

**Commission on Aging
Minutes
October 24, 2019**

Location: North Potomac Community Center, 13850 Travilah Road, Rockville Maryland

Time: 9:15 am– 12:00 pm

Members Present	Alumni Members
Jean Dinwiddie, Chair	Charles Kauffman
Stephanie Edelstein, Vice-Chair	Pat Lesnick
Beverly Rollins, Secretary	Isabelle Schoenfeld
Revathi Vikram, Budget Finance Advisor	
Amoke Alakoye	Guests
Neal Brown	Marc Elrich, County Executive
Barbara Brubeck	Seda Gelenian
Mort Faller	Maive Cade
Arunima Ghosh	Raiza Lansigan
Amy Harbison	
Richard Jourdenais	Liaisons
Miriam Kely	Denise Isreal, Department of Transportation
Morris Klein	Phil Smakula, Department of Recreation
Karen Maricheau	Karen Tan, Asian American Health Initiative
Nanine Meiklejohn	
Karon Phillips	Staff
Edgar Rivas	Odile Brunetto, Department of Health & Human Services
Monica Schaeffer	Pazit Aviv, Department of Health & Human Services
Barbara Selter	Tremayne Jones, Department of Health & Human Services
Mary Sweeney	Marcia Pruzan, Department of Health & Human Services
Tho Tran	
Hillery Tumba	
Marsha Weber	
Ryan Wilson	
Janice Zalen	
Members Absent	
Ruby Moone	
Deborah Royster	
Odessa Shannon	
Syed Yusuf	

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Jean Dinwiddie welcomed attendees and guest speaker Marc Elrich, Montgomery County Executive.

Speaker

Marc Elrich discussed implementing a new budget process. Mr. Elrich wants to move toward two-budget cycles, a method of financial planning that he says will free up time to assess departmental performances and ensure that funds are being used effectively. Mr. Elrich's plan is facing resistance from County Council who will not endorse the implantation of a two-year operating budget cycle. The councilmembers raised several concerns about the legality of the switch under state law and the county charter, both of which require annual budgeting cycles.

Mr. Elrich has already directed executive departments to submit two-year budget projections, he has a tentative plan to include them in his proposed budget for fiscal year 2021.

AAA Director Updates

Dr. Odile Brunetto, Acting Chief, Aging and Disability Services provided the following updates:

- She recently read the summary of the Council of Government's report on the future of housing in the region. She saw nothing concerning older adults or accessible housing in the summary. She suggested that one of the CoA committees may want to research this.
- The Park and Planning Commission is doing a big project using data from the report on affordable housing. It was suggested that the CoA research this because the County Council may finalize a resolution on affordable housing at the end of October.
- The County Executive is implementing a new budget process; the County is going to a 2-year budget cycle. The County government will use it, but the County Council is not yet concurring with it. County departments must submit their new budgets to OMB by December 6. They are now required to delineate the different programs, sort out program requirements, and then submit budget requests based on those requirements; not just a total budget request for the department. HHS has 52 programs and of those 10 are programs within Aging and Disability Services. The budget requests must indicate how they fit into the CE's vision and 7 goals for the County. The process requires a great deal of writing; all the write ups will be sent to reviewing teams called BOLTs. BOLT members are County staff who will purposely be assigned to review programs that they are not familiar for neutrality. The reviewers will have criteria on how to rate the programs. The CE is looking for recommendations on the programs and funding from BOLT teams. BOLT members can only make recommendations over County-funded programs and contracts.
- County Council President, Nancy Navarro, has reached out to HHS and the recreation department regarding the new Wheaton Community Recreation Center. She has heard complaints about the lack of senior programs and is interested in a senior lunch program there. She wants to hold a public hearing about it by end of month.
- Maryland Secretary of Aging, Rona Kramer, has been invited to speak at the November CoA meeting. There is no confirmation as of yet if she will attend.
- Executive Committee members voted to invite Council member, Evan Glass, to the November CoA meeting. He may want to discuss a bill he introduced, the *Housing Impact Fairness Tax* (Bill 34-19). It has the potential to raise a lot of money for the County.

- The HHS Committee and the Transportation and Environment Committee will hold a special Council meeting on November 14 at 2pm. regarding transportation issues.

Commission on Aging Business

Approval of September COA minutes were unanimously approved.

Budget Report

Commissioner Revathi Vikram reported the COA currently has a budget of \$5,109.31.

Updates on Recreation Department

Chair Dinwiddie had a conversation with Recreation Department Director, Robin Riley, and clarified what Director Riley has in mind for the older adult “listening sessions” at the County recreation centers. Essentially, Director Riley wants her staff to hold informal meetings with individuals who use the centers and ask them what services and programs they would like for the centers to offer. CoA members who live near centers where these informal meetings will be held are invited to attend. Chair Dinwiddie is unsure whether the meetings will only be held at those centers that provide older adult programs. Director Riley will schedule the informal sessions and will let Chair Dinwiddie know when they will take place. Chair Dinwiddie reported that it is looking good for funding for the Senior FIT program and for older adult programs at the new Wheaton Community Recreation Center.

Update on meeting with Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA)

Chair Dinwiddie and Commissioners Marsha Weber and Nanine Meiklejohn met with the new DHCA Director and Deputy Director for Housing on October 3, 2019. The Director is very eager to work with the CoA. During the meeting several things were discussed including a letter the Department is writing to the State regarding Montgomery County’s low-income housing tax program and the rapidly escalating rents in some areas that are driving individuals out of their homes. The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission is doing a study now and when that is distributed it may be helpful. Census data will show where the rent pressures are worst. One place that the study is looking at is where the Metro’s Purple Line is being built.

Updates on meeting with Department of Transportation

Commissioner Mort Faller reported that he, Chair Dinwiddie, Commissioner Dick Jourdenais, and HHS staffer, Shawn Brennan, met with Department of Transportation Director, Al Roshdieh, and Fred Lees, Chief of Management Services on October 8, 2019. It was a helpful, productive meeting and everyone was candid. The Flex Ride-On program, Call-n-Ride, the Transportation Services Improvement Fund, and other transportation issues were discussed. The CoA members were given recommendations on how the CoA should proceed on some of the topics. One issue that was discussed was whether the TSIF can be used for programs other than making taxicabs accessible; e.g., initiatives such as restoring Friday transportation for older adults to recreation centers. Director Roshdieh stated that it cannot hurt for the Recreation Department to request to use the TSIF for Friday transportation. The group also discussed increasing the timeframe when older adults can ride free on County buses. Director Roshdieh stated that the County must pay for older adult transportation on the Metro buses (which are not operated solely by Montgomery County), and that is a problem. Director Roshdieh noted that the Flex program is successful, and the County wants to expand it, as well as expand who can use Call-n-Ride. The County is considering operating Flex as “on demand” at bus stops. In addition, many of the departments have their eye on the TSIF pot of money. The taxicab industry has not been applying to use it and now different programs are vying for it.

Testimony on COAFY21 Priorities

Chair Dinwiddie presented oral testimony to the County Council HHS Committee on October 10, 2019 at the County Council HHS Committee hearing on COA FY21 budget priorities. These hearings are an

opportunity for all Boards, Committees and Commissions associated with HHS to provide input on their priorities for next year's budget.

Nominations for 2020 COA Officers

The following members have been named officers for 2020: Jean Dinwiddie, Chair; Vice-Chair; Secretary; Ryan Wilson, Budget and Finance Officer

Commission on Aging Alumnus Austin Heyman was honored by AARP Maryland, County Executive Marc Elrich, and Montgomery County Council for his lifetime achievement in community service in the county on October 22, 2019. Austin was presented with the AARP Maryland J. Joseph Curran Jr. Lifetime Achievement Award. AARP Maryland's award is named for the esteemed statesman J. Joseph Curran Jr., former state representative, lieutenant governor, and longtime attorney general. It recognizes exceptional individuals who have exhibited a lifetime of exemplary commitment to volunteerism and civic involvement. Austin Heyman is only the second person to receive this honor from AARP Maryland. He also received separate proclamations from County Executive Marc Elrich and the County Council to celebrate his long record of accomplishments which benefit County residents. Austin's leadership contributions on behalf of County residents span several decades. They include serving as the first chair of the Montgomery County Commission on Children and Youth; president of the Montgomery County Council of PTAs; member of the Maryland Task Force on Guidance and Counseling; founder of the nonprofit organization "Interages," which builds bridges across generations and cultures; delegate to the White House Conference on Aging; chair of the County's Commission on Aging; originator of Montgomery County's Vital Living Initiative; promoter of the Senior Leadership component to Leadership Montgomery County; senior fellow in the Office of Community Partnerships; co-chair of the Age-Friendly Montgomery group on Civic and Social Involvement; and, host of the television show, "Seniors Today."

Council President Nancy Navarro and Councilmember Gabe Albornoz recognized and celebrated Austin Heyman as a visionary and integral leader of our community who has demonstrated a life of service, creativity, integrity and purpose. To view the proclamation event please click the link below.

https://archive.org/details/mccmd-Austin_Heyman_Proclamation_by_MoCo_Council

Upcoming Events

November 14, 2019 the Commission on Aging will hold their annual Legislative Breakfast at Holiday Park Senior Center from 8:00 am-10:00 am.

November 14, 2019 Chair Dinwiddie will attend County Council meeting with Council's HHS and Transportation and Environment Committees.

December 19, 2019 the Commission on Aging December meeting will take place at Tandoori Nights in Kentland at 11:00 am followed by the Holiday Luncheon.

"Save the Date" on March 18, 2020 there will be a Public Forum more details to come at a later time.

Committee Reports

Aging in Community

The committee reported that the County Council's bill, the *Racial Equity and Social Justice Act*, is going forward. However, specifics of the bill need to be considered; i.e., issues regarding older adults.

Health & Wellness

Health & Wellness Committee discussed social isolation and the effect hearing loss has on it. The committee suggested that because social isolation is such an important topic that perhaps the different CoA committees could do a joint project. The committee will look at health related aspects of social

isolation. The “Senior Gap” paper Too Rich To Be Poor, Too Poor To Be Rich was presented to the COA. The focus for the paper was that the Health & Wellness Committee were looking at long term care options for seniors. The focus is on population over 65 years in age in need of long term-care or support to keep safe. The paper target those in the middle-don’t qualify for Medicaid and can’t afford the high cost of assisted living. The concern about daily care challenges facing “Senior Gap” individuals.

Public Policy

Reminder that the Legislative Breakfast will be held on November 14th at Holiday Park Senior Center from 8-10 am.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:00pm