
COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING

Minutes
October 26, 2020

PRESIDING: Sharonlee Vogel, Chair

Members Attending

Reginald Avery
Angie Boyter
Peter Brunner
Wei Guo
Susan Hailman
Julia Mattis
Michael McPherson
Eletta Morse
Sue Song
Mark Stinson

Excused

Jennifer Asher

Absent

Michael Willis

Office on Aging and Independence

Terri Hansen
Donna Tugwell

Guests

Jacqueline Scott, Director DCRS

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm

Approve Agenda

Reginald Avery motioned to approve the agenda and Sue Song seconded the motion. Motion was approved. *All in favor. Agenda accepted.*

Approve Minutes

After changes were noted for the September minutes, Peter Brunner motioned to approve the minutes and Reginald Avery seconded the motion. Motion was approved. *All in favor. Minutes accepted.*

Special Guest

- Jacqueline Scott stated she hoped everyone had a chance to participate in the Virtual Showcase that was held on Friday, October 23rd. She thanked Terri Hansen and the team for the work they did putting together the Virtual Showcase.
- Jacqueline Scott provided an update on legislation related to Boards and Commissions. Ms. Scott reported County Executive, Dr. Ball, examined current Boards and Commissions, how they are operated, and seeks to establish parity across all Boards and Commissions. DCRS has ten boards and commissions. Ms. Scott noted the ballot currently has a question posed to the public to reduce the terms of members of Boards and Commissions from a 5-year commitment to a 3-year commitment. The limitation of two terms will remain. When each Board and Commission's functions were reviewed, it was noted that some related to the COA were outdated and needed revision.
- Legislation will be introduced to the County Council in November regarding the COA, the legislation proposes to update the language to the phrasing of older adults, change the age requirement from 55+ and older to 50+ and change the language of the COA and the OAI to align with the OAI language in the description. The legislation will state that a majority of the commissioners need to be 50+, but not all. In the past it was a majority of 55+ and there have been members under 55.
- Also, it would align the responsibility of the COA to have the advice and counsel language that is included in all other boards and commissions legislation. For the COA there was historically language in the creation of the commission that spoke to budgetary authority over the department. That language is changing to advising the County Executive as opposed to having a level of budgetary authority.
- The Commission on Aging existed before the Department of Community Resources and Services and Office on Aging and Independence existed. Therefore, much of the language described is antiquated and does not reflect the current structure of County government. The proposed legislation will change the name, but it will recognize that the OAI is a large office that reflects its infrastructure and connects this commission to the Office. The bill will come forth for amendment and will be introduced by the Administration on November 2nd at the virtual hearing before the Council which will be held at 7pm. There will be a virtual public hearing opportunity on November 16th at 7pm. Then the Council has its final action at their council meeting on December 7th.
- Several commission members mentioned that the Commission was not made aware that this was on the ballot for this election. It was mentioned by members that the Commission in the past has not had meaningful input regarding the budget or been communicated with on the development of the budget. Commissioners expressed they feel in the future they should be communicated with to give their input so they can share their expertise. One member stated that the reputation of the Commission is that they do not make a difference and that this could deter people from volunteering to be on the Commission. Ms. Scott stated in the future the department and office could work on engaging the Commission more, so they could give their input and advice. She agreed to have the legislation sent to the commissioners.

Presentation on Howard's Age-Friendly Initiative

- Terri Hansen gave a power point presentation on the Age-Friendly initiative. On December 3, 2019 the Age-Friendly initiative was launched in Howard County. It was launched due to the everchanging demographics in Howard County and the incredible growth that will happen in the next 25 years in the over 60 population. Since January 2020, there has been a work group for each of the eight domains of livability. Each work group is working on their goals and creating vision statements. Action steps will be written in the next couple of months. The timeline has been modified due to COVID-19. In February 2021, the action plans will be submitted to the Steering Committee for review and comments. In March 2021, the Steering Committee will

report back to work groups. In April 2021, an action plan will be submitted to County Administration for review. In May/June 2021, an action plan will be submitted to AARP. Challenges to the initiative were noted as: listening and focus groups cannot be conducted in person due to COVID-19. Creative ways are currently being explored to reach out to people who may not have been well represented in the survey completed in February. Telephone town hall meetings as well as partnering with various existing groups to attend and existing virtual meetings to get input are under consideration. The action plan will lead the County through the next five years. Ms. Hansen stated she is looking for Age-Friendly Ambassadors to help implement the action plan. The commissioners were asked to consider being ambassadors, noting that some commissioners are already members of a work group. Ms. Hansen agreed to send a list of the work groups' definitions and the work group meeting dates to the commissioners.

Office on Aging and Independence Report

- Virtual Showcase was held on Friday, October 23rd from 9am to 2pm to get information out to the public, as the Master Aging event was not able to be held this year. WebEx was used for the Virtual Showcase. The showcase was well attended. It featured programs and resources of OAI and the Resource Guide for OAI. The presentations were recorded and will be available on the website. The Age-Friendly and MAP presentations are among them. The showcase included a tribute to Phyllis Madachy, who was a former Director of DCRS and an OAI Administrator. The Resource Guide is available on the website and also as a link to virtual offerings for the month.
- OAI is working to make their part of the County website a more interactive and effective tool for the people who go to it. The website re-design is led by DTCS.
- The budget will begin to be developed in late October. It will be a tough budget year due to COVID-19.
- The Area Plan will be coming up. It is an annual document that is written and sent to MDoA as required by MDoA. It is a comprehensive plan and will include federal, state and local funded programs. It will include what was done the past year and what will be done in the upcoming year. The updated Area Plan will be sent to Commissioners.
- The Grab and Go Meals program is a curbside meal distribution program that was started when the 50+ Centers were closed at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The meals are frozen, and meet one third the RDA, and are distributed once a week. Both pickup and delivery are available. OAI was able to contract with Neighbor Ride to help with the meals that are home delivered. The Standard meals are a seven-day meal pack and the Korean meals are a five-day meal pack. The program is by donation for individuals 60+. The program started March 26th and has since distributed 25,000+ meals. The program started with the Standard meals and in August the Korean meals were added. OAI is looking into expanding the Grab and Go Meals program to include Indian meals. With the meals, individuals are given nutrition information and information on OAI programs. The Grab and Go Meals program is in addition to the traditional home delivered meals program through Meals on Wheels.

Chair's Report

- This year's Legislative Breakfast has been cancelled.
- Suggested that if a Virtual Master Aging is held next year, the agenda should be posted throughout the day.
- Mentioned that Commission on Aging meeting held on October 26th was not listed on the WebEx events on the County website.
- At next month's meeting, one of the things that will be talked about is how the Commission wants to work with OAI.

New Business

- No new business

Sharing from Commissioners

- One member through their work is continuing to help point people in the direction to find help. There are still a lot of people out in the community in need of help.
- The Health Department, LHIC, is hosting a two-hour Crisis Response Training for community volunteers on 11/12/20 and 11/13/20. The training is free of charge and covers intervention for trauma, non-suicidal self-injury, best practices for safety, etc.
- The County will do a training for Hands Only CPR and Stop the Bleeding via WebEx.
- One member shared that they had had health issues unrelated to COVID-19.
- One member shared that there is SAM (Smart Alert for Mail) app available for free. It alerts you to when your mail is delivered. It also helps control SPAM. Amazon has it.
- The Village in Howard is in the process of rejuvenating their Facebook page. It was requested that members “like” the Facebook page for The Village in Howard. On it, there is a twice weekly program called Good Morning Howard. It has one-hour presentations by members of The Village in Howard on a variety of themes.
- One member is trying to link up with Kathy Wehr and Earnestine Thomas about the Caregiver Grant, as there are people they know who are interested in it. Kathy Wehr will be asked to respond.
- One member lost their father in July and has been helping take care of their mother who has dementia.
- The Korean community through a partnership with OAI is holding four virtual classes a week on positive aging and healing.
- English classes for Chinese seniors, that were stopped because of the pandemic, are now available online.
- One member shared that they are enjoying being part of the Age-Friendly initiative. As part of the group, they learned what is going on with part of the County and the world and how things are being dealt with.
- A new non-profit called Volunteens has teen volunteers who are helping seniors with yard work. They are hoping to get volunteers who can help with snow shoveling this upcoming winter season.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:03pm.

Recording Secretary: Donna Tugwell

Future Meetings: Cancelled Legislative Breakfast November 17, November 23, no December meeting