

AGE-FRIENDLY SOCIAL PARTICIPATION WORKGROUP MINUTES



Date: 07/27/2020

Time: 3:00 PM

Facilitators: Ruth Coleman and Pat Sasse

In Attendance

Ruth Coleman

Pat Sasse

Kathleen Krintz

Terri Hansen

Andrew Monjan

Sophia Ross

Ann Benjamin

Colleen Konstanzer

Margaret Pittman

Charles Smith

Jeannie DeCray

Barbara Scher

Minutes Approved

First: Andrew Monjan

Second: Jeannie DeCray

Announcements:

Welcome to Sophia Ross. Sophia is a graduate from Towson University in family studies and a lifelong Howard County Resident. Interested in joining this group because she wanted to work with older adults and be more involved in her community.

Speaker for September will be Tracy Manning

Guest Speaker today is Charles Smith, Planner for the Howard County Department of Community Resources and Services to give us insight as to how to make our survey better.

New Business:

Charles presented a series of questions to enable the group to think about the purpose of the survey and the best way to get that information:

- What do you really want to know, and do we already have the answers? Are you looking for an inventory of the social activities in the County? (Hard to compile, becomes quickly obsolete.)
- Are we looking at what people want in terms of activities? (Is this knowable, or is it too subjective? Are there already surveys that have looked at this?)
- Finally, what is a priority for Howard County in its Action Plan? (Identify options, borrow from other jurisdictions, prior Howard County efforts and literature; evaluate in terms of

feasibility and impact; look at how to complete your goal—survey? Virtual focus groups?
Internal expertise of group members?

Question and Answer period after presentation:

- Andrew said to keep in mind the data that is already available from previous surveys and take into account the population and the type of questions and the goals of those surveys. There are data samples in national representative samples that can be queried to help us to design a specific one for the County.
- Charles agreed with Andrew, and said he read nearly half of the action plans on the AARP Website and was looking for innovative things that people had proposed. He found consistently that many noted the need to:
 - Do more research
 - Advocate more
 - Develop concrete actions
- Ruth felt that one document had a lot of great research on Social Participation.
- Pat, in discussing the survey with Charles, talked about the survey that was done for Civic Engagement. She spoke with Jim Sanders who worked with Volunteer Howard to get a list of organizations that have volunteer opportunities within the County. The group sent out 240 surveys and received 30 back; this was attributed to COVID. Jim has plans to send the survey back out and see if he receives any new results. We would be able to modify some of the answers by looking at the results as well.
- Ruth stated when we go back and look at the old survey we had developed, we probably could predict what the answers would be. It seems like we were asking questions that we already had the answers to. And trying to keep up with a directory/inventory/opportunity was not realistic.
 - Charles stated when he was in Montgomery County a fulltime employee spent 6 months on this and within a year the directory/inventory was obsolete.
- Ruth suggested looking at action plans already present around the country in jurisdictions that are like ours and picking out ones using our internal expertise that represent the top 20 potential goals, then create our survey based on that. Ruth created a spread sheet and went through the Age-Friendly action plans of communities like ours to see how general some of the goals were. She suggests the group look at these goals or add some that you may have to the list and then narrow down the top ones and create a survey out of those goals. Send out the survey to those organizations who service the greatest portion of the population in the community, and then have those organizations send out to their customers. And see how the two compare as to what they think is the most important.
- Charles stated when he went through about 100 action plans some were too vague. He suggested focusing on how people are going to do it not what they are trying to do.
- Terri concurred—look to see if the action steps they wrote were truly measurable, specific and attainable SMART goals.
- Andrew suggested another way to approach this is use a similar mode to the Federal Government Health 2020.
- Pat we would take information that we like and talk to the community who are doing this type of work and then from there have more concrete steps to get to where we want to be. From the people out there, what's working and not working and try to address that.
- Ann wanted to go back to Charles's talking points. She wanted to know some ways that we could do focus groups that could work to our advantage and how might the focus groups take us to the next step.

- Charles stated the virtual focus group gives you more in-depth information. Surveys are good for getting feedback from a bored population of people. With a focus group you have some opportunity to do follow up, cross discussion. You want it to be a relatively small group of 7 to 8 people max. When Ruth, Pat and I had our meeting I believe it was Pat who summarized it well. We imagine this as a multiple-staged process within your work group. You could identify a series of initiatives or tasks that you thought were best practices. It comes down to what it is you want to know and what question you are trying to get answered.
- Ruth stated the group will decide who from the large list of organizations to invite to the focus group. We want to have good representation across the community.
- Ruth stated the next step is to identify what we want for the focus group.
 - Charles asked if you want to test the focus groups or ask them about the goals, objectives, tasks or a mixture of those.
 - Charles stated be aware of time constraints. No more than 20 questions. You may want to reduce it to just tasks.
- Ann stated that based on the tremendous amount of work that Ruth did we could look at the goals and objectives and use the links to find the tasks. This would lead us to only focus on tasks in terms of the survey.
- Ruth asked for suggestions for other speakers. One idea might be to reach out to jurisdiction to the people who did the work and see if they would present at meeting to find out their process and what was successful.
 - Ann is interested in social isolation and loneliness. From the documents that are currently in our google drive can we identify a speaker or two who might give us some insight as we are beginning to look at what we have here in Howard County?
- Andrew mentioned the University of Chicago and the National Institute on Aging—their behavioral science division. Another possible speaker would be from the County Commission on Aging.
- Colleen wanted to know if we tapped into the Erickson School on Aging at UMBC to see if any of their research aligns with what we are doing.
- Colleen stated she was thinking broadly about social participation and aging. How do we keep people connected and the impact isolation has.
- Ann would like to present her summary in September.
- Terri received a reminder email that the 30th anniversary of the ADA is Thursday, July 30 at noon. If you are interested, she will send the information about the online event to members.

Homework Assignments

- Ruth will send out two communities to each member to research. The task should be completed for August meeting.

Next Meeting:

August 24, 2020 – 3:00 PM