
COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING

Minutes

November 25, 2019

PRESIDING: Sharonlee Vogel, Chair

Members Attending

Jennifer Asher
Reginald Avery
Angie Boyter
Pete Brunner
Wei Guo
Susan Hailman
Julia Mattis
Michael McPherson
Eletta Morse
Mark Stinson
Michael Willis

Excused

Bob McLaughlin
Sue Song

Absent

Deborah Fleischmann

Office on Aging and Independence

Jenna Crawley
Donna Tugwell

Visitors

Terri Hansen

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm

Welcome to New Commissioner Wei Guo & Introductions

Each of the commission members shared what brought them to the Commission. Jennifer Asher has been on the Commission about four years and is Vice-Chair. She has a background in estate and trust law and tax law. She felt she could share this knowledge as it relates to older adults. Mark Stinson joined the Commission about a year ago. He has had clients' parents who have experienced various issues and took care of his dad for 40 years. He wanted to share his knowledge and experience. Eletta Morse is on her second term with the Commission and started when she was still working as a nurse practitioner. She felt it would be a useful thing to continue doing after she retired. She is the official representative to the Adult Guardianship Review Board. Reginald Avery has been on the Commission almost four years. He heard about the Commission from Sharonlee Vogel. He is employed with Federal law enforcement. His wife is retired from Medicare and was the Aging and Outreach Officer for all the United States. Sharonlee Vogel is leaving the Commission next May and has served on the Commission a long time. She is currently serving her third term. Michael McPherson and Sharonlee served on the Maryland Commission on Aging together. The County Executive invited him to serve on the Commission and as an active senior felt he could give a valuable contribution to the Commission. Angie Boyter joined the Commission and felt she could give insight into keeping seniors in the community. Pete Brunner has been with

the Commission about seven years. He joined the Commission because he wanted to age in Howard County and help create an environment that was supportive of older adults. Julia Mattis has been a realtor in the County for about 30 years. She joined the Commission for two reasons. One because she deals with a lot of seniors and two because she helped take care of her mother-in-law who had Alzheimer's for 10 years before she passed away. She is now helping care for her own parents. Julia is halfway thru her second term. Michael Willis is a licensed Nursing Home Administrator. He joined the Commission to give insight from a long-term care perspective. He has been on the board over three years. Wei Guo is still working at Johns Hopkins and joined the Commission because she wanted to contribute her time and talents to the community.

Approve Agenda

Motioned to approve the agenda and the motion was second. Motion was approved. *All in favor. Agenda accepted.*

Approve Minutes

Motioned to approve the minutes and the motion was second. Motion was approved. *All in favor. Minutes accepted.*

Presentation by Terri Hansen, Age-Friendly Howard Manager

The launch for Howard County to become an Age-Friendly Community is Tuesday, December 3rd. The goal of the launch is to raise public awareness and get people excited about it. The initiative dates back to 2006 when the World Health Organization saw that the world was aging quickly, and older adults were moving back into the cities. They wanted to make sure that cities are prepare for seniors and the changing world. They focused on the world being a place that treats everyone with respect regardless of age or their ability level. It needs to include government agencies, businesses, and non-profits and have them all involved. It also needs to be a grassroots effort with the average person and residents involved. We need the aging population in the County to tell us what is working and what is not working.

By the year 2035, there will be more people 65+ than people under the age of 18. What does that mean for service delivery and for the world in general? Diversity is needed because of the increase in diversity in the community. The initiative needs to benefit people of all ages and treat everyone in a respectful manner plus have intergeneration opportunities. Age-friendly is the platform to ensure that all community members remain connected to the community. To be successful, we must embrace collaboration, new thinking, and have strategic and dependable resources to support the effort. Communication between departments must take place. It will take 3-5 years to develop and complete the initiative. The aging population in Howard County will look different than in years past. It will be a majority minority population.

An age-friendly community respects everyone, no matter a person's age or stage of life. It is a place that has 1) useable outdoor spaces, 2) provides opportunities for work and play, 3) needed services, 4) affordable, accessible and safe housing, 5) effective ways to get around including safe and accessible public transportation, 6) engaging activities and social events, and 7) an age-friendly community effectively gets information to all its members in a variety of ways. The eight Domains of Livability are 1) outdoor spaces and buildings, 2) transportation, 3) housing, 4) social participation, 5) respect and social inclusion, 6) civic participation and employment, 7) communication and information, and 8) community and health services.

Howard County is at the enrollment point. Work groups will start in January 2020. There is a steering committee and help from other County agencies. Also, HCGH, CA and other agencies will be asked to join in the effort. There will be surveys and listening sessions. The hope is to combine what is done in years One and Two, doing both surveys and listening sessions. The following two years will involve implementation. The Commission's input is requested in reviewing the survey questions, examining content and format, and seeing if they would recommend any more questions to be added that are not on the list. The total survey questions should be between 25-30. Terri will give Donna the survey to send to Commission members. Feedback is requested from the Commission on how to get the message out other than email.

Communications/Outreach

Access was given to the portal. Then feedback was given to the developers of the portal. However, the Commission feels that the feedback was not used in the development of the portal at all. Black not gray, and white not pale blue were suggested, but this was not followed. Also, subtitles on the portal are illegible. However, Jenna has had a follow-up conversation with DTCS. They were very appreciative of the comprehensive feedback that the Commission gave them. The Commission does not feel they were listened to nor their input considered, certainly not included.

Senior Tax Issues

Nothing to report.

Promoting Aging in the Community and Healthy Aging

Nothing to report.

Transportation

Nothing to report.

Office on Aging and Independence Report

The Thanksgiving Luncheon was very successful with over 385 people in attendance. County Executive, Dr. Calvin Ball, was among those in attendance. There was a great band and good food. Bain renovations will be starting next week. The preliminary end date for the construction is July 22nd. The East Columbia 50+ Center is in the design and development phase. Groundbreaking is scheduled for July 2020, with completion in December of 2021. The Ellicott City 50+ City was voted best Senior Center by Baltimore Magazine.

Chair's Report

The meeting date for May 2020 will be May 18th because of the Memorial Day holiday and the September 2020 meeting date will be September 21st because of a religious holiday. The August meeting date is up in the air. The next Legislative Breakfast will be Tuesday, November 17, 2020, after the election.

Andy is back in town briefly and then he is going to Hawaii to spend the winter. He sends his best to everyone.

Volunteers are needed for the Exercise for Brain Health study funded by NIA. There is no cost to participate in the study. The University of Maryland and Johns Hopkins and others will participate. They are looking for people between the ages of 60-89 in good health, but not physically active and without a cognitive impairment. The study includes supervised exercise classes at the Columbia Athletic Club, physical, cognitive and stress health testing. Sharonlee will send the PDF of the flier to everyone with the information.

Sharing from Commissioners

Jennifer Asher attended a Healthy Aging Workgroup at LHIC last Tuesday. Terri Hansen spoke there. At the end of the meeting, the topic of implicit bias came up as a potential action item for 2020 for the Healthy Aging workgroup. The definition is a feeling you have outside your conscience awareness or control, a hidden bias or an unintended bias based on something like age, religion or race. This is something that the Commission might be interested in exploring.

Eletta Morse shared that in various countries and some U.S. states, it is required that at a certain age people be retested for their driver's license. California has such a law.

Wei Guo shared that grandparents and others from China that do not have a good understanding of English, have English classes available to them that they can take.

Michael McPherson shared that Neighbor Ride received an award for their contribution to the community. Many seniors who are eligible for their services are not aware of them. Seniors look at transportation as getting to the doctors, going to the grocery store, etc. The rest of the community looks at transportation as being convenient to go wherever they want to go. On-demand transportation is needed for seniors. Uber or Lyft can be expensive for seniors, unless there is a special rate given to them.

Sharonlee Vogel shared that Bob McLaughlin will be at the January meeting.

Angie Boyter shared that she went to a meeting of The Village in Howard where Jenna spoke. Angie learned that Montgomery County Delegate Ron Stewart is working on introducing legislation about senior housing. Angie contacted his office and learned from his staff, that he is still working on it. They will let her know when the draft is ready, and she will share it with Commission members. Angie spoke with Kathy Wehr about the great resources available to caregivers. However, some people are not aware of them and some are not available to people who are working. Many working people who are caregivers, do not think of themselves as caregivers. Angie asked that Jenna and Donna tell Terri Hansen that she took a Zumba Gold Toning exercise class at a 50+Center. The class was excellent. She intends to take more classes at the Ellicott City 50+ Center.

Peter Brunner shared that The Village in Howard held a Bingo fundraiser, and it was an effective fundraiser. On December 5th, The Village in Howard will hold its annual meeting and it is their fifth anniversary.

Susan Hailman shared that the Commission still needs to advocate for seniors on certain issues such as healthy aging. For aging in place there are problems that need to be addressed. Many people fall in between, as their income makes them ineligible for certain programs, but they do not have enough income to hire someone on their own.

Adjournment

Motioned to adjourn, and the motion was second. The meeting adjourned at 8:31pm.

Recording Secretary: Donna Tugwell

Future Meetings: No December meeting, January 27, February 24, March 23, April 27, May 18, June 22, July 27, no August meeting, September 21, October 26, Legislative Breakfast November 17, and November 23 or 30.