



**COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING MINUTES  
July 26, 2021**

**PRESIDING:** Jenna Crawley, Administrator, Office on Aging and Independence

**Members Attending**

Jennifer Asher  
Angie Boyter  
Peter Brunner  
Wei Gou  
Susan Hailman  
Victoria Hathaway  
Elizabeth Edsall Kromm  
Eletta Morse  
Sue Song  
Mark Stinson  
Michael Willis

**Excused/Absent**

Reginald Avery  
Geetha Jayaram  
Julia Mattis

**Office on Aging and Independence**

Jenna Crawley  
Donna Tugwell

**Guests**

Quanita Kareem, Compliance Officer, Howard County Department of Housing & Community Development

**Call to order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm

**Approve Agenda**

Agenda has a change to the guest speaker.

**Approve Minutes**

Edits to the June meeting minutes were identified. The June minutes will be approved at the September meeting.

## **Presentation on HC Housing Opportunities Master Plan – Special Guest – Quanita Kareem, Compliance Officer, Howard County Department of Housing & Community Development**

- Quanita Kareem presented and gave an overview of the HC Housing Opportunities Master Plan. The plan is a strategy for improving the availability, affordability, and accessibility of housing in Howard County.
- The plan is necessary to address needs of existing and future residents; strengthen the community by fostering its racial and socioeconomic diversity; coordinate policy across the County; support the local economy of Howard County; increase transparency for residents, employees, real estate agents, property developers and other groups that operate in the community; and mobilize resources that are necessary to accomplish each of these.
- Key findings were from 12 months of research and data analysis done in the region and nationally. They were in growth and demographics, housing supply and demand, and housing affordability.
- Nine primary challenges facing housing in Howard County were given. They were the result of public engagement through 16 task force and workgroup meetings, outreach discussions, community meetings, and two public surveys. These challenges include 1) land use, planning, and zoning, 2) policies and programs, and 3) housing and infrastructure. An overview of recommendations in these areas was given.
- Key implementation items were presented. And, additional recommendations for residents of Howard County were given for 1) new and existing homeowners, 2) older adults, 3) low-income renters, and 4) persons with disabilities.
- Commissioners then shared comments and asked questions.

## **Office on Aging and Independence Report**

- The Age-Friendly action plan is currently being written. We expect to have it presented to the County Executive by early September. There were about 85 recommendation that came out of the eight work groups. There are several common themes throughout the recommendations.
- OAI is continuing to restart and resume in-person services. 50+Centers are now reopened with no appointments. The attendance at 50+Centers is about half of what it was pre-COVID. A hybrid approach is being done where there are some virtual and some in-person programming.
- The vacancy rate for staff is at about 35%. Positions are being posted.
- A lot of community feedback has been received around the Connections and Kindred Spirits programs. Those are the social day programs for those individuals who live with cognitive and memory impairment. We are looking at resuming Connections in early September.
- Jenna Crawley thanked the Commissioners for reviewing the Age-Friendly recommendations for the action plan.

## **Chair's Report**

- Jenna Crawley provided the Chair's report in Reg Avery's absence.
- Commissioners were asked that when guests present at COA meetings, to treat them with respect and civility. Remember that these individuals are coming to provide information and education. And to help inform of recommendations and advising for our older adult community.
- Beginning in September, in-person COA meetings can be resumed. Having future in-person COA meetings was discussed. It was decided that the September COA meeting will be virtual. At that meeting, whether to resume future in-person Commission meetings will again be discussed.
- There will be no August COA meeting.

## **New Business**

- No new business

## **Sharing from Commissioners**

- Sue Song – The Korean picnic was a success. About 80 people attended. They are considering doing another one in September depending on COVID-19.
- Jennifer Asher – Asked for clarification about the Virtual 50+EXPO, whether it was The Beacon or OAI hosting the Virtual 50+EXPO. Jenna clarified that it is a partnership with The Beacon and The Beacon will be the host. It will be held from October 1<sup>st</sup> through November 30<sup>th</sup>. The Media kit will be sent to the Commissioners. Master Aging hosted by OAI/DCRS will not be held this year.
- Victoria Hathaway – Suggested Andre Lingham present on elder fraud and abuse at the Virtual 50+EXPO.
- Angie Boyter – Suggested Easy Technology as a topic for the Virtual 50+EXPO. Smart Speaker Alexa could be one of the items discussed.
- Eletta Morse – Stated that the technology was great, but you must be able to afford it and have the ability to learn it.
- Pete Brunner – The Village was able to buy on E-Bay a couple editions of the Optelic Clear Reader Plus for individuals with severe visual impairment. Jenna Crawley shared that through The Loan Closet, OAI has partnered with MDTAP which is with the Maryland Department of Disabilities. MDTAP has a number of pieces of equipment that people can try out.
- Victoria Hathaway – Shared examples of older adults who need help, some of who do not want the technology items or assistance that could help keep them safe. The Senior Call Check through the Maryland Department of Aging is a free service that can be used. It is on OAI website.
- Jennifer Asher – Suggest Reg Avery speak about the Commission on Aging as part of the OAI/Beacon virtual Expo and who we are, what we do, and what our mission is. Then he could introduce a speaker who would present on easy technology and how it relates to aging in place safely.
- Pete Brunner suggested that maybe in the future there would be a grant that could be used to help distribute the technology to older adults.

## **Adjournment**

Angie Boyter motioned to adjourn. Pete Brunner seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:28pm.

Recording Secretary: Donna Tugwell

Future Meetings: no August meeting, September 27, October 25, November 22, no December meeting