

**COMMISSION ON AGING
MEETING MINUTES
June 25, 2015**

Members Present	Members Absent
Charles Kauffman	Revathi Vikram
Rudolph Oswald	Grace Whipple
Myrna Cooperstein	Tamara Duell
Sam Korper	Song Hutchins
Spencer Schron	Miriam Kely
Arva Jackson	Syed Yusef
Isabelle Schoenfeld	DaCosta Mason
Noelle Heyman	Liaisons
Sue Guenther	Austin Heyman, Office of Community Partnerships
Jerry Morenoff	Monk Casper, City of Rockville Commission on Aging
Paul Del Ponte	Morton Davis, Montgomery County Police Department
Barbara Mulitz	Phil Smakula, Montgomery County Department of Recreation
Judith Levy	Marcia Pruzan, Commission on Health
	Faisal Khan, Montgomery County Department of Transportation
Guest Presenter	Pat Lesnick, Ethnic Affairs Committee
Amy Gotwals, N4A Chief, Public Policy and External Affairs	Stephanie Moore, Housing Opportunities Commission
	Guests
	Sheila Kasasa
	David Richman
	Leslie Marks
	John Honig
	John Sprague
	Janet Carter
	Staff
	Odile Brunetto, Director Area Agency & Aging
	Tremayne Jones, Department of Health & Human Services

Chair, Judith Levy opened the Commission on Aging's meeting at 9:30 am.

COA Administrative Business:

The COA members unanimously approved minutes from the May 28, 2015 meeting.

Treasurer's Report- \$2,239.09

Judy Levy, COA Chair Report:

Senior Subcabinet Meeting-Senior Subcabinet met on June 9, 2015. The topic that was discussed was the County Executive's Summit on Aging that will take place on December 3, 2015. Pam Luckett and Bennett Connelly are the consultants hired to plan and coordinate the event. The Summit Advisory Group will meet on July 7th with seven members who will represent the diverse community in Montgomery County, one COA member who will represent the COA, one Vital Living Network member who will represent VLN and seven members from the County Government.

COA Alumni Group-The Commission on Aging Alumni group held it's first meeting with approximately 20 alumni. The next meeting will take place on July 28, 2015.

Amy Gotwals, N4A Chief of Public Policy and External Affairs– The Federal Budget:

Chair, Judy Levy introduced Amy Gotwals, N4A Chief of Public Policy and External Affairs. Amy Gotwals joined n4a in September 2005 as Director, Public Policy and Legislative Affairs. In March 2014, Amy took on the newly created position of Chief, Public Policy and External Affairs. In her new role, Amy leads N4A's Public Policy, Advocacy, Communications, Marketing, external relations and membership relations activities. Representing local Area Agencies on Aging, Ms. Gotwals serves as the lead in outreach to Congress and the Administration to ensure that needed resources and support services are available to older Americans and their caregivers.

Ms. Gotwals spoke about the primary focus of n4a to advocate for policies that effectively and efficiently address the needs of an aging America. Federal funding to support older adults and their caregivers has dramatically lagged behind inflation and the growing population of individuals needing aging services. Years of cuts in funding has eroded service capacity. Ongoing federal and state budget cuts continue to strain the ability of local agencies to help older adults age with dignity and independence in their communities. n4a established the following legislative priorities for 2015.

- **Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act (OAA)** –The Older Americans Act reauthorization bill, S 192, was unanimously passed by the Senate HELP Committee. The S. 192 bill is a bipartisan compromise bill that makes very modest changes to the Act. The bill has n4a's support, as they believe it represents a reasonable approach to moving a reauthorization bill through the Congress and reinforces the critical importance of OAA programs and services that AAAs develop, coordinate and deliver every day. The legislation also includes a compromise provision to address the funding formula issues that stymied progress during the last Congress. N4a cannot weigh in on the merits of the funding formula compromise language given the geographical diversity of our membership. While no compromise is ever perfect, n4a strongly supports moving a reauthorization proposal that will offer three years of stability to the Act amidst a very challenging budget and policy environment. Keeping up this new-found momentum in the Senate is critical to ensuring that n4a get reauthorization completed in this Congress.
- **Enhancing the Health of Older Adults** – Recognize the pivotal role that the Aging Network plays in bridging the gap between the health and LTSS system.

- **Fiscal Year 2016 Appropriations** – Restore funding to OAA and other supportive services to help older Americans successfully and independently remain in their homes and communities.
- **Promoting Community Living and Mobility** – Prepare America’s communities to meet the needs of today’s and tomorrow’s older Americans, especially through the availability and accessibility of senior mobility and transportation services.
- **Preserving the Safety Net** – Deficit reduction must not undermine the very programs that keep our nation’s older adults from falling into poverty, suffering ill health or otherwise struggling to live independently and with dignity.

Odile Brunetto, AAA Report:

- Housing Opportunities Commission’s (HOC) waitlist will be opening this summer. HOC is seeking input from providers and community representatives in providing feedback regarding the new process. You will be able to hear about the process, watch a demo on accessing and providing data entry into the system, and provide HOC with input on where they plan to place kiosks around the County. Meeting to take place on Tuesday, June 30th 9:00-10:30 am, East Deer Park (EDP) office/training room. 231 East Deer Park Drive, Gaithersburg MD 20877.
- Wynn Case/Supreme court decisions is effective retroactively to tax years 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015. Estimates tax years 2016 impact is \$8-10 million revenue loss. For FY17, over \$50 million revenues loss for the County. At this time departments are preparing a list of potential reductions for FY16. Over 100 HHS vacant positions will remain frozen for now in order to save County funds.
- State DHR initial FY16 reduction \$211,000 for HHS in Senior Services, has been adjusted effectively July 1, 2015 to only \$50,000. We will manage via personnel vacancy.
- Medicaid FY16 State payment rates are restored to FY15 levels (Nursing Homes, Physicians, etc) by Governor’s Hogan.
- State funded Adult Day Care Subsidies for people not eligible for Medicaid (500 people statewide) have been restored by Governor Hogan for FY16.
- DHMH agreement with HHS for contractual nurses for AERS evaluations no longer in effect: 1244 persons have been reassigned by DHMH to the County. Workload is overwhelming.
- The Dec 3, 2015 County Executive Summit on Aging in Montgomery County will be held at the Silver Spring Veteran’s Building. The Office of County Stats has drafted a survey monkey based on the 40 questions in the AARP survey for Age-Friendly Communities.

The goal is to obtain input from County residents via this online tool as well as a paper survey. The Summit Advisory Group will meet on July 7th.

- The Maryland Health Care for all citizens initiative had a public forum this week at Holy Cross Hospital. All hospitals in the County were represented. Presenters' powerpoint slides will be available shortly and will be shared with COA. Holy Cross Health Network has started a pilot project with selected nursing homes and senior housing buildings to prevent unnecessary emergency room visits.
- The new federal regulations governing the LTCO program have been released. We are reviewing to examine any potential impact on operations.
- The Alzheimer Association local chapter has opened an office in Rockville. The Ribbon Cutting ceremony was held on June 17th. Congressional support for NIH funding for further research is moving ahead in the Senate.
- New positions recruitment updates: H&W Coordinator and PT Caregiver Coordinator unknown at this time.
- New COA appointments - Mid July expected by County Council.

Draft revised Bylaws-Isabelle Schoenfeld. The Bylaws committee reviewed the current Bylaws and revised them to reduce duplications and to update information. Isabelle reminded Commissioners to provide comments to her by August 1st. The Bylaws committee will review and resolve the comments.

COA Annual Meeting Debrief- The Commissioners stated that the COA annual meeting was a success. There was a brief discussion on the objectives of the Annual Meeting. Some comments were: Annual meeting is to inform, hear from political representatives, determine the summer studies, Commissioners spend time together in a more relaxed way, tie up what we've accomplished and plan for next year, would be useful to have potential new Commissioners attend.

Stakeholders Forum-Spence Schron and Grace Whipple. Spence spoke about the stakeholder forum "Family Caregiving Support: A Dialogue" that will be held on October 28th from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Silver Spring Civic Building. Last year the COA conducted the forum, "Family Caregivers of Older Adults" and the outcome of that meeting was documented in a report and its recommendations serve as a basis for October 28th forum. The objective of the forum will be how to assist decision makers to support family caregivers. Elinor Ginzler will be the moderator for the forum with guest panelists that will include Montgomery County State Delegation representatives, County Council members, State and County Health and Human Services representatives.

Summer Studies-Arva Jackson, Noelle Heyman, Isabelle Schoenfeld and Leslie Marks. Isabelle spoke about the Commonalities and Differences in Local Government Approaches for Aging in Community summer study that was held on June 23rd, the meeting speakers were representatives from Larimer County, CO, York County, PA. and Philadelphia, PA. The

moderator, spoke about n4a's Livable Communities approach. In addition, Shannon Guzman gave a presentation on the AARP's Livability Index.

Arva spoke about the Long Term Care summer study meeting to be held on June 30th at the Rockville Library, this meeting will focus on context and some historical information about nursing home care in the United States. Arva explained why she thinks this is an important issue to study. In 2006, a Voluntary Quality Improvement Campaign to make nursing homes a better place to live, work and visit was announced and in 2012- VOICES released a report- "No encouraging news" about nursing homes in Montgomery County, MD. There will be two guest speakers at the first meeting. Eileen Bennett, Montgomery County Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTC) and Kathy Schoonover, Montgomery County Nursing Home Surveyor. Montgomery County LTC ombudsman program has been in existence for more than 26 years. Ombudsman means "citizen advocate." The service is not a prescribed process, it is resident-driven. Focus on quality of life (vs. quality of care). Ombudsmen visit all nursing homes and assisted living facilities in Montgomery County. Montgomery County's Ombudsman Program is a model program that has received national recognition. The summer study will focus on discharge planning which is an area of concern. Facilities are motivated to discharge residents to get new admissions/new residents. Also, many complaints are a result of poor staffing patterns not enough staff to answer call bells etc...

Liaisons reports:

Commission on Health (COH)—Marcia Pruzan informed the COA that COH have been advocating for dental health. There will be two legislative priorities that the Commission on Health will address in regards to children in Montgomery County. The first will be to raising the age limit to buy cigarettes and the second is to discuss obesity in Montgomery County.

Vital Living Network (VLN)—Leslie Marks stated that the JCA Job expo for 50+ was well attended.

Department of Transportation (DOT)—Faisal Khan indicated that the Montgomery County Department of Transportation submitted a TIGER Grant application to the U.S. Department of Transportation requesting funding for a MD 355 Ride On Plus Transit Improvements Project (ROP). If funded, the project would establish an 11-mile, premium, limited-stop bus service to improve transit travel time and increase transit frequencies between the Lake Forest Transit Center in Gaithersburg and the Grosvenor Metrorail station. Funding for the ROP project would enable the purchase of 14 zero emission electric buses; related infrastructure improvements including bus stop improvements; electric charging stations; accessible pedestrian improvements; real time travel passenger information; adaptive transit signal priority improvements; and bike share stations.

Department of Recreation (DOR)—Phil Smakula spoke about the 3% budget reduction the Department of Recreation will face in FY16. The 5th Annual Montgomery County World Elder Abuse Day (WEAD) which was held on June 10, 2015 at Holiday Park Senior Center was successfully attended by 200-300 people. The purpose of the event is to educate our community, including older adults, family members, and professionals on the presence of elder abuse, the warning signs, and who to turn to for help. This year there will be an emphasis on learning how to combat financial exploitation of the elderly. Six public agencies responsible for protecting the

County's seniors, included the States Attorneys Office, the MCPD and Department of Health and Human Services hosted the event. There were exhibitors, blood pressure checks, door prizes, demonstrations and musical entertainment. The keynote speaker was National Elder Justice leader Bill Benson. Phil also spoke about the White Oak Senior Center receiving the Maryland Association of Senior Centers (MASC) Program Award at the MASC annual meeting. The award recognizes White Oak Senior Center at the Annual Golden Award Ceremony, which is a special event, created to honor and celebrate all of the program participants who regularly visit the center. At the annual ceremony, participants are honored in a variety of categories including, "Most Congenial," "Most Inspiring" and "Member of the Year." The Maryland Association of Senior Centers (MASC) was founded in 1980 with a goal of representing and promoting senior centers throughout the state.

City of Takoma Park - Karen Maricheau updated the COA about events that are taking place. The City of Takoma Park continues to develop partnerships to meet the budget shortfalls by working with Takoma Park Adventist Church volunteers and Difference Makers, a student run organization that was founded in 2009 by a group of Takoma Park Middle School students and their club sponsor. The volunteers will go to senior homes on July 18th from 2-4pm to change LED light bulbs which will help reduce the cost of their utility bills throughout the summer months.

Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC)—Stephanie Moore Senior provided several HOC updates about their housing waitlist to reopen in August. When the waiting list opens, advertisements are placed in local newspapers, on radio, on TV in the form of public service announcements, and on this website. Applications are available only while the waiting list is open and will only be accepted on-line or by mail at Montgomery County Service Centers, County senior centers, and/or on this HOC website.

Health Montgomery—Sam Korper discussed the Steering Committee Meeting on June 1st. Healthy Montgomery allows the Committee to compare data with other sites around the Country. Council President George Leventhal requested that a report be done to identify the needs in the County.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 am

Respectfully Submitted

Isabelle Schoenfeld, Secretary