



COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING

NOTES – No Quorum

June 24, 2019

PRESIDING: Sharonlee Vogel, Chair

Members Attending

Reginald Avery
Peter Brunner
Susan Hailman
Bob McLaughlin
Michael McPherson
Mark Stinson

Excused

Jennifer Asher
Angela Boyter
Debbie Fleischmann
Julia Mattis
Eletta Morse
Michael Willis

Absent

Sue Song

Office on Aging and Independence

Jenna Crawley
Donna Tugwell

Guests

Tom Bradley
John Bruns
Brandee Ganz
Kim Pruim

Call to order

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

Approve Agenda

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

Approve Minutes

Since there was no quorum, May Minutes will be approved at the next meeting July 22.

Update on Applicants for Commission on Aging

Kim Pruim gave an update on the applications for the 15th Commission member. There are five applications right now. More applications can be accepted for consideration for about a week or so. Kim will send the applications to Sharonlee and Jenna and the Commission will be able to review them and give their recommendations.

Sharonlee pointed out to the Commissioners that we need diversity, especially culturally and ethnically to truly represent Howard County residents.

IT Overview and Q & A

Brandee Ganz and John Bruns from IT gave an overview of the technology upgrades and answered questions. Windows 10 will be rolling out to everyone and will enhance security. One Drive and Sharepoint a file-based storage system will be started.

Also, the public website is being redesigned. IT will be asking departments for input. Commission members reported, currently seniors are having trouble finding the information they need and on previous versions of the website, information was not easy to find. It was suggested that the level of contrast needs to be improved, that people should have the ability to increase the font size, and the website should be geared more toward people rather than agencies. IT reported a Constituent Service Portal will be designed and be linked to the website. The portal will be organized by user type; i.e. residents, parents, business, etc. On the portal, users can search information on services and various topics.

MAP was discussed. Right now, it is primarily phone based. In the future, it would be helpful if people could search a database online for services such as housing assistance and food assistance. The top five things people call into MAP for was discussed. People who are able to conduct a search independently should have the ability to easily access information. Brandee Ganz and John Bruns said that the Commission will be able to test the website before it goes live to the public. Accessibility issues should be looked at when reviewing. The projected timeline is to have the updated website ready by the end of the year.

Work Group Reporting

Senior Tax Issues

The work group divided the issues into two areas, the Howard County legislative agenda and the Maryland State legislative agenda.

For Howard County, 1) now that the Aging in Place tax credits are in place, the Commission advocated to ask the administration of the County Council to implement the changes. The commission is awaiting a response from the County Executive to the letter that was sent to him concerning the Senior Tax Credit. Jenna agreed to follow up and ask the status. 2) Lobbying for a better website, which is already in process.

Maryland, the Commission reported has been consistently ranked as one of the worst age friendly retirement locations. The Commission plans to address the following at the annual legislative breakfast: 1) Review of the implementation and regulations governing the new NANA legislation. 2) Looking at the tax base contribution of seniors to the Howard tax base and their value. The goal is to show that the contribution of seniors in Howard County is valuable. 3) Request a change to the Cost of Living Adjustment formula to the Pension Exclusion. The National Association of Active and Retired Federal Employees urges the adoption of the CPI-E. 4) Application of the Pension Exclusion is possibly the only place in the Maryland Tax Code which splits a benefit among spouses. Everywhere else income and deductions are combined. 5) Continue to request that IRA benefits be counted towards the Pension Exclusion.

There was some discussion regarding Medicaid Waivers in Maryland. Jenna reported the waiting list for people applying for assistance and needing help in their homes is about 20,000 statewide. Howard County is in the process of trying to determine how many of those 20,000 reside in our jurisdiction. The Senior Care Program has a small waiting list.

Promoting Aging in the Community and Healthy Aging - No committee members present to give a report.

Transportation

Michael McPherson was welcomed to the transportation workgroup. He expressed interested in transportation services for the aging Howard County population.

The committee reported over the last two months, County Executive Ball has been very vocal about 1) decreasing traffic congestion, 2) improving the infrastructure, and 3) expanding public transportation services for the aging and student population. There is new money from a grant from Maryland Department of Transportation that could be used to buy six new buses.

Chris Eatough has finished the Complete Streets program. The idea is to integrate sidewalks and crosswalks to make them safe whether you are walking, biking, or driving.

A national award was awarded for the Columbia Pedestrian Bridge.

In the next year, funding will be expanded for on-demand transportation.

Communications/Outreach

The committee reported being pleased with IT's visit to the Commission meeting and the plans for improvement to the website.

COA Summit

Sharonlee and Peter met with representatives from the Commission for Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne, and Talbot counties to discuss the Age Friendly Summit to be hosted by the Commission. Sharonlee has invited County Executive Ball to give the welcome address. Sharonlee has reached out to the keynote speaker, but has not heard back yet. It will be held at the North Laurel 50+ Center, Sept. 17, 2019. Thirteen of twenty-three counties have responded yes to attending. Jenna has reached out to Hyattsville, Montgomery County and Washington, DC. It is expected that between 70 to 100 people will attend.

Office on Aging Report

It was pointed out that the Commission minutes on the website need to be updated. OAI will follow up with Office of Law for how long minutes need to be retained and archiving guidelines.

On June 18th, a public meeting was held at the East Columbia 50+ Center to give updates and information on the plans to enlarge the center. The new center will be 33,000 sq. feet and have two floors. Ground breaking will be in FY2021 and plans to be complete by December 2021.

The Bain 50+ Center renovation does not have a start date yet, but will begin approximately late summer. The courtyard will be enclosed to create a fitness center. The HVAC system will be updated and office space renovated.

The Loan Closet construction is nearing completion. A walk through of the new site is scheduled for June 26th. The space will be triple the size of the current location and will include technology assistance. Jenna provided follow up to the discussion regarding Loan Closet services in Western Howard County. The Loan Closet program manager will meet with The Lions Club to follow up. The Loan Closet will be expanding its services to include a loaning library of assistive devices under a partnership with MDTAP.

Approximately 150 people attended World Elder Abuse Day held on June 15th at 9830 Patuxent Woods Drive. Howard County Office on Aging partnered with AARP, the Howard County Police Department, the Office of Consumer Protection, and the Howard County Sheriff's Office and others to help spread awareness about the types and signs of elder abuse. At the event, there was document shredding that about 351 people used.

The four-year area plan for 2020 through 2023 was submitted to MDOA. OAI has received one round of comments for review of which we responded and are awaiting final approval. The Commission requested a copy of the final plan once approved by MDOA.

The Office on Aging and Independence is undergoing a realignment of divisions to make the office more efficient and streamlined. The position of Age Friendly Coordinator is being added.

Upcoming dates for events: Senior Day at the Fair on Tuesday August 6th and Walk for Alzheimer on Saturday, September 28th, and the NAACP Senior Summit on Saturday, September 28th from 10am-2pm at North Laurel.

Chair's Report

Jennifer Asher, Pete Brunner, Sharonlee Vogel and Michael Willis have expressed interest in taking the Hands Only CPR training. Howard County General Hospital charges \$45.00 to take the Hands Only CPR training.

The Commission was informed the Commission on Aging cannot issue appreciation certificates to elected officials.

New Business - None

Sharing from Commissioners

Reginal Avery shared that the redesign of Long Reach Village Center has been postponed. The plans for reconstruction will have to start over.

Pete Brunner will not be at the next meeting in July. He will be in Barcelona.

Susan Hailman raised concern about the automatic doors at the entrance to the building. The doors do not stay open long enough. Jenna agreed to report this to the ADA Coordinator.

Bob McLaughlin shared that school is out for the summer for some. But for some high school students attending summer school, there is no bus transportation service.

Michael McPherson shared that many of his neighbors are asking why the location of the 50+ EXPO was changed from Wilde Lake High School to Howard Community College. Jenna explained that the event is being revised and updated, giving a summary of the new event. The new event will be called Master Aging.

Adjournment

Reginald Avery motioned to adjourn. Bob McLaughlin seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:00pm.

Recording Secretary: Donna Tugwell

Future Meetings: July 22, August 26, Statewide Summit September 17, September 23, Legislative Breakfast October 15, October 28, November 25, no December meeting.