

# AGE-FRIENDLY HOUSING WORKGROUP MINUTES



Date: 08/07/2020

Time: 09:30 AM

Facilitator: Fran LoPresti and Jeff Bronow

## In Attendance

Terri Hansen	Angie Boyter	Jeff Bronow
Paul Verchinski	Fran LoPresti	Jim Sanders
Patti Hutton	Joyce Nagel	Larry Carson
Julia Mattis	Quanita Kareem	Leslie Marks
Alice Lewis	Tina Morgan	Patti Hutton
Barry Mehta	Dale Schumacher	Sharon Matthews
Peter Morgan		

## Minutes Approved

First: Alice Lewis

Second: Angie Boyter

## Announcements:

- Fran stated with the revised timeline we will need to be done recommendations by January. Goes to the Steering Committee in February and to County Administration in April. Only virtual field trips and focus groups cannot be done.

## New Business:

- Angie expressed concern that we cannot do an adequate job in this time frame. Our group has a lot of reviewing of regulations and finding out how things really works.
- Terri stated there has not been a lot of feedback yet since this is the first meeting with the new timeline. She is prepared to take that feedback up the chain.
- Jim reminded the group this is a 5-year process.
  - First deliverable is a call-to-action, then a gap analysis, then developing an improvement Plan

He brought out we must consider rigorous the first assessments will be and will it be worthy of people spending more time and budget. Further, will the request be rigorous enough to get the funding needed. Most of what we are talking about is aspirational and most will require commitment and funding to follow through.

- Fran stated when the recommendations go to the Steering Committee there will probably be questions for the work groups. We still need to be prepared to answer more questions and do more research. Our work group will be ongoing (won't meet as often) until it goes to AARP. We do not need all our recommendations at one time. Once we have the appropriate format we can go ahead.

- Terri is asking for information and ideas to best describe the work that has been done so far by the work groups. Want to put together an infographic and put information in to show what we have done. The easiest part is the number of hours you all have invested (please make sure you continue to put your hours in). Looking for ideas that can go into the infographic that goes to the County Administration, or a specific element to highlight. Want to be able to put something up on the Age-Friendly website so that the citizens have a better idea what Age-Friendly is and what it is going to be.
  - Angie asked for example of an infographic
- Fran stated one thing that should be on your info graphic is most seniors want to stay in their homes.
- Patti suggested one of the things we can put together and agree upon is what is the definition of home. People can call many things home; does not have to be a free-standing property in a neighborhood. It could still be a retirement community. Need the group to come together on a common definition of home and that would part of the recommendation for Aging in Place.
- Quanita mentioned how affordable it may or may not be to stay in one's home
  - modifications may make a difference
- Anita stated having to hire services can get expensive.
  - But it can be cheaper to stay and hire services then move to a congregate living facility.
- Terri would like to throw out the concept of “aging in community” over “aging in place”. In this case one can stay in the same community, not necessarily in my home and still be close to all the amenities they are familiar with. This way a person can look at the housing options within the same community.
- Larry stated there is a problem they discovered that may not fit into any of these categories as it is a state government problem.
  - There are few subsidized apartments around the County and there will be no more of them. The State formula for awarding tax credits for projects like those no longer favor senior projects. There is a waiting list for these types of places, and this doesn't fit into any of our categories that we have, and I think the County should press the issue with the State.
  - There is a housing problem for seniors who cannot afford to stay where they are, and this will be a problem in the future.
  - Fran suggested this could be a recommendation that the County work with the State to provide more affordable apartments in multiple communities within the County.
- Alice from the minutes Dr. Ball mention how challenging the housing issues are in different areas. One thing we have not included is presentations from the Howard County Housing department as what types of programs they and the Housing Commission currently have.
  - Quanita explained that she maintains and manages all the agreements that go through the County for all moderate-income housing. Where things are developed and zoned there is a percentage 10-18% that must be moderate income. Developers own the properties and they decide what they want to do, and we do not have the mechanism to make them develop more senior housing, but we do enforce the moderate-income component.
- Barry stated there is a fundamental issue we need to look at with people staying in their home due to fall risks. Aging in place in the home may not be the ideal situation from the standpoint of quality and quantity of one's life. Assisted living may be a solution for some people.

- Fran wanted to know if any of the subgroups investigated senior housing.
  - Fran asked Patti and Quanita to get together and come up with a recommendation in this area and determine a subgroup to address whether there is enough rental stock. We need to understand it and what the recommendation would be.

**Presentation – Leslie Marks – Senior Fellow in Montgomery County Housing Department**

- Fran explained that Montgomery County had done things ahead of time and their composition was different as well as the process. I think it is still relevant to us in what they have been doing in terms of the recommendations they made related to housing.
- Leslie presented more than five-year history of how Montgomery County attained its age-friendly status. She offered information about the role of the Commission on Aging, the support of County Executive, the multiple summer summits, and a number of programs that have come out of the initiative. The presentation is available on the dropbox.

**Questions and Answers after presentation:**

- Larry: What definition do you use for accessory apartment?
  - Leslie: It needs to have a place to sleep, kitchen and a bathroom.
- Larry: Is it this within a home or added on?
  - Leslie: It can be either but needs to have a separate entrance.
- Jeff: Can the ADU's be restricted to only seniors or do they have to be available to anyone?
  - Leslie: Not restricted to seniors. There is a real need out there and accessory apartments are not for overcrowding. It is for supporting people, so they have a place to live for various reasons.
- Jeff: So the zoning regulations were changed for Montgomery County to allow ADU's? That is a very controversial issue here in Howard County.
  - Leslie: It was a very controversial issue for us too but as a person representing seniors you need to explain this is a way for additional income, support, living with family.
- Angie: Neighbors of people who have accessory apartments do not want family members moving in and out a lot, how do you prevent that?
  - Leslie: For the accessory apartments what we were promoting was for a senior living in a home who might need additional income or someone to help them or the family inviting the senior to move into their house to help take care of them.
- Angie: How do you prevent other family members moving in the apartment?
  - Leslie: Comes from zoning regulations and is handled that way.
- Jim: So you have a leadership and coordination activity in Montgomery County that is attractive. The Aging Commission has been doing the summer studies, with a set of studies and data that has been done consistently over 4 or 5 years. Another thing that you have is this intern model with 2 or 3 people that are senior associates who are subject matter experts working as County Government employees. Can you tell us more?
  - Leslie: We get paid for 600 hours a year comes out to 11 hours a week. So, the County gets a bargain they get people with expertise and we get our brains engaged.
- Jim: The Wish program was tied between the Hospital and the Services. One of the biggest financial issues we do not have a relationship between the Hospital and the Services. What does the Wish Program do?
  - Leslie: The program no longer exists. What this program did is save the hospital money by keeping people out of the hospital if they had support and got services outside the hospital paid for by Medicare or Medicaid.

- **Barry:** In your 3-year program slide you had affordable assisted living. If you look at a blank canvas what is the ideal system? Let's design a brand-new system not going by what is there now but what should be. Instead of funding aging in place in their homes. The whole concept should be funding aging in community by way of assisted living homes. Believe that would be the ideal solution?
  - **Leslie:** Our mission statement focuses on housing choices.
    - Affordable assisting living
    - Aging in place
    - Affordable rental housing
 It needs to be available and it is not always available. And it is something that needs to be addressed.
- **Barry:** One of the choices can be to educate. Do community focus sessions and educate the community about the choices and encourage people who are at-risk staying in their home to look into a group home within their community so that they are still close to amenities within their community.
- **Alice** how did you manage to get advocacy to have them build all these affordable developments? How did you get the support to get this big project done? The need is here, but the last development built in Columbia had no affordable housing included.
  - **Leslie:** It is a partnership, and we are fortunate that the Commission on Aging was out front in identifying issues and doing research to determine what could be done and what has been done in other parts of the country and the cost for certain things. We got support because we kept going back to decision makers with our information and our data. This is what we need. These are the issues and this is how we can get it done, having seniors come and talk and consistently pushing.
- **Terri:** What is the definition that Montgomery County used for affordable housing?
  - **Leslie:** It aims at the area of median income. I will research more and get back to the group.
- **Jim** how do we learn more? I read the Senior Housing Report and wanted to know if there are other reports or other ways to learn what you have done.
  - **Leslie:** I will send some links to that request.

### Old Business:

- Fran suggestions for our form will take comments until next Wednesday and will send out new form with the changes.

### Homework Assignments:

Please get your comments for the form to Fran by August 12, 2020.

### Next Meeting:

September 4, 2020 – 9:30 AM - (will be a WebEx invitation will be sent before the meeting).