.

Copies of letters and testimony are not usually sent to the full CoA, but it was suggested that this be done. They will be made available at the CoA meeting next week.

Rudy will send the H&W Committee a list of the health-related bills.

The PPC is also discussing the development of a template for advocacy letters, to avoid members having to “reinvent the wheel” and to maintain consistency.

H&W (David).

No report today as needed to leave.

Other

There was some discussion about future CoA meetings, and topics for guest speakers.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.