

**Communications Committee Meeting  
Minutes  
November 20, 2023**

**Attendees**

**CoA**

Jean Dinwiddie, Co-chair  
Beverly Rollins, Co-chair  
Linda Bergofsky  
Virginia Cain  
David Engel  
Arunima Ghosh  
Norman Goldstein  
Bob Levey  
Kendell Matthews  
Kathleen McGinness  
Barbara Selter  
Marie Sloan  
Katie Smith  
Kate Stein  
Mary Sweeney  
Marsha Weber

**Alumni**

Marcia Pruzan  
Rev Vikram

**Staff**

Jennifer Long, Aging and Disability Staff  
Sara Swarr, Recreation

**Guest**

Odile Brunetto

**Roll Call**

Jean Dinwiddie took roll and asked for approval of September 2023 minutes. The minutes were approved.

## **Library Liaison Program**

Jean reminded everyone that they need to keep track of when they visit the libraries. The reports are due on a quarterly basis.

She noted that most of us have found the librarians welcoming and appreciative. But some librarians have issues with our efforts. Kendell Matthews stated that she went to the Marilyn Praisner library in September and introduced herself. There was no established older adult area but the entry way did have some flyers. In October, she visited again and met with the original librarian and another one. The second librarian was not friendly and said that nothing could be displayed unless it was received from central office. Kendell said that on this visit the librarians were not receptive and were very disrespectful. She does not want to return there. She noted that she has worked with the Marilyn Praisner library before on another program and they were very accommodating. Jean stated that Chair David Engel just sent a second letter to library director, Anita Vassallo, with a status update of our actions. Jean suggested that we give Ms. Vassallo time to respond to our note and then see whether the librarians' attitude change.

Mary Sweeney reported that she picked up, at A and D offices, the three flyers that are to be placed in the libraries. She will deliver them to the Potomac library. Mary commented that the *Beacon* should also be available there. She said that the crew at the Potomac library is open to having and displaying older adult materials.

Jean asked, "Is Praisner the only library where staff were rude?" Marie Sloan stated that she is able to work with her librarian. Barbara Selter said that the Little Falls library is very lovely but it does not have an older adult section. She asked, "What would be the best way to approach them? Tell them that other libraries do have an older adult section?" Barbara commented that she will work on it. She asked whether delivery of the flyers should go through staff person, Peter Flandrau, or should the Liaison deliver the materials herself? Jean responded that if the library says it will not put anything out if it does not come from central office then the liaison should ask Peter to have it delivered.

Linda Bergofsky asked whether there is a liaison for the Poolesville library. Jean asked Linda if she could take on that responsibility and Linda stated that she would do it. Marsha Weber asked Barbara whether the librarians at Little Falls knew why she was visiting. Barbara responded that they were clueless. Jean commented that we will just have to keep pushing. She said that she understands why Kendell does not want to go back. She noted that after Thanksgiving we should follow up with Director Vassallo.

Kathleen McGuinness said that she visited Little Falls library last week and they have a small older adult section. She will be going back there soon and can follow up.

Jean reported that AARP recently had an in-person event at the Wheaton library where AARP staff answered older adult questions and provided information. CoA member and liaison, Mona Grieser, attended and stated that it went well. AARP will be doing it again on Tuesday, December 12 and CoA member and liaison, Laurie Pross, will be sitting with them.

Finally, Jean asked whether the group feels that the CoA's Briefing Book should be made available at the libraries. The group agreed that it should not.

### **Ambassador Program**

Jean noted that Kathleen and Beverly will be visiting the Margaret Schweinhaut Center on November 21 to give a presentation. Kathleen has worked on the presentation to make it more professional and engaging.

Jean asked how the group would feel about developing 2-3 presentations and the presenters can pick the one they like best. Linda said that it may depend more on who the audience is with regard to which presentation is used. Odile Brunetto agreed. But the information should be consistent. Jean said that Kathleen confirmed that each link shown in the presentation is still working and the phone numbers are correct.

One of Kathleen's suggestions is to give the attendees a pad of paper and a pen showing the County's 3000 number. Odile and Jennifer stated that the County has no pens that show the number and it would not be easy to order them. Jennifer said that there are no marketing tchotchkes to give away. David Engel commented that the Planning for Life booklet has a nice business card inside that has relevant information. Maybe more cards like what is in that booklet could be obtained and given out at the presentations. It could include the information that would go on a pen.

Marcia Pruzan stated that a pad of paper with the 3000 number on it would be more valuable than a pen. Katie Smith suggested that we should consider what type of things people would keep around and not throw in a drawer. Rev Vikram noted that an organization she is with gave away a penlight/keychain that had valuable information written on it. Those could be more expensive, however.

Jean asked for a motion to investigate the pads of paper for the Ambassador program with the 3000 number on it. Odile suggested that we ask someone who works in the County's Recreation Department what they do because they give away things. Sara Swarr responded that the County's print shop can put together a pad of paper and we can ask them to print what we want on it. They have different sizes of paper. They also have key chains. Odile noted that the print shop uses recycled paper and that is nice. Sara said that she will touch base with staffer Danielle Moxley and get back to us.

Beverly asked who else we should reach out to provide Ambassador presentations. Marcia Pruzan stated that she would like to do one in her condo building in January or February. Barbara Selter offered to team up with Marcia for that presentation. Rev said that the North Potomac Senior Center has not provided dates for her presentation with Virginia Cain. She said that she will send a note to staffer Sheila Hall and ask whether she is still interested. Rev said that she will not be available the rest of the year to give a presentation.

Odile noted that Jennifer Long has two individuals on contract who do similar community outreach. She asked Jennifer where these "Connectors" are finding the need for presentations.

That team is out there and knows where the need is. Jennifer responded that the Connectors did not get enough responses at events to hire additional individuals for this type of work. They are going to places like libraries and dialysis centers. She noted that the County does not have a marketing person to oversee the program. Staff are now looking into whether the Connectors should go to the same places over and over or reach out to as many places as possible. She suggested that the Communications Committee reconnect with the Connectors, possibly have them attend a future meeting. She also commented that the AARP initiative to have a person sit in the County libraries providing older adult information is a good thing.

Marsha Weber stated that the librarian at the Olney library is onboard for having a presentation. Marie said that her librarian at Aspen Hill is also onboard with it. Marie also commented that she and Beverly discussed possibly holding presentations for religious organizations and she would like to look into that, possibly after the first of the year. Sara commented that she will be sending out the invitation that Beverly prepared to the different recreation and senior centers to see whether they spark any interest. She said that hopefully, she will have a list for the Committee after Thanksgiving.

Linda asked whether we have reached out to the Office of Veterans' Affairs. They might be interested. She also said that the town of Poolesville would welcome a presentation. Kathleen said that the Villages would be good as well and also Leisure World. She will find out the point person for the Villages.

### **Website Update**

Arunima Ghosh stated that she sent an email to Jean and Beverly a few days before the Communications Committee meeting saying that some things on the website needed to be updated, and they were subsequently updated. She is now waiting for staffer Shawn Brennan to respond to her question about a video of the recent Senior Summit. Jean said that there is a County policy about putting recorded media online and Shawn is looking into how to post it. Hopefully the issue will be resolved soon. Arunima responded that there is guidance about what kind of media can be posted online. She suggested that maybe the CoA should have a disclaimer form signed by individuals who appear in videos that would give the County permission to show the videos online. Arunima said that she has a form that she will share with the Committee.

David said a few individuals are working on a debriefing from the Summit. Arunima suggested that maybe we could share slides online that were presented at the Summit. David said that he will follow up on that to see whether we can get them.

### ***50+ in Montgomery County Update***

Jean noted that the current and upcoming 50+ programs include:

November program – Medication Management  
December program – Second Acts  
January program – Volunteerism

She reminded everyone that the 50+ Planning Committee meets the first Friday of each month at 1p.

### **Brainstorm for Committee Projects for 2024**

Jean asked the group whether the Committee should start thinking about what its next project will be. She suggested that we could partner with the Age-Friendly Communications Committee or work on the County's Senior website. Odile and Jennifer liked the idea of partnering with Age-Friendly. Marcia Pruzan explained that Age-Friendly is an initiative begun by the World Health Organization and AARP. The County's Age-Friendly effort has 10 workgroups. The workgroups want to work across County government and organizational silos to get out information for older adults. She noted that Age-Friendly is not just County-wide, it is a worldwide initiative. Jean said that the one thing the Age-Friendly Communications Committee does is sponsor a full page ad in the *Beacon* every month. She commented that the CoA and Age-Friendly have the same goals. Age-Friendly is more of a concept, a roadmap.

Kate Stein asked whether there is an opportunity for us to reach out to folks whose first language is not English. Jean responded that the Office of Community Partnership may have hired some translating staff recently.

David closed by saying that if our Committee worked with Age-Friendly we could work together with folks in different County departments to do a service for the County's older adults.

### **Adjourn**

#### **Action Items**

- After Thanksgiving Jean and Beverly will follow up with Director Vassallo regarding the note November 3 note that CoA Chair sent her.
- Sara Swarr will touch base with staffer Danielle Moxley regarding printing pads of paper for the CoA's Ambassadors to give out at presentations. She will also ask about key chains and other tchotchkes.
- Rev will send a note to North Potomac senior center staffer Sheila Hall regarding whether she is still interested in holding an Ambassador presentation there.
- The Committee should reconnect with the County's Connectors and possibly have them attend a future meeting.
- Marie and Beverly will discuss how to reach out to religious organizations for possibly holding presentations.
- Sara will be sending out the invitation that Beverly prepared to the different recreation and senior centers to see whether they spark any interest. She, hopefully, will have a list for the Committee after Thanksgiving.
- The Committee should reach out to the Office of Veterans' Affairs to see whether they would be interested in Ambassador presentations.
- The Committee should reach out to the Villages about holding a presentation. Kathleen will find out the point person for the Villages.

- Arunima said that she has a disclaimer form that she will share with the Committee that individuals sign to allow organizations to show videos (featuring those individuals) on the web.
- Arunima suggested that maybe we could share slides online that were presented at the Summit. David said that he will follow up on that to see whether we can get them.