PRESIDING: Reginald Avery, Chair

Members Attending
Jennifer Asher
Angie Boyter
Peter Brunner
Wei Guo
Susan Hailman
Victoria Hathaway
Geetha Jayaram
Elizabeth Edsall Kromm
Michael McPherson
Sue Song
Mark Stinson
Michael Willis

Excused/Absent
Eletta Morse
Julia Mattis

Office on Aging and Independence
Jenna Crawley
Donna Tugwell

Guests
Jacqueline Scott, Director DCRS

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

Approve Agenda
Pete Brunner motioned to approve the agenda. Sue Song seconded the motion. Motion was approved. All in favor. Agenda accepted.

Approve Minutes
Sue Song motioned to approve the minutes. Jennifer Asher seconded the motion. Motion was approved. All in favor. Minutes accepted.
Discussion Commission Charter (Roles and Responsibilities) – Special Guest – Jacqueline Scott, Director, Department of Community Resources and Services

- Jacqueline Scott discussed with the Commission on Aging, the roles and the responsibilities of the Commission on Aging. Discussed were the major shifts in legislation that were passed and questions were answered.
- Jacqueline Scott welcomed the new Commissioners and began the discussion. The discussion included reflection on what it means in Howard County to age and how can we make it more fully inclusive, evolving, and adaptable. Over the past year and with COVID-19, deep pockets of need have been identified. OAI is seeing trends in populations that they have not had to touch as frequently in past years. Examples are homeless older adults, mental health conditions, increased hunger, safety in housing and needing more care.
- DCRS has 9 offices and 10 commissions. The Department is working to standardize and make consistent processes and procedures across commissions. Historically, the COA was established prior to the OAI and the Department and as a result, had different authority than other commissions. To bring the COA authority into alignment with other commissions, legislation was approved that accurately reflects the role of the COA budget review in relation to County procedures. The role of the COA is to advise the County Executive on issues the COA think are critical and should be priorities for the population they represent. Also, to provide advice and counsel to Jacqueline Scott, Director of Department of Community Resources and Services and Jenna Crawley, Administrator of the Office on Aging and Independence. Commissioners asked questions and gave feedback.

Office on Aging and Independence Report

- Jenna Crawley discussed the two primary areas: 1) Resumption of in-person services and 2) the FY22-23 Area Plan Update.
- Jenna Crawley discussed the reopening plan. Masks are no longer required for people at the 50+Centers for those that are vaccinated. Over 92% of the over 65 population has been vaccinated with at least one dose. Limited in-person services by appointment only resumed April 30th. As of May 1st, 50% capacity at 50+Centers and masks no longer required. As of June 1st, 75% capacity at 50+Centers. Effective July 1st, open 100% no appointment necessary.
- A survey was done about the 50+Centers asking about various things such as the virtual programs that were done, are people ready to come back, what are they interested in, etc. Over 1,500 responses were received. Charles Smith will put together a summary for the Commissioners.
- With limited staff capacity, OAI is looking at how to maintain some of the virtual programming while resuming in-person programming along with implementing hybrid programming.
- The County will be opening county buildings to the public in August. Therefore, as of August, COA meetings can be in-person. September could be a time when COA meets again in-person.
- OAI is looking at what the restart will look like for the Connections and Kindred Spirits programs and will be doing a survey to assess how individuals who experience cognitive impairment have coped during COVID-19 and what supports individuals desire moving forward. Commissioners will be sent a link to the survey. Once complete, the survey results will be shared with Commissioners.
- Cycle2Health has resumed with over 100 people registered. Outdoor capacity limits have been lifted, so the limits for Cycle2Health have been lifted.
- This year is our update to the 4-year annual plan. After this year, there will be one more year. The plan is being drafted and will be reviewed before being sent to MDoA. A draft will be sent to Reginald Avery and the Commissioners by May 27th. Comments are needed by June 1st. Then Reginald Avery will compile the comments and get them back to Jenna Crawley by June 2nd. Jacqueline Scott will review, then the County Executive reviews the plan, and then it will be submitted to MDoA by June 7th. OAI has not yet received their budget allocations from MDoA. Those are needed before the budget portion of the area plan can be completed.
A new county website was launched today. There are some bugs and some domains that do not connect 100% yet. There is a feedback form on the website directly in the righthand corner.

OAI has had a successful restaurant initiative using nutrition funding. OAI partnered with some of the local restaurants infusing the local economy with some of the funding received from MDoA.

April Retreat Feedback and Discussion

- Themes and topics discussed at the retreat were impact, commitment, networking, community, influence, inclusiveness, and diversity and the use of the talents of COA, to make life better for Howard County older adults.
- Visioning to determine how the Commission and the Office can work together to impact the older adult population was explored.
- Proposed immediate actions to be taken were 1) establish onboarding/mentoring of new Commissioners, 2) research seniors’ roles as financial assets, 3) OAI to provide briefings on new initiatives to COA prior to implementation so the COA can give insight and be champions, 4) establish liaison from County Executive’s office to COA, 5) determine what is most important during COA meetings, and 6) clarifying roles.

Chair’s Report

- Reginald Avery talked about the letter regarding the proposed tax legislation to County Executive Calvin Ball.

New Business

- No new business

Sharing from Commissioners

- Angie Boyter – Discussed a noticeable increase in the number of people who are talking to her about taxes.
- Pete Brunner – Reported the manager of The Village in Howard is retiring. A new manager is needed. It is a part-time job.
- Sue Song – Spoke about the Korean older adult community and how some have expressed a desire to move back to Korea.

Adjournment

Angie Boyter motioned to adjourn. Pete Brunner seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:35pm.

Recording Secretary: Donna Tugwell

Future Meetings: June 28, July 26, usually no August meeting, September 27, October 25, November 22, no December meeting