



## COMMISSION ON AGING

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### COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING

Minutes

March 25, 2019

**PRESIDING:** Sharonlee Vogel, Chair

#### **Members Attending**

Jennifer Asher  
Angie Boyter  
Peter Brunner  
Debbie Fleischmann  
Susan Hailman  
Jan Horan  
Julia Mattis  
Bob McLaughlin  
Andrew Monjan  
Sue Song  
Mark Stinson  
Michael Willis

#### **Excused**

Reg Avery  
Eletta Morse

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

Jenna Crawley

#### **Call to order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm.

#### **Approve Agenda**

Bob McLaughlin motioned to approve the agenda and Michael Willis seconded the motion. Motion was approved. *All in favor. Agenda accepted.*

#### **Approve Minutes**

Pete Brunner motioned to approve the minutes and Bob McLaughlin seconded the motion. Motion was approved. *All in favor. Minutes accepted.*

#### **Workgroup Reports**

##### **Transportation**

Bob McLaughlin reported that the Transportation Advisory Group held a joint meeting with Bike Howard and discussed the value of complete streets, which includes appropriate sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike pathways. Complete streets are essential in areas like the Route 1 corridor where pedestrian accidents and fatalities continue to occur.

Bob also reported that the Office of Transportation has not replaced their administrator, Clive Graham.

## **Promoting Aging in the Community and Healthy Aging**

Andrew Monjan reported that the work group had not met, but would be focusing on ways to include diverse populations in their efforts.

## **Communications/Outreach**

Jan Horan reported that the work group would like to focus on communication between county departments. Jan informed the Commission about the Board of Education's senior pass program, which allows older adults to attend high school events including theater performances and plays as well as sporting games for a discount. The work group noted that a directory of all the county services which apply to older adults would be very helpful.

The work group continues to be interested in ways to improve the county's website. While improvements and redesign are planned, the work group hopes that the public and the way they navigate will be a priority. The public cares more about ease of navigation and less about the department in which a program is housed.

## **Senior Tax Issues**

Pete Brunner provided an update to Senate Bill 654, which is intended to allow counties to set the residency threshold for the state's Aging in Place tax credit. The bill has passed the senate and went to the house for a hearing on the 19<sup>th</sup>. Despite repeated calls, Pete hasn't been able to obtain a status update since the hearing.

Pete also provided the Commission with information on Senate Bill 279, which has passed both the house and senate, and is intended to provide a new series of grants for either new or expanded aging in place programs. The grants will be administered by the Maryland Department of Aging.

## **COA Summit**

More than one-third of the counties contacted have indicated they are interested in participating in the COA Summit; members may be asked to reach out via phone to counties who have not responded to the invite. The Committee recommends focusing on the areas of Age-Friendly Communities which relate most closely to aging as this will keep the Summit focused. The Committee is considering including a report out on best practices in different jurisdictions to round out the day.

## **Chair's Report**

Sharonlee shared that members of the Columbia Associations Senior Advisory Council (CASAC) were writing to Howard County General Hospital following the publication of the hospital's Wellness Guide; the guide does not list a geriatrician. Debbie Fleischmann clarified that providers in the guide can only choose one specialty for their listing, so it's possible there is a geriatrician who chose to be listed under a different specialty.

Commissions that may be interested in changing work groups should email Sharonlee before next month's meeting.

## **Office on Aging Report**

Jenna Crawley announced changes to the 50+EXPO. Instead of a vendor focused fair, the new event, entitled Master Aging, will be education focused and will have a conference-style feel. Master Aging will be held amongst three buildings at Howard Community College on October 19. The event will still feature vendors, as well as a keynote speaker and entertainment and seminar options. Master Aging will not feature a health fair or flu shots as the Expo did.

The Office on Aging has partnered with the Department of Finance to co-locate MAP staff at the County's cashier's office one day a month. MAP Specialists will focus on application assistance and will provide customers with a more holistic view of programs for which they may be eligible. Bilingual staff will be participating in the partnership to provide services in both English and Korean.

The Bain 50+ Center renovations are still in the pricing stages, but are anticipated to be completed in two phases. The first phase will deal with the current administration/office spaces and the second will enclose the courtyard and renovate the exercise rooms.

A public hearing on the East Columbia 50+ Center construction project will be held. When a date is confirmed, the Office will share with the Commission.

The Loan Closet move is scheduled for early June. The proposed space is more than three times the size of the current location, so the Office is working to determine what services can be co-located at the Loan Closet. Commissioners suggested replicating the Loan Closet in Western Howard County as the Columbia location can be a hindrance to older adults in Western Howard County.

Upcoming Events:

April 11 Mosaic Project Kickoff

April 16-17 Health Care Decisions Day presentations featuring OAI, AARP, and the Horizon Foundation

April 27 Caregiver Conference

June 15 Elder Abuse Awareness Day

Staff Changes

The nutrition specialist position at Bain is vacant, but the job has been posted.

**New Business**-None

**Sharing from Commissioners**

Bob shared that he has been appointed to a second term on the Commission.

Pete shared that he had personally written letters endorsing the Senate bills he discussed earlier. On March 30, the Village in Howard will be celebrating their fifth anniversary. Pete also shared that his councilperson, Deb Jung is holding monthly coffees; Commissioners may want to check if their councilperson is doing the same as attendance has been valuable.

Jan shared that she has again been visiting different 50+ Centers, including taking a neighbor to Ellicott City 50+ Center. Jan also reapplied for the Aging in Place tax credit and was disappointed to have to reprove her residence annually to continue to receive the credit.

Jennifer Asher provided some information from a Baltimore Sun article on taxes. This year close to 28% of Maryland residents are experiencing an increase in state taxes, with those in middle income brackets bearing the brunt.

Andrew shared that he is experiencing more ageism while traveling. In certain areas, rental cars are unavailable to those over a certain age as are timeshares. He's even been required to provide a doctor's letter to participate in a diving excursion.

Sharonlee also provided the Commission with information on the Maryland House of Delegates decision to advance legislation to create a Prescription Drug Affordability Board that could set limits on how much state and local governments pay for high-cost medications. The Board will only have the power to reduce the price of drugs purchased by health plans that serve employees of state and county governments.

Debbie shared that Howard County General Hospital is focusing on employee safety. Older adults tend to be the most combative patients and education for staff is ongoing about how to understand changes that are happening and to know how to appropriately respond.

Angie Boyter attended the Grief and the Older Adult training the Office on Aging sponsored earlier this month. While the topic was great, more than half the workshop was spent on introductions and overviews of models that are no longer used, so the presentation didn't provide much value.

Sue Song is participating in an Acute Care Work Group which is examining appropriate placements for those with Alzheimer's, dementia, or memory issues after acute care.

Susan Hailman shared the AARP's work books on livability with the Commission as the topics covered overlap the proposed COA Summit topics. As multiple ways of addressing the topics is discussed in the books, they may be valuable when planning.

### **Adjournment**

Angie Boyter motioned to adjourn. Sharonlee Vogel seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:00pm.

Recording Secretary: Jennie Rittenhouse

Next Meeting: April 22, 2019, Ellicott City 50+ Center, 7pm