

# AGE-FRIENDLY OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS WORKGROUP MINUTES



Date: 07/15/2020

Time: 09:00 AM

Facilitator: Nicola Morgal and Marian Vessels

## In Attendance

Terri Hansen                      Kathleen Krintz  
Marian Vessels                  Nicola Morgal  
Margaret Pittman                Matt Madera  
Mary Pat Donelan

## Minutes Approved

### Announcements:

- Nicola Morgal has decided to be co-chair with Marian Vessels
  - Homework assignments will be sent out week before meeting as a reminder
  - Goal – bring the homework to the meetings and share with the workgroup
  - Goal – bigger goal is to break down into subgroups and develop goals and objectives
- Marian – efficient structure to keep us on track. The vision statement will be on the agenda for every meeting to remind everyone where we are going and what our focus is.
- Terri expressed her appreciation to both Nicola and Marian for stepping up to be co-chairs and what they will provide in their leadership to the group. And thanks to everyone in the group for attending each month and doing the work.

### Old Business:

- Nicola mentioned in the last in-person meeting we put our goals in a list on the whiteboard. We want to pull that work together and get it on paper.

### New Business:

- Nicola mentioned that last month we talked about the Recreation and Parks Website but not the Columbia Association Website.
  - Mary Pat spent time last month on the Columbia Association Website and found it to be lacking.
  - Margaret stated it seems to be really focused on the facilities.
- Nicola looked at the website also and looked at the map for pathways and trails, finding not much there; thought it was very limited. Asked if there was anyone in any of the workgroups from the Columbia Association.
  - Terri stated not currently due to the furlough.
  - Nicola thought it would be very helpful to have someone from Columbia Association on this committee because of the many buildings and trails.

- Marian was also disappointed in looking at the CA website. It really gave minimal information. Not helpful to us at this point.
- Mary Pat mentioned about the All Trails website that Nicola had mentioned and found it very helpful.
  - alltrails.com is very detailed and user friendly. Could be a reference for us. Nicola talked with the park superintendent of Rec and Parks about our website. Talked about the trails and possibly using icons. Accessibility-wise because of the grade and the way some of the trails were built initially some may not be accessible. As they are repairing and adding new trails they are updating them to code.
  - Margaret also found the all trails website particularly helpful. She wondered if we could reference alltrails information on the Columbia Association website.
- Nicola talked to the park superintendent about expanding information that is on Rec and Parks website. They only have one person in charge of the trails. Nicola will work with that person to bring suggestions to her and see if we can help her as well. Perhaps we can make it our goal to get that information (such as dog friendly, accessible) on the website. Margaret suggested having the restroom locations noted on the trails map.
- Nicola will also talk to their Marketing Group to see if that will be something they can do for the work group.
  - Matt added with the trails for CA and Rec and Parks, sometimes it is hard to know whose trail is whose. There are always trails being added and it is a challenge to keep up. There was a collaborative effort with CA and Rec and Parks to show all the trails in the entire system but this has not be updated in a decade.
  - Marian thought it would be helpful to have the person who does trails come and talk to the group.
  - Nicola suggested we to have her on the agenda for one of the meetings. Also mentioned the park superintendent as a resource. It is a very complex system.
- Nicola wanted to know if anyone had a chance to look at the World Health Organization website.
  - Matt did look but just concentrated on the Outdoors section. Felt that it was very broad. Seems to be more about planning and zoning and park development. Felt like we were already addressing those areas in Howard County. Found it to be a great resource to give a broad outline of the whole process.
  - Margaret approached the website differently as she went through it. Referencing “Grace and Frankie” a comedy show about older adults which addresses the experiences of the aging process—not enough time crossing the street (in the cross walk), toilet seats too low, etc.
  - Nicola also discussed bathroom proximity and accessibility, number of benches and their locations not in full sun but close enough to the action. She liked the check list.
  - Terri mentioned one of the advantages we have in the United States is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). We are very lucky but it is still not as good as we would like it to be. Issues like maintenance remain important. Many of us who are mobile do not think about the narrowness of pavements for example. Other elements discussed:
  - Pedestrian crossings very important.
  - People need to feel safe and secure, especially older adults. Factors to consider:
    - Lighting
    - Crime and violence
  - Marian enjoyed looking at what other countries have done and realizes how useful the ADA has been able for us. Keeping up the maintenance is critical. It’s a nice benchmark to look at these different entities. Would that be something we want to focus on?

- Nicola mentioned a trip she took to a city in Sweden. They had the complete streets concept—using many different forms of transportation, people traveled safely, and pollution is very low.
- Terri said one of the things that often gets missed is signage, or wayfinding, so that people really know where they are going, including signage for non-English speakers.
- Terri recently went to a grant award ceremony. One of the groups who had applied was recommending putting in a large changing table in public bathrooms for adults who would need assistance changing incontinence supplies. It is beyond public toilets with access; it is the next step. In the new 50+ centers that bathrooms are much larger, and a larger table could be used there. The next step in allowing people to have more independence than they would normally not have within the community. Maybe consider putting this into our action plan.
- Margaret: I know that we have accessible restrooms. If the height of the commode is not accessible they need to be higher. Something to consider in terms of what accessible means.
- Marian, the ADA does require that one of the restrooms be accessible and that the toilet be higher. Depending on the number of toilets there is a standard toilet with grab bars and the toilet is higher.
- Matt stated the way they used to design urinals was more favorable than the ones designed now. We go with the flushless urinals now and for older adult males it is too high.
- Terri it is unfortunate that we need to be addressing at this level of detail, but we need to bring these things to light when 20-25% of the population is going to be older. One of the other ways to address this is to build more universally.
  - Marian explained that universal design exceeds the minimum standard of the ADA and building code. Maybe one of our benchmarks would be to research what universal design is and recommend what best practices for the County might be. She explained that as a member of the Commission on Disability Issues she recommended that the van accessible handicap spot be moved to the last one in the handicap row, making it more likely to be left available for persons who drive a van since those spaces closest to the door get used first. One of the standards that we can recommend is the higher toilets and grab bars for better accessibility; the cost should be minimal. The cost for accessibility is usually less than 1% of building costs.
  - Nicola stated these discussions have made us more aware of the accessibility needs and as we move forward with our goals and objectives, we are aware of things that can be changed slightly. Keep this at the forefront of our mind to make sure we have these things in there and make it more Age-Friendly.
- Nicola talked about the review of the overlay map from the last meeting. Are there any comments or suggestions?
- Nicola wanted to know if anyone had a chance to go on AARP and look at other jurisdictions.
  - Mary Pat looked at Montgomery County, MD and Salem, Massachusetts and thought it interesting on how they presented the information and suggested we look at the format.
  - Nicola looked at Colorado Springs and looked at Brockshire County in Massachusetts. Colorado Springs gave a lot of stats at the beginning. Both had different ways to go over their goals. Brockshire County showed strategy, action steps and then potential leads; it gave resources and how you would approach the goal/objective.
- Terri, overall the goals we write for the action plan will be
  - Specific
  - Measurable
  - Timely
  - Relevant/Realistic
  - Achievable

- We will also identify who needs to address those tasks. Whether it be a government agency, business, non-profit, or individuals and when it is to be done.
  - Mary Pat looked at Salem, Massachusetts and they listed an action item, potential partner and an outcome.
  - Marian spent a lot of time looking at different counties around us. Montgomery County had a Park-Rx working with Physicians to prescribe patients to get outside and exercise. Howard County has the ability to get people outdoors because of the number of trails that exist. DC talked about a having a park within 10 minutes of every citizen. Talked about having building incentives for builders to make sure they build parks within the neighborhoods to encourage people to get outdoors.
- Nicola stated we have talked about getting information out. She informed the group that Howard County has Park-Rx too and started it a couple of years ago. The Sports division took it on as a project to work with different doctors and see if they would prescribe walking and fresh air.
  - Matt stated that it was taken from Frederick County, and we have only been able to get two doctors to come onboard. We even created the prescription pad for them, basically did all the leg work for them.
  - Terri suggested maybe that is something we want to work in conjunction with other workgroups.
  - Marian walking 30 minutes three times a week is so beneficial. And should we engage the Health Department the Medical Association there is a lot of things that can be done.
  - Marian thought it could be manageable and documentable—showing how many people are engaged.
  - Terri: also it is good for people of all ages. This is a wonderful cross generation element. Also, better when the community can see that it benefits everyone. Maybe even investigate adding Pediatricians who will be more likely to write prescriptions.
  - Nicola can get with the person responsible for the program within Rec and Parks and get an update on where they are with it and what were the challenges. Having other people commit to it was the struggle.
  - Terri asked if that person would be willing to come and do a quick presentation for us.
- Nicola and Marian talked and these past few meetings have been about research and gathering information and can kind of give us some thoughts as to where we should be going and what we want to achieve from this committee. They want to look at the past meeting minutes where we did the sticky notes on the wall and look at what the goals and objectives were a few months ago. And based on the research we have been doing, are we on track with what we thought in the beginning. The next couple of meetings will be to decide what we are going to do and how we going to do it.
  - Share goals and objectives from a few months ago
  - Share through their research on AARP
  - Come up with 3 or 4 goals that have objectives attached to them
  - Decide what the goals are going to be and the objectives that go with each goal
  - Potential lead on how we expect to fulfill that goal.
- Nicola asked the group members to come up with 3 or 4 goals that you think would be good for our group. Working through the goals and honing ourselves in on getting our focus. At our next meeting in August we will have everyone share their goals.
- Marian one strategy that I found to be helpful is looking at the last 3 months of minutes. I was amazed at the rich discussions we have had over a variety of things.
  - Terri stated you can look back on the website to see the minutes prior to those 3 months. [howardcountymd.gov/agefriendly](http://howardcountymd.gov/agefriendly)
- Marian asked Terri to send out another link to the map.

- Terri: it is important to have all the hours in from staff and volunteers. I want to be able to paint a picture for County Administration to show all the work being put into this effort. Will have Darlene send out the directions again.
- Terri talked about last Friday when Dr. Ball attended the Housing workgroup meeting and personally thanked the workgroup for all their work. Dr. Ball was so energized by what he heard that now he would like to attend all the workgroups. What we need to think about is how we would like to do a presentation of this workgroup.

### Homework Assignments:

Look at June minutes; let Kathleen or Terri know if there needs to be corrections

Think of 3 or 4 goals that you would like this committee to accomplish

Make sure you are documenting your time in the Volunteer website

You may want to review the survey results that were sent out to help with your goals

### Next Meeting:

August 19, 2020 – 9:00 am