

Public Policy Committee Meeting

October 6, 2016

Minutes

Attendees: Rudy Oswald, Stephanie Edelstein, Odile Brunetto, Isabelle Schoenfeld, Charles Kauffman, Jerry Morenoff, Tammy Duell, John Honig, Mary Petrizzo (by phone)
Guest: Susan Kirk

Odile distributed the latest version of the letter to Mr. Leventhal on Priorities.

Rudy Oswald called the meeting to order at 9.30am.

The COA Priorities letter was discussed. Rudy thanked Isabelle, Karen, and Odile for their hard work in developing the document. He indicated that free, extended day transportation could be very expensive. No cost estimate was provided. Chair, Noelle Heyman attended a meeting that Uma Ahluwalia had with representatives from the Boards, Committees and Commissions and in response to Uma's request to come up with an issue they all agreed to, they identified affordable housing including rental housing as a priority and the BCC's agreed to highlight it in their priorities testimony. Noelle polled the board by e-mail & received broad support for including housing as a priority. Odile mentioned that this year's priorities totaled \$1 million, about twice last year. Stephanie suggested that "financial support" be deleted from the Guardianship section, since that falls under a different organizational entity. There was a reminder that the Planning Office of the Maryland National Park and Planning Commission Rental Study will issue a Report that will be discussed at a hearing scheduled Nov 7.

Odile indicated that a one page summary sheet called "FY18 Commission on Aging Budget Statement" be renamed "Priorities Statement" and was due to be submitted on the day of this meeting.

Tammy led the discussion on the Dental Care Gap. Specifically she spoke about the 3 recommendations in the summer study report on the subject of Public Policy and Legislative Action. One was to provide inputs to the new State Orals Health Plan.

There is a letter in draft to the Governor - to urge the Governor's Office to include funds for dental care under Medicaid for all adults. - - -Maryland is way behind other states in dental care support. Tammy and Mary will draft a letter for dental care support needs. It was also suggested that COA work with other counties to support this effort.

The summer study also called to support legislation to expand dental hygienists services into assisted living facilities and other senior living communities.

Stephanie briefly discussed the Advocacy Training meeting held for Boards, Committees and Commissions on 27 September. Stephanie, Odile, Bonnie, Tammy, Mary and John attended the meeting. It was a result of the Lobbying Bill 37-15 which puts controls over the access to the Legislatures when lobbying. It was explained that all advocacy actions have to go through a central Office of Intergovernmental Relations (OIR) and that all actions have to be accompanied by answers to a set of 10 questions. A copy of the law and the ten questions was distributed by Odile at the meeting. These requirements affect COA also.

Our guest, Susan Kirk, Executive Director of Bethesda Cares, gave a very informative talk on Bethesda Cares. This is an organization primarily concerned with assistance to homeless and potentially homeless

persons, many single mothers with children, whose income is insufficient to cover minimum living expenses for the family. In many cases the cause is underemployment. There is a sizable portion of homeless seniors with insufficient income. Many of them face large rent increases which are not restricted by voluntary guidelines limiting increases. The organization is active in finding individuals who do not voluntarily ask for help. There is a need to rate medical vulnerabilities. There does not appear to be much influx of homeless people from DC to MC. Homeless tend to stay in the area they are familiar with.

For MC seniors Bethesda Cares has a \$ 850,000 budget of which about \$7000 comes from the County and the rest from foundations, churches, etc. This is the only local outreach program that looks for homes for homeless people. There are about 250 hot spots in the county to find homeless individuals. Last year 6 homeless are known to have died on the street.

The 40-56-year-old homeless is the biggest group, but the 18-24 year youths are the biggest challenge. In the past individuals were placed into transitional shelters and finally into housing. Nowadays it was found putting individuals into housing first provided additional stability to get started. The organization is trying to look for best practices. Among those appear to be more medical personnel serving the streets, and adding additional housing on top of fire stations, etc.

Rudy mentioned an -Nov.7 meeting by the Planning Office of the Park and Planning Commission on Affordable Housing. Chuck Kauffman volunteered to attend. A number of suggestions were offered on the Leventhal priorities letter.

Rudy briefly explained the procedure we have been following for a number of years at the Legislative Breakfast. He also said, as done in the past, members of the PPC would be given names of legislators to call to follow-up on the invite sent to them to attend. A week before the breakfast may be best to call. Tammy or Mary agreed to discuss the dental support issues and it was suggested that Bonnie may be best qualified to discuss the APS issues mentioned in Uma's letter. Some thought that the State tax break for housing modification may be too narrow an issue at this time.

The State Legislators Hearing with the County Council is the day before our Legislative Breakfast which will be on Nov. 17