

Commission on Aging (CoA) Public Policy Committee (PPC)

February 8, 2024, 9:25 – 11:00

Via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Commissioners: Morris Klein (PPC co-chair), Kate Stein (PPC co-chair and scribe), David Engel (CoA chair), Norm Goldstein, Linda Bergofsky, Peter Flandrau (staff); Kristin Cummings (County staff), Paul Moss (Partners in Care, Community for Life)

1. Welcome

Due to challenges with ZOOM, the meeting was called to order around 9:25, after the adjusted start time of 9 am.

2. Minutes

The minutes were approved.

3. Additions to the agenda

No additions were made to the agenda.

4. State level public policy activity

Several letters have been sent since the PPC's last meeting:

- A congratulatory letter on the Longevity Ready Initiative was sent to Governor Moore on January 30. A response was received from Secretary Roc
- The letter regarding OHCQ and nursing home inspections was sent to the MD Department of Health on February 2nd, 2024. On February 5, a response was received from Laura Herrera Scott, copying Dr. James Bridgers and Patrice McGhee, among others.
- Letters were written in support of HB318/ SB373 (mail theft) and submitted for testimony. CoA chair David Engel gave oral testimony on 1/30 to the Judiciary Committee. Present at the hearing were attorneys from both the state and the postal authority. Delegate Moon expressed concerned about penalties and times, rationale behind making it a state felony.
- We submitted written testimony in support of HB0032 tax credit for family caregivers bill.
- We wrote a letter in support of HB0068 Continuing Care Retirement Communities - Governing Bodies, Grievances, and Entrance Fees.

Morris explained that most bills have a Committee hearing in February and don't get a Committee vote until March; the big push to review bills and draft testimony begins now. The biggest hurdle is to get bills out of committee. If a bill gets out of a house committee, it is likely to pass.

The letter in support of HB0068 was approved and sent to Leslie Frey for uploading but was not uploaded in time. If possible, Morris requests that we submit our letter, even if late, so that our support is on the record. We discuss other ways outside of written and oral testimony that we can advocate or lobby for passage of a bill on behalf of older adults in the county. We would like to modify our CoA PPC processes to make sure that written testimony is submitted on time in the future. Peter suggests that he send testimony to Leslie Frey early on the day of submission and then follow up the initial email with a reminder.

Action: Change process to share written testimony with sponsors from the county delegation to let them know we have supported their legislation. Request Peter to send testimony.

Additional testimony:

- Letter in support of HB349 LTC Insurance Study has been sent.
- Testimony in support of HB403 / SB443 Maryland End of Life Option Act (The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings and the Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass Act) was finalized and sent to Leslie Frey but was not uploaded in time. The senate hearing is scheduled for today. The house will consider the same legislation (HB0403) on the 16th.
- Wrote letter for HB462. Deadline was missed.

New bills, just assigned to committee and now being tracked, and actions:

- ***Action: review renter's bill to see if there's recorded testimony. (Kate). Let the group know and decide whether or not to write our own letter. D. Engel to reach out to Renters coalition for their perspective.***
- HB1177. This is another CCRC bill. ***Action: Morris will review.***
- House bill on trafficking. HB892. This would make it a crime for someone to confine an individual or control finances, targets elderly. Linda notes that there's a federal law that makes this a crime. Morris clarifies that this bill specifically names the elderly. ***Action: Morris will track.***
- Villages bill will get testimony from Pazit. Miriam Kelty was a former CoA commissioner. ***Action: David will put together testimony.***
- Discussion of nursing home sale bill. Important to take a position. ***Action: Norm and Linda to review and work together on testimony.***
- SB1057. ***Action: Morris to track.***
- Senior nutrition bill. ***Action: Kate to review.***

- Delegation of nursing home inspections. *Action: David and Janice will review.*

5. Policy Activity in the county

Kate reviewed status of proposed county bills and ZTAs.

- **ZTA 24-01** Household living -civic and institutional use. This ZTA is intended to help address the county's lack of affordable housing by providing conditional use to religious assembly use and ed institutions to build multi-unit housing in areas currently zoned for detached residential housing. The conditional use will req. developers to meet affordability thresholds. Public Hearing scheduled for 2/27.
- **Bill 45-23** Property Tax Credit for individuals 65 and older, veterans and their spouses. This bill will change eligibility and amount of tax credit, increasing the max value of eligible home to 899k and reducing the residency requirement reduced from 40 to 25 years. We wrote a supporting letter suggesting credit tiers be linked to AMI and adding tier with full tax credit. The council hearing was on 1/23. There was discussion of issues around the length of residence required to claim benefit (25 years). Former Del. Al Carr raised the need for support for older renters. This is a topic we have discussed within the CoA as well.
- **ROFR 38-23E.** This bill would allow county exec to designate qualified entity to exercise the county's ROFR. Qualified entities must have demonstrated a commitment to preserving affordable housing. This could have positive impact on equity. Kate attended the committee worksession on 1/22. The bill is not yet scheduled for public hearing before the full commission.

David will reach out to Kate Chance re: religious institutions ZTA. We may want to sign on to testimony or write our own.

There being no other business before the committee, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED at approximately 11 am.