

AGE-FRIENDLY WORK AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT MINUTES



Date: 03/12/2020

Time: 03:01PM

Facilitator: Jim Sanders

In Attendance

Seema Agarwal-Harding

Jennifer Asher

Nicholas Keplinger

Elexis Lawson

Alice Lewis

Michele Millican

Pamela Reese

Jim Sanders

Darlene Vaselaros

Terri Hansen

Approval of Minutes

First:

Second:

Minutes were approved with no changes

Announcements:

Update on the Survey

- We have received over 3,300 surveys.
- We received 150-160 from the St. John's Evangelical Church from the Spanish Mass which will help with our diversity
- Received a first draft on results from Charles Smith and would be happy to share results once reviewed.
- There were over 1,400 individual answers in the narrative questions that were asked in the survey.
- Currently if the analysis were to be printed today, the document would be over 79 pages.
- **Working on the best way to provide information to the workgroups.**
- There seem to be consistency in the answers. The majority were about taxes and sidewalks.
- The plan is to have the analysis sent out electronically to all workgroups by the end of March or early April.

- The report is analyzed data, not raw data, though the narrative itself is raw data and includes data and graphs.
- The data is seeming to be skewed more towards women than men, more towards white than non-white,
- The County itself, compared to the state overall, is skewed more towards those with a higher education

Other announcements

- Will send out information on how to access the website with the intent to share information with the group.
- We have 9 months to get the project done
 - Using a third of the time to review what works today
 - Using a third of the time on how other people do it
 - Using a third of the time on visiting new ideas
- Listening sessions were being planned in late April/early May, but due to the COVID-19 the sessions are out for now.
- We need to recognize that what is happening in the Community and in the World at large is going to affect how Age-Friendly initiative is going to operate.
- Starting next week all workgroup meetings will be held through Web-X (including Commission on Aging meetings).
- As a group we still need to communicate, just must do it differently.
- Progressing along with bringing together information from the surveys and previous reports that have been done over the last several years, will give us some of the recommendations previously looked at.

Discussion

- Introductions of new members:
 - Elexis Lawson- Work for Office on Workforce Development; interested on seeing how this can impact our Seniors and our future.
- Jim Sanders asked Shante Barry who works for the Howard County Recreation and Parks as the Volunteer and Special Projects Manager to talk to the group. Shante hopes to be able to provide insight and guidance to the group.
- Each project team will do things on a month-to-month basis and use the group's website to share their findings.
- As a group we want to try and meet the requirements for the Community, and use technology to declare when we have a meeting and to share notes on the meeting
- At the end of the day our task is to create an assessment of how we are doing in the Age-Friendly domain and what else we could be doing.
- The first draft will need to be done in October
- Charter and Work structure:
 - Making sure that we understand the quality of volunteering to engage the skills of the community.

- As a group we need to make sure to include:
 - Faith-based groups
 - Non-profits

- Shante's presentation:
 - Manages the volunteer program.
 - Has 6 years in the position- worked her way in to the position from coordinator to manager
 - As a collective group determine the volunteer opportunities
 - Her team helps to manage the coordinators and supervisors as well as volunteers
 - Offer a variety of volunteer opportunities
 - Volunteers of all ages, if under 16 they need to be accompanied by an adult
 - There have been very young volunteers (for family volunteer events) all the way up to Seniors
 - New registration totals (from 2019) were 1,989
 - Age ranges: ages 17 and under were 331
 - Older adults/Senior adults (55+) were 257
 - Were the ages broken down to 55-75 and then 75+?
 - They were not, but it can be broken down further
 - Largest age range is 18-54 and were 1,401
 - Majority of volunteers come through the Coaches
 - The Department is opportunity-based, based on necessity
 - In 2019 the top three programming areas were sports and adventure division, natural resources and heritage programs, and recreation services division
 - Length of time of events can be anywhere from one day to consecutive days (recurring would still be considered a one-day event)
 - Primary recruitment tools are seasonal guides (go out every season); any major volunteer opportunities are listed in the guides
 - Samaritan volunteer data base website is where all volunteer opportunities are listed; volunteers create an account and sign-up for volunteer opportunities- this is shared through the HoCo volunteer website
 - Three departments are covered;
 1. Department of Recreation and Parks
 2. Department of Community Resources and Services
 3. Department of Sustainability
 - The data base does not include school events, or the Age-Friendly volunteers signed up for.
 - Opportunities are posted, this is a template site; user friendly, good visual aids.
 - The Volunteer center is a completely different data base
 - Other recruitment tools:
 - Social Media
 - Event fliers
 - E-school newsletters
 - Word of mouth
 - Workshops/fairs

- Returning volunteers
- Recreation and parks has such a variety of opportunities
- Some people “just know” about certain events (i.e. Wine in the Woods) from living in the area and attending recurring events
- People are attracted to topics that interest them. Then volunteer for events under those topics
- Organizational system questions are the retired volunteers being relied on?
 - The sports division heavily relies on volunteers but most of them are parent volunteers
 - Other programs that don't have a specific buy-in do struggle with getting volunteers
 - Also, we are dependent on staff that way there's always enough staff in case volunteers don't show up (advised not to rely too much on volunteers)
- Are there negotiations for volunteer time and then in return kids get into a specific program?
 - This is not occurring anymore, but it has been recommended by Seniors in exchange for trips and tours
 - Time-banking is also something to consider
 - At the Robinson Nature Center volunteers can get training on topics and in return they give 40 hours of volunteer work
- Assessments
 - Interviews, if needed, are done by the coordinator
 - Not all volunteer positions require an interview or background check, some are just placement, it all depends on the level of the opportunity
 - Background checks follow the National guidelines and are usually used when volunteer position involves the vulnerable population
 - Alternative to providing social security number would be fingerprinting
 - Background check is self-initiated
 - Can take 3-5 business days
 - People have been turned away due to results of the background check
 - It's a pretty smooth process
 - Background check is usually required annually
 - Most volunteers go through the process
 - Background checks are within the state of Maryland, but an address check is processed
- What is the volunteer capacity?
 - Not sure there is one
 - Volunteer numbers depend on opportunities and staff available to help them
 - Less is more, don't want volunteers standing around with nothing to do
 - Ratio of volunteers to staff is relative to each individual event
 - Are there more women than men? It depends on the opportunity
- Risk-assessment
 - Who gets to use the technology?

- Who gets to transport?
 - It is hard to show what our department can do when you cannot utilize the volunteers
 - New people in risk management
 - Training for volunteers:
 - Depends on the Coordinator
 - A lot of training is on-site
 - Heritage Caitlyn does group orientations
 - Staff and Supervisors also get training regarding working with the volunteers
 - The process was not streamlined in the past, is getting more streamlined in the last 5 years
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- Darlene's presentation
 - Department of Community Resources is more event-based
 - Darlene is the only one working with Volunteers
 - Volunteers are used for the whole Department of Community Resources and Services. Originally volunteers were used just for the Office on Aging.
 - Volunteers are shared with Recreation and Parks
 - Department of Community Resources and Services volunteer program not yet up-to-par but with the Age-Friendly approach, hoping that she can advocate for action items
 - **Hoping the Age-Friendly will be able to assist.**
 - For technical reasons, no longer able to take on Student Interns due to a reluctance to allow people access to the system
 - Want to encourage younger people to work with the older community
 - If something, like transporting a Senior, is not in your job description, you are unable to do so
 - Department of Community Resources and Services Volunteer system is not streamlined
 - Trying to mock Department of Recreation and Parks system, our current data base is being shared with the Department.
 - It is hard to get staff to buy-in
 - Often cannot accommodate volunteers
 - Starting to get some "meat" into the program
 - Using constant contact for recruitment
 - We have some annual programs
 - This is one the biggest role due to the need to coordinate Staff and Volunteers
 - Once an event is updated on the Volunteer website, is there an assessment for the matching process?
 - The person running the event will provide screening questions
 - **The Volunteer coordinator then screens the applicant with the screening questions.**

- Other times it's a soft handover
 - Darlene started working with only the Office on Aging and Independence, but now is working for the entire Department.
 - Office on Aging and Independence is the largest office out of the 9 sub departments
 - There currently are 9 departments within the Department of Community Resources and Services.
- We need to rethink the volunteer coordinator position, as the Department has several large planning events and it is difficult for one person to accomplish staffing for all those events.
 - From the Director-level down, everybody needs to understand the Volunteer Manager and Coordinator positions; there is not enough support.
 - If something happens, then everyone will look at the Volunteer Coordinator to find out why/how it happened and must explain how coordinator could not find enough support
 - Due to Volunteer efforts, saved 1.5 million dollars (based on reported hours served)
 - Therefore, it's important for all volunteers to log their hours
 - Also for State reporting and funding
 - Calculates to approximately \$20/hour
 - The Volunteer Center is the big overall Howard County volunteer clearing house
 - When Department of Community Resource and Services opened their volunteer website there was confusion between that and the Volunteer Center
- When you do capacity planning, you plan for fixed assets (Staff) and Volunteer assets
- Earlier research shows that volunteerism is not equal across the Community
 - How many of the volunteers are non-white?
 - This is an optional question, and many do choose not to answer that question
 - There is a lack of diversity in the volunteers, but there isn't the current data to support that
- Next five-year plan now streamlining is completed is to look more closely at diversity in Volunteers
- Most of our volunteers want to volunteer at the Ellicott City and Bain 50+ Centers
- Are most volunteer hours during regular work hours? No, they are well spread out
- Research shows that one in 5 is more likely to get volunteers if they are invited, not if they self-initiate
- Research on Seniors volunteers, shows that they do so more for social reasons, less for recreational and educational reasons
- Older adult population is more about having something to do and to feel like they are making a difference
- There tends to be a 30% drop-off in volunteers after spending a year volunteering.

- You have more influence in stopping people from quitting than you do to recruit in the first place
 - Show them they are making a difference to keep them coming back
 - Volunteering is also good for depression and health-improvement
- Volunteerism in the Age-Friendly Survey
 - Overall 21% of the respondents reported volunteering over 21 times or more in the past year
 - 28% stated that they want to volunteer in the future
 - Under 65 more interested in working with the youth than working on boards
 - Interesting data to work with
- Next steps
 - Gather information from the earlier sessions
 - Reach out to those who have selected to do volunteering, by calling and or sending email.
 - Self-initiate about topics to discuss
 - Create meeting notes on the project website
- Next monthly meeting is on paid work
 - Proposal is to have a panel of the three dominant groups that are currently fall into that group with in our Community
 - Next session would be with those three different speakers
- We clearly need to better understand the volunteer center and the other big programs (including the Hospital and the Library systems)
 - Jim Sanders has volunteered to go an interview several people within the Hospital and Library system. If interested, you may help Jim.
- Send Terri PowerPoints for the web calls

Next Meeting

April 9 3:00pm – 4:30pm Web-based

Meeting adjourn at 4:46pm