

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

January 11, 2024, 9:30 – 11:00

By Zoom

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Commissioners: Morris Klein (PPC co-chair), Kate Stein (PPC co-chair and scribe), David Engel (CoA chair), Joyce Dubow, Janice Zalen, Barbara Selter, Wayne Berman, Norm Goldstein, Yvette Monroe, Linda Bergofsky, Kathleen Dennis, Peter Flandrau (staff)

1. Welcome

Morris Klein welcomed everyone and invited them to introduce themselves.

2. Review & Approval of minutes from November Meeting

Morris requested we begin the next meeting on February 8 at 9 am. The group agreed to the request.

Action: Morris to communicate timing change to Tremayne.

3. Legislative Breakfast post mortem

The virtual breakfast was well organized and run. All attendees—senators, delegates, and their staffs—received thank you emails. The request from Senator Kelly to comment on LTC insurance study bill came in response to the thank you email. Several senators and delegates, including Ben Kramer, mentioned that they would look into / follow up on the nursing home inspection issues previously raised with the Secretary of Health, but we have not heard back.

Action: Barbara offered to follow up with these attendees.

4. Letters to Kelly and Friedson Update

The PPC's letter commenting on Sen Kelly's LTC study bill was approved by the EC and sent to her as a reply to her email request. The PPC's letter in support of County Council Chair Friedson's homeowner tax credit bill was also sent. His staff asked that we upload testimony for discussion on 1/23.

Action: David to upload.

5. State issues

a. Nursing Home Inspections

The group reviewed ongoing issues with nursing home inspections and discussed next steps. All counties are concerned and all waiting on state. MOU with the county was not renewed in 2021 and state took over inspections, inspections didn't happen. We think the focus should be on greater transparency and more inspections, not on resurrecting the MOU, though we would like to understand why it was not renewed. Kentucky and Maryland are at the bottom in terms of inspections. When complaints are not responded to, nursing homes may take

advantage. It is a highly regulated industry, but regulations are not being enforced. CMS is aware of the issue. OHCQ knows the complaints they are getting, but they don't have to share and they do not respond to questions. The secretary of state has also not responded to correspondence. We met with governor's transition team. We have sent a letter to secretary of health and received no reply. We have forwarded unanswered correspondence to state reps, but some of our strongest advocates have moved on. Fed gov is paying staff to conduct inspections. Additional staff may have been hired in July. Has anyone considered talking to CMS about issue? We should use our congressional reps to look into problem in MD (e.g. Raskin). Can we work with other counties? We have an obligation to continue to push the state on this issue on behalf of MoCo seniors. We all agree that continued action on the issue should be CoA PPC priority.

Actions:

- ***David and Peter will send background documentation to the group.***
- ***Peter will follow up with Leslie Frey and Kimberley Johnson (county AAA).***
- ***Janice will follow up with reps who promised to engage at the legislative breakfast.***
- ***We will send another letter to secretary of health with cc: to gov (Linda and Norm to draft, Kate to review correspondence and draft letter).***
- ***Kate and Morris to schedule separate ad hoc meeting for letter review and planning.***

b. Dept of Aging initiative

The governor established longevity ready MD initiative:

<https://aging.maryland.gov/Pages/LRM.aspx>. We discussed how best to support this initiative.

Actions:

- ***Norm to draft letter of support to Department of Aging cc:ing governor.***
- ***David to build list of other county commissions and contacts in order to identify partners for collaboration.***
- ***Linda to follow up with other commissions to see if there's interest in joint proclamation.***
- ***Wayne volunteered to reach out to commission on people with disabilities.***

c. Relationship with Senators and Delegates

We would like to identify committee and commission members who have current relationships with senators and delegates.

Action: Commissioners to send an email to Morris.

d. Monitoring Legislation

The MD General Assembly is now in session. Morris has emailed an initial review of bills to the committee--many bills have been prefiled—with about 18 bills flagged. Please note hearing dates. We need to be selective about what we

work on. Bill about wage reimbursement for care givers, tax cut bills, etc. The question was raised as to whether we should request a bill asking the state of MD to fulfill its obligation to inspect nursing homes.

Actions:

- *Morris will continue to send out bill tracking report.*
- *Joyce volunteered to coordinate response to SB208 (Senator Kelly's study bill) There is no hearing date yet; may be crossfiled.*
- *Janice will look at Sen bill 270. Sen Bill 202 re: tax credit for caregivers.*
- *David will ask other commissions if they want to collaborate on any issues / bill.*

6. County Issues

a. Relationship with Friedson and others

Committee members with special relationships with Council members were asked to alert Morris via email. It was noted that a relationship with Chair Friedson would be especially helpful.

Action: *Commissioners to send an email to Morris.*

b. County bill on tenant ROFR

Kate briefly explained the bill and why it may be of interest to CoA PPC. Expedited Bill 38-23 was proposed by the County Executive and would allow him to delegate right of first refusal to authorities in Rockville, Takoma Park and Gaithersburg. Do we support this bill? Kate will send the bill to Committee members for review and to determine support.

Action: *Kate to send bill documentation and PPC to review.*

c. Monitoring Legislation

Discussion of Friedson's property tax credit bill is scheduled for discussion at County Council on 1/23. Kate has begun monitoring county legislation and will provide updates to PPC.

d. Other Issues

CoA Alumni Chuck Kaufman asked that we oppose a sprinkler mandate. The majority of the Committee was opposed to Chuck's suggestion. It was noted that he signed the letter to the Washington Post with the title, "Chair, Alumni, CoA. His use of the title may have been inappropriate.

Action: *David to communicate our decision.*

7. Other Business

Peter followed up on the question of utilizing Google Docs and shared that, according to the County Attorney, we cannot collaborate via google drive due to concerns about open meetings requirement. Group discussed the need for a complete archive of documents; few are available on CoA website. Peter will look into storing documents on the website. David would like better archiving. Wayne suggested OATS training on document collaboration.

Action: Peter to explore other tools both for archiving and for collaboration, including storing documents on the website.

8. Meeting adjourned at 11 am.