

AGE-FRIENDLY HOUSING WORKGROUP MINUTES



Date: 04/03/2020

Time: 9:30 AM

Facilitators: Fran LoPresti and Jeff Bronow

In Attendance

Fran LoPresti

Joyce Nagel

Angie Boyter

Peter Brunner

Jeff Bronow

Alice L. Lewis

Sharon Matthews

Evelyn Jackson

Dave Wanex

Barry Mehta

Patty Hutton

Larry Carson

Jim Sanders

Terri Hansen

Minutes Approved

Old Business:

Fran LoPresti stated that the plan for today was to go over the documents that were sent for today's meeting: Review of Charter, Review of Data Collection Areas, Review of Operating Approach, Review of Workplan, Review of Subgroups. Jeff Bronow will discuss the Housing Master Plan Process.

New Business:

Fran started with the Charter, the big picture of what we want to do. We are looking for comments and then edits agreed to will be placed back in the google document.

Peter Brunner mentioned in the charter documents that the first question did not mention affordability.

Alice Lewis asked that each one be read before the discussion for those on the phone.

Under the charter:

1. Focus on current types of housing available and planned, current programs to adapt current homes, and zoning laws related to senior housing.

✓ Fran will rewrite and include the word affordability.

The following comments were provided by members:

- ✓ Avoid using senior housing as a generic term as it implies something special. We are looking to make sure there is housing that is age friendly.
 - ✓ If we use the word age-friendly would that be acceptable.
 - ✓ Some of the places are senior housing (Senior Communities) due to the fact there are communities exclusively for older adults.
 - ✓ Those are senior specific communities, did not want to use term in general. A lot of what we are talking about are general neighborhoods that we want to make them friendly.
2. Measure the adequacy of current programs.
- a. Measure the adequacy of current programs and housing types and examine new programs and housing types that are beneficial to the community.
- ✓ The problem is the word adequate. Adequacy applies that you have a base line that you are trying to measure against.
 - ✓ In the book from the AARP, the subgroup will determine what they determine to be adequate and why it's not. Where the gap is. There are also suggestions in their book in terms what makes something adequate, such as ramps. The work of the subgroups is to determine what we want and how far away is Howard County from it.
- Discussion of the word appropriate in place of adequate
- ✓ That would be a fine line. If someone has special needs, then the housing would have to be adequate to those needs.
 - ✓ One member would like to get back to the fundamentals and asked if we should analyze the philosophy and purpose of the zoning. What is zoning all about and what is the reason we have zoning laws? Unnecessary descriptions in the zoning laws and why are they there.
 - That would that be part of the subgroup for zoning.
 - ✓ When talking about programs it is every program that the County has including zoning. Not specific to just housing.
 - ✓ A member reminded the group that this is the charter for the workgroup. It is intended to be a broad overview of the topics and the details will be worked out in the subgroups.
 - ✓ Analyzing the philosophy of zoning laws to housing should be part of number 1. The purpose should be we want to expand senior housing and housing efficiency. Need to go back to the basics what is the purpose of the zoning and why is senior housing restricted?
 - The subgroup needs to find out what that is.
3. Develop a report of the findings by October 2020.
- ✓ Not sure if the County will be extending the Age-Friendly program. For now, we will plan on October 2020. The County will likely reassess and let us know given the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - ✓ Leave the question as is and it can be modified if things change.
4. Create recommendations for improvement which will be reviewed by the Steering Committee, the County Executive and community leadership. The outcome of the workgroup is a vision for the future and concrete actions that can be carried out in years 2-5 for the Age-Friendly program.
- a. The second sentences reads more like a preamble to the entire document. It was suggested moving the second sentence to the top as descriptive material. And have 1 through 4 as we discussed.
- ✓ Make that our motto

- ✓ As one of the subgroups (one of the 8 pillars), our charter is to make recommendations to be reviewed by the Steering Committee
- ✓ Simplify the first sentence, say report recommendations for improvement to the Steering Committee.

A member asked since the Steering Committee gets recommendations from all 8 domains - would they pull recommendations for development regarding what they are going to put into practice? Terri explained Steering Committee is not going to pick and choose recommendations from each of the pillars. They are going to try to bring everything together.

- ✓ Our charter is to work through the Age-Friendly methodology, but housing is different from all the other domains because there is a large amount of policy within the housing master plan. A subtext of our work should create information and guidance that would inform the housing master plan process. Do we put in our charter or keep as a secondary agenda the fact that we are about to make decisions about the future of housing policy which lead into the future of zoning? Need to be mindful that will be real decisions made right away and should include in our analysis.
- ✓ Jeff Bronow, who is on the housing master plan taskforce, will talk about the housing master plan and how that will be integrated into the group's work and process. Not a bad idea to include that in our charter.
- ✓ In trying to get a scope of this project, we called out huge topics. Only some of these can get done by October; one thing we hope to do is to influence current policy.
- ✓ On item 2 change the word measure to assess.
- ✓ Totally agree with Jim's point about working with the task force; this should be in our work plan as to how we are going to operate. We should also add to the general plan the fact that if they plan to revise the general plan this year in the light of all this, that should be something we are going to coordinate with.
- ✓ The good news is the housing plan is going to be an element of the general plan. So, the integration of the housing master plan and the general will happen. We are also going to integrate the housing pillar of the Age-Friendly plan with the housing plan to make it part of the general plan too. This group will be important to that end.

Moving on to the data collection, an email was sent to everyone. There are four different areas of data collection. Jeff, Terri and Pat have reviewed the work from our first and second meetings. To enable data collection, we may have to work differently but we still need to collect data. The County's other groups have data to share with us. Questions were read from the email that was sent out. What do you think of the summary - did it capture everything?

- Jim again raised the question of affordability and thinks it may fit in the scope with a couple of the items but needs to be made more explicit. He believes that is a major focus at what we are trying to look at. Affordability needs to be addressed in the scope of our data collection; it may already be in the data. If so, it needs to be extracted and presented, identified and dealt with.
- Jeff answered, the housing master plan and the consulting team, housing master plan is being led by the housing department. The consultant firm, RCLCO, are doing an affordability analysis right now and will have that information for us to review.
- Alice asked if we could phrase the affordability in such a way that it would be a data target.

- Jim said we can handle this in number 1 just by saying need to know the types of housing for seniors that exist, affordability of housing, how many and occupancy. Part of the research could be used as source information gathered through the housing master plan.
- Barry stated that on a google site regarding attractive states in which to retire, Maryland is at the bottom of that list #50. Think we should put something in our purpose or goal that age-friendly housing can make Maryland a more attractive place to retire.
- Terri suggested that instead of putting affordability in, we say we need to know the cost. Affordability is a value statement where cost is very objective.
- Alice said to investigate how much low- and moderate-income housing is available. We need data on that.
- Barry said he does not think that will make Maryland more attractable.
- Jim wants to prioritize our focus so that we are representing the aging view. What is special about the Age-Friendly perspective it that it is a voice to a specific audience. We need to think about not only can people afford it, but does it meet their needs - the range of needs not just the physical place. Many of the housing settings stop at a physical place and do not address increasing health needs. Data needs to consider increasing health needs.
- Fran thinks regarding cost, that will be data to collect. In terms of evaluation, we already know costs are out of sight for 20% of seniors. We must collect data regarding cost to determine if it is unaffordable for a portion of our citizens.
- Jeff said that if we put cost in number 1 that does include affordability because it includes an affordability analysis.
- Jim states another piece of that is an assessment of what is happening with migration from the County. He believes there is more that we need to do in this area.
- Jeff stated that the survey asked questions about that. The survey results were insightful in terms of choosing to leave or not to leave based on income levels. A lot more research is needed on this topic.
- Jim says there is another piece to the fact that people are moving out of the county and there is another step to that - do we care if they are? Consider the relationship of the contributions that demographic makes to the tax base of the County.
- Jeff says that is a good point. One thing that he has heard from other groups is that we do care because older adults contribute so much to the county, and we want to be able to create a situation where they can stay in the county. Also, from an economic/fiscal standpoint, it is beneficial to have seniors stay in the county because they contribute to cost for schools and still have income within the County.
- Jim says his own view is that seniors are a profit center for the County Government and thinks there is data that can be developed to back that. And why do we care? We care because there is an economic contribution to the county.
- Fran asked, how we can capture migration? When we get to the subgroups let us bring up migration again and determine in which of the three subgroups migration should be addressed. Anything else about the four areas? We have already added cost and migration.
- Angie asked, what you are saying is that we need to know what types of housing for seniors exist? She thinks we need to have a distribution of where seniors are, including the ones living in the community and not in senior housing. When we look at affordability, there are two groups of people leaving the county because of cost of living. A lot of them are well off and they do not like the taxes. So, not everyone who says cost of living is reason to leave has an affordability problem.
- A member stated we must keep in mind when people are answering survey questions about what they are planning to do in the future, it does not always work out that way.

- Barry said we talked about migration and data collection earlier. Can we get some data from the census as it relates to seniors? That it could be a good data base for us.
 - Jeff said yes, the census has lots of data on population by age group. That can certainly be part of the data gathering. Keep in mind the 2020 census is happening right now, and data probably will not be available for at least a year. We can use what is called the American Community Survey Data which is other data from the census in the meantime.

Fran suggested changing the agenda since we are talking about the data area. She wants to discuss the subgroups and believes this is the most important part of the meeting today. She said three subgroups are based on the data collection and why we do it; this is what we came up with:

1. Aging in place or aging in community including home modification and additional structures, and the policies and programs needed to achieve these goals.
2. Other living modalities including 55+communities, CCRCs, assisted living to include both purchase, rental and cost considerations.
3. Zoning to encourage new/rehab/conversion for seniors and where such projects should be located.

I think that captures a lot of the discussion we just had except for migration

Pete stated that 2 and 3 are nicely written, but he has a problem as to what you are getting at in number 1. What is the goal of the second phase of number 1? Just describing modifications and additional structures or is that the area where we are describing policy and programs need to support aging in place? This could include migration and affordability. Modify number 1 to incorporate those items or else add a fourth group.

- Jeff thinks migration relates to number 1 and would be a research topic. He is not sure if we must include “migration.” That can be researched in number 1.
- A member said number 1 is now broad enough to encompass most of the things that we are looking for.

Fran asked everyone to think about which subgroup they want to be on and who wants to chair that subgroup. For each subgroup there will be a separate folder in the google drive. She went over the organization and operations of the group, which was emailed to everyone in the group. What big things are we missing from the Why that are not there?

- Jeff said these are meant to really be for all three subgroups, so, they are inclusive for everything.
- Fran said since everyone will need services, it is an accumulation of all your ideas put in terms of questions. This way it does not exclude anyone.
- Pete thinks the migration reference works better for aging in place rather than senior housing.
- Angie thinks one of the things missing is what people want in terms of the proportion of senior housing vs. non-senior housing. Are we getting what we want and not just considering what is appropriate for a given age group?
- Fran asked under zoning and planning if the stock of housing matches desires for living.
- Jim says each group is going to define its work.
- Fran stated that since everyone did a lot of work, she wants to have it reflected to give the subgroups a head start.
- Jeff stated that this is from the “Why” did we choose to be in this workgroup document which is also in the drop box,.
- Jim wants to make sure we get to Jeff’s comment about the consulting project and talk about how the workgroup will operate. This should include comparing to other communities that do it better. What are we doing in Howard County but what are the better examples?

- Fran agreed, and said AARP has other communities to look at so you can see what they are doing. That should be a resource for the subgroups. We will go over the workplan, and ask Jeff and Terri to speak at the end of the meeting regarding resources they can provide. This is how we will proceed.
- Jeff stated we can add another to indicate the three workgroups will come up with ideas.
- Fran wants people to be comfortable with the subgroups. Jeff and Terri will be able to provide lots of data and can bring in county employees to do presentations on WebEx.
 - Members stated that when there are presentations to make sure they are presented to the whole group, not just the subgroups.
 - Fran stated that the subgroups will be responsible for arranging presentations but make sure to include the whole workgroup.
 - Jeff suggested subgroups would do their own research and then present that research to the whole group.
 - Fran stated that while we are dividing up the work, the large workgroup will still meet monthly. Meetings may need to be extended to do all the work and possibly have presentations.

Homework Assignments:

Pick a subgroup and email Fran
Work on research for subgroup

Next Meeting:

May 1 at 9:30 am (will be via WebEx; an invitation will be sent before the meeting).