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**COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING**

Minutes

February 24, 2020

**PRESIDING:** Sharonlee Vogel, Chair

**Members Attending**

Jennifer Asher  
Reginald Avery  
Angie Boyter  
Peter Brunner  
Wei Guo  
Michael McPherson  
Eletta Morse  
Sue Song  
Mark Stinson  
Michael Willis

**Excused**

Deborah Fleischmann  
Susan Hailman  
Julia Mattis

**Office on Aging and Independence**

Jenna Crawley  
Donna Tugwell

**Guests**

Stephanie Adibe

**Call to order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm

**Approve Agenda**

Motioned to approve the agenda and the motion was second. Motion was approved. *All in favor. Agenda accepted.*

**Approve Minutes**

After a change was noted for the January minutes, the January minutes were approved. *All in favor. Minutes accepted.*

**2020 Census Presentation**

- An informational video presentation on the census was given by Stephanie Adibe.
- A timeline was given. The census will open online March 12<sup>th</sup>. The mail and phone census will open April 1<sup>st</sup>. Census collection will end July/August 2020. Then census information will be compiled. The census director will deliver counts to the president December 31<sup>st</sup>.
- The census will be available in English and as many as 60 other languages.
- The Complete Count Committee will address issues such as hard to count populations and various challenges such as an increasingly diverse population, informal complex living arrangements, limited

financial resources, distrust in government, mobile population, declining response rates and information overload.

- The census is safe as the U.S. Census Bureau must keep all information confidential.
- Use of census data include:
  - 1) Residents can use the census to support community initiatives involving legislation, quality of life and consumer advocacy.
  - 2) Businesses can use the census to decide where to build factories, offices and stores, which create jobs.
  - 3) Local governments can use the census for public safety and emergency preparedness planning.
  - 4) Real estate developers can use the census to determine where to build new homes and revitalize old neighborhoods.

## **Workgroup Reports**

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

- Mobile Integrated Community Health is still in the planning stages. A presenter could come to a future COA meeting and give a presentation on MICH. Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue has taken the lead. MICH is a ninety-day intervention with the goal to reduce the frequency of 911 calls, prevent avoidable hospitalizations, identify what support services are needed in place to minimize the unnecessary utilization of the hospital, and address home environmental issues on various things, such as why people are falling.
- WeCare addresses hotspots in various concentrated areas in the community that demonstrate a high utilization of 911 calls. The Howard County Health Department has taken the lead and is partnering with HCGH, OAI and various community groups. WeCare brings services to areas that have been identified as high utilizers of 911.

### **Transportation**

- Starting in the Fall of 2019, United Way began partnering with Lyft to provide rides for eligible adults that qualify. Howard County may be able to partner with United Way to help provide rides.
- Someone from the commission is needed to serve on the task force of the Howard County Office of Transportation.

### **Communications/Outreach**

No report

### **Senior Tax Issues**

- So far there has been no response from the letter that was sent to the County Executive concerning legislation to revise the pension benefit exclusion and other tax relief for seniors. It was suggested that commissioners contact their delegates as constituents, not a member of the COA, about the legislation.
- Jennifer Asher gave a report on the hearings she attended on Senate bill 486 and House bill that was introduced to address the income tax question in Maryland.
- There is a proposal to increase educational services. The government wants to fund it by putting a sales tax on services. This could disproportionately target older adults. It would not include medical services but would include numerous others. Peter Brunner will create a bullet list concerning the matter. Commissioner can write their delegates as constituents about the proposal.

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

- On February 11<sup>th</sup>, Jenna Crawley testified on behalf of the County Executive in support of Delegate Hill's NANA bill.
- The Police Senior Liaison, William Kreitzer has been asked to attend the March COA meeting.

- Phase one of the Bain 50+ Center renovations are scheduled to be completed by March 21st. Phase one includes main bathroom renovations, pouring a concrete slab for the new fitness center, creating a health room and renovation of some classrooms. Phase two will include moving the admin offices back to the area that was renovated and moving the front desk to the lobby. Some areas such as the woodworking area and the art room will be locked off temporarily. The area available for use will be the main bathrooms, the kitchen, and Great Rooms I and II. The hours of operation during this phase will be 8:30am-4:30pm, M-F. Currently there are hours of operation on Thursdays until 9pm, but those will be scaled back beginning March 19th until the renovations are complete. Renovations are scheduled to be completed around the end of July. Bain 50+ Center is used as an early voting site and is one of the highest used. Construction will stop, and voting will start April 16<sup>th</sup> – April 26<sup>th</sup>. During this period the center will only be open for early voting.
- Testimony is again being taken on the East Columbia 50+ Center renovations.
- Department of Housing is working on a Master Plan. Jenna Crawley will be working on the policy workgroup. The focus will be what is the role of County and State government. The work will include legislation between those entities, zoning, the County's Age-Friendly initiative, etc. The goal is to have synergy between these initiatives and the Age-Friendly plan.
- Age-Friendly surveys are being returned. There have been about 2,700 surveys returned so far. The majority are in English. Results are in the process of being compiled and an action plan will be drawn up based on the responses. Community partners have been instrumental in sharing the survey with the public. The survey is scheduled to close on February 29<sup>th</sup>. A timeline has been established and will be adjusted if necessary.

### **Chair's Report**

- The Commission on Aging is an ambassador for the County and the Office on Aging and Independence.
- The Commission on Aging Handbook is in the process of being updated. It will include information on all the Office on Aging and Independence programs. There will be a PDF document and a folder with information. The PDF document should be ready in March.
- Commissioners should tell the COA Chair and Jenna first if there are issues they wish the OAI to address.
- A Saturday morning spring retreat can be planned if commissioners are interested.

### **New Business**

No new business

### **Sharing from Commissioners**

- The Age-Friendly Social Participation workgroup needs more diversity. There are two co-chairs.
- A lot of the Chinese community is doing the surveys in English. The surveys are available in Chinese.
- Blood pressure monitoring at the 50+ Centers is changing to more of a screening and educational tool. Residents are given blood pressure cuffs, so they can monitor their blood pressure at home. OAI is partnering with HGCH in this venture.
- Most of the Korean Age-Friendly surveys are being done on paper and not online. About 100 have been done so far.
- Users of The Loan Closet find that the staff are very well-informed.
- There was a newspaper article regarding the shortage of people providing care to older adults. Older adults with hearing problems sometimes have trouble understanding home health aides if the aide has an accent.
- Parking spots for electric vehicles are taking away some of the disabled parking spaces available.

### **Adjournment**

Motioned to adjourn, and the motion was second. The meeting adjourned at 9:05pm.

Recording Secretary: Donna Tugwell

Future Meetings: March 23, April 27, May 18, June 22, July 27, no August meeting, September 21, October 26, Legislative Breakfast November 17, and November 23 or 30.