



## COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING MINUTES January 24, 2022

**PRESIDING:** Reginald Avery, Chair

### **Members Attending**

Jennifer Asher  
Angie Boyter  
Peter Brunner  
Susan Hailman  
Wei Guo  
Victoria Hathaway  
Geetha Jayaram  
Elizabeth Edsall Kromm  
Julia Mattis  
Eletta Morse  
Sue Song  
Michael Willis

### **Excused**

Mark Stinson

### **Office on Aging & Independence**

Jenna Crawley  
Donna Tugwell

### **Guests**

Stephanie Lyon

### **Guest Speaker**

None

### **Call to order**

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

### **Approve Agenda**

Sue Song motioned to approve the agenda. Victoria Hathaway seconded the motion. Motion was approved. *All in favor. Agenda approved.*

### **Approve Minutes**

The November minutes were reviewed, and it was determined that clarification was needed for one of the points. Clarification will be added. The November minutes will be reviewed again for approval at the February meeting.

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

- County Executive Calvin Ball will be holding a virtual press conference announcing the release of the Age-Friendly Action Plan tomorrow on January 25<sup>th</sup> at 11:00am. It will be through WebEx. Jenna Crawley will send the invitation to the Commissioners. There will be different speakers from the members of the work groups. Some of the recommendations from the work groups will require policy change and legislation changes to be fully implemented. Priorities will be identified. A hard copy of the Age-Friendly Action Plan will be sent to Commissioners. Appendices are available online.
- Due to the increase in the COVID-19 positivity rate, a pause has been put on in-person programs in the 50+ Centers. The 50+ Center will remain open to the public. In person activities will resume February 1<sup>st</sup>. Masks will be distributed at the 50+Centers. Vaccine clinics and booster clinics are being organized at the 50+Bain Center and the Elkridge 50+ Center.
- Several staffing transitions have occurred. Barbara Scher, 50+ Center Division Manager is retiring Monday, January 31<sup>st</sup>. Chris Moore, MAP Program Manager, accepted a job as a AAA Director with the City of Alexandria.
- Presenters for future COA meeting included Hank Greenberg, AARP State Director and Jen Holz, AARP Representative for Howard County.
- In November 2021, Office on Aging and Independence received American Rescue Plan Act funds of \$851,000 across various title programs within Older Americans Act funding. These are one-time funds and need to be spent within two years (by September 2024). The COA, HCGH, and the Health Department were consulted with to help determine the needs in the community and how best to allocate these funds. Direct care support, home delivered meals, and transportation are some of the areas identified where the funds could be used. The OAI would like to use these one-time funds to help seed new and pilot programs along with providing direct care support to support aging in community. Planning of these funds is underway with the goal to begin spending in FY23.

## **Chair's Report**

- Stephanie Lyon was chosen as the candidate for a Commission on Aging Commissioner. The County Council will vote to confirm her appointment in February. She has a wealth of experience and over the years has been very active in the community.
- Reginald Avery attended the East Columbia 50+ Center groundbreaking which took place on December 16<sup>th</sup>. Jenna Crawley, Angie Boyter, and Victoria Hathaway were also there. The renovated center will be much larger and very well equipped.
- County Executive Calvin Ball will give a presentation tomorrow, January 25<sup>th</sup>, on the Age-Friendly Action Plan.
- Reginald Avery and Jenna Crawley received an email today from a group asking for the Commission's assistance. The organization is Student Cyber and Tech Association (SCATA) and is a non-profit. They aim to educate senior citizens with the knowledge and skills to protect themselves from cybercriminal activity and integrate into a technologically evolving world. They utilize student and adult volunteers and are asking for volunteers to serve on their board. The email will be shared with the Commissioners. Victoria Hathaway will forward it to retired Police Officer Andre Lingham who was the lead in the County for elder fraud and abuse and now consults. It was suggested that the Executive Director of the organization could give a presentation at a future COA meeting. Also it was noted, OAI partners with Consumer Protection in having presentations and classes on this topic.
- The next Commission on Aging meeting is February 28<sup>th</sup>, followed by March 25<sup>th</sup> and April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

- The letter on taxes and tax credits was sent to County Executive Calvin Ball. Reginald Avery will reach out to the County Executive to determine the status of his review of the letter.

### **Commission Business Discussion**

- The Village in Howard is a participant in a network called The Village to Village Network, which is a nationwide affiliation of about 275 villages. In a recent newsletter they described a consortium in the Washington metropolitan area that is expected to receive 6.6 million dollars in grants from the Federal Transit Administration for enhanced mobility for seniors and disabled individuals. It was recommended for Howard County to pursue similar grant opportunities. Peter Brunner can send the link to the Commissioners so they can read the article in the newsletter.
- As a member of National Association of Active and Retired Federal Employees, Peter Brunner received a link to an interesting study, Maryland Needs Tax Reform to Retain Seniors. NARFE is in contact with the State General Assembly. The study shows with the outmigration of seniors, Maryland and its counties are losing 194 million dollars in tax revenues per year.
- Priorities from the retreat are 1) Reframing the Concept of Aging, 2) Reaching Howard County's diverse aging population, 3) Onboarding/mentoring new Commissioners, and 4) Ambassador's role of the Commission (what and how does that look to be a bridge to the OAI). There was discussion about the Commission forming committees to focus on areas of impact. Some suggested areas discussed: annual report priorities, how does the Commission want to impact the County, Age-Friendly, and the budget. Commissioners were asked if they wanted to develop committees again for the Commission. And if so, what kind of committees would be appropriate. Two former committees were transportation and taxes. Age-Friendly was suggested as a committee. Montgomery County's COA and its involvement with implementing Age-Friendly was discussed as a possible model from which the COA could learn was discussed. It was noted there is considerable overlap in what the Commissioners have mentioned as their priorities and parts of the Age-Friendly Action Plan. The COA could be involved in advancing Age-Friendly both individually and as a group. The Commission could also be an ambassador and explain to the community what the Age-Friendly Action Plan is all about.
- The Commission on Aging budget is \$2,550.00, \$600.00 for printing and \$1,950.00 for supplies, and must be spent by June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- The Commission on Aging will have four members leaving as their terms end in May: Peter Brunner, Jennifer Asher, Eletta Morse, and Julia Mattis. A Commissioner can serve until a new Commissioner is appointed. A nomination committee will be needed again.
- Angie Boyter learned last week that Senator Clarence Lam introduced a bill for a new senior tax credit to help lower income seniors. There are bills in place to help if your assessment goes up. The bill Senator Lam introduced is to help constituents if the property tax rate is raised. If your combined income is not more than \$75,000, you are at least 65 years or old, and have lived in the County for at least 30 years you are eligible for a tax credit of 100% of any increase imposed by raising the tax rate. The bill does not say anything about the actual tax rate which has not been changed since 2007. The County Council can decide how long this will be in effect. Angie Boyter as a citizen is sending a letter to Senator Clarence Lam saying that it would be better to put it in terms of median income in Howard County, so that as the years go on, it will keep up with inflation.

### **Adjournment**

Sue Song motioned to adjourn. Eletta Morse seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 8:38pm.

Recording Secretary: Donna Tugwell

Future Meetings: February 28<sup>th</sup>, March 28<sup>th</sup>, April 25<sup>th</sup>, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, June 27<sup>th</sup>, July 25<sup>th</sup>, August – no meeting, September – TBD, October – TBD, November 28<sup>th</sup>, December – no meeting