

**Communications Committee Meeting
Meeting
February 28, 2022**

Attendees

CoA Members

Jean Dinwiddie, Co-Chair
Beverly Rollins, Co-Chair
Virginia Cain
David Engel
Chuck Kaufmann, Alum
Marcia Pruzan, Alum
Barbara Selter
Marsha Weber

Staff

Pazit Aviv, Villages Coordinator, DHHS
Jennifer Long, Communication, DHHS

Roll Call

Jean called roll. The group approved the January 2022 minutes.

Discussion with Pazit Aviv, Villages Coordinator

Pazit Aviv discussed ways in which the Villages could get information out to diverse communities. She talked about actions she has taken toward this effort and shared a map of where the Villages are located in Montgomery County. Pazit urged meeting attendees to look at the Villages' website to obtain valuable information about them. Currently, there are a couple of Villages in Rockville that do not have leaders; otherwise, all of the Villages in the County do have a leader.

The County's diverse populations primarily reside along Interstate 270, in Silver Spring, Takoma Park, and along the Rt. 29 corridor. There is a mismatch of where the Villages are located and the highly diverse areas, and not all of the diverse areas have a Village. The Villages that do cover the diverse communities do not necessarily mean that they have a diverse membership. People join voluntarily and not everyone will join.

Pazit noted that individuals often get overwhelmed if they receive too much information. She said that she tries not to send too many emails and limits the 'density' of the emails. It is always a balance of what is shared, and how often. She carefully chooses what she sends and then gives

individuals time to process the information. She stated, however, that when something is critical, individuals tend to process that information quickly.

Pazit said that she has some strategies to reach the diverse and faith-based communities. She has contacts within some groups and touches base with those contacts. Also, she strategically chooses distinct groups to contact. But she cannot guarantee how much of this information actually gets out to the public.

Pazit suggested that what the CoA needs to consider is how to develop content that the diverse groups would be interested in, and how to get individuals on its distribution list. The CoA should obtain permission to place individuals on its distribution list and should also contact organizations and tell them what the CoA will be sharing, and how frequently. As with individuals, organizations should give permission to be on the CoA contact list. Pazit noted that that the CoA does not want to overwhelm individuals or organizations with large volumes of information.

Pazit commented that in considering diversity, the CoA needs to consider language and technology access. For instance, how would it create content that contains the information it wants to convey and how would it deliver it in different languages? The diverse cultures want to receive information in different ways.

Jean Dinwiddie asked whether the County's *Senior News* is distributed in different languages. Jennifer Long responded that it is not, but readers can translate it using Google translate. She said that the County does not know the culture of the folks who subscribe to *Senior News*. David Engel asked whether folks who are reluctant to get information through technology would be hesitant to go to a website to get information. Pazit responded that folks from Southeast Asia seem to be more amenable to using technology, but Latinos are not. Text messages work well for some folks, not so well for others. Sometimes children receive emails and texts and show them to their parents. But not all cultures do that. Pazit noted that the County cannot just translate into one language; if it translates into one, it will need to translate into several. That can get cumbersome if information is sent frequently.

Pazit stated that individuals may not pay attention to emails and may not process all of the information. The most important thing the Communications Committee could do is publicize the number to the County's Aging and Disability Resource Unit: 240-777-3000. Then individuals could call and get the information they need. Hopefully, that will steer them in the right direction.

David asked whether the CoA could reach more diverse communities if it put pamphlets and information in libraries. Pazit responded that it would help, but careful consideration must be given regarding the information that is provided. She added that a dedicated space in the libraries is needed, and the information must be timely. The CoA would have to keep an eye on the information that is available. Jean noted that the CoA is going to contact the libraries in the early summer to work on a project with them and provide CoA ambassadors.

Chuck said that he finds that County employees do not know things about the CoA, the Villages, or the Age-Friendly initiative. He said there should be an effort to inform County employees about these groups. Networking to provide this information is important. Pazit agreed. Jennifer said that many employees are more interested those departments that provide direct services. Pazit said that she has been pushing for more integration of work among County employees and eliminating silos. She stated that she is making inroads with upper management folks, but the work continues with the line employees.

Marcia Pruzan stated that a few years ago a survey was conducted among the County employees with regard to Age-Friendly activities and the survey showed that a lot of employees did not know what was going on in other departments. She also said that she just found out that neighboring jurisdictions have a 311 phone app. Marcia noted that she distributes a weekly newsletter and offered to include *Senior News* in it. Jennifer responded, however, that *Senior News* has no web link. She told Marcia that they can discuss how to include it in Marcia's newsletter. Jean added that members of the Committee have considered including *Senior News* on the CoA's website, but, because it has no weblink, it would need to be manually updated every month.

50+ in Montgomery County Update

Jean reported that the March program was taped on Friday, February 25 and included representatives from three of the County's Villages. The theme of the April program will be on staying safe in your home, as a teaser for the May forum. The public service announcements (PSAs) have been extremely well received; several departments have been volunteering to prepare them. Chuck noted that the recent advertisement in the *Beacon* was particularly good, it was from the Department of Consumer Protection. Jean stated that the Age-Friendly team and the Communications Committee are hoping to compile a resource guide as a joint effort. Marsha Weber asked whether the folks who are helping with the PSAs can also help get the word out about 50+.

Beverly Rollins reported her efforts to contact older adult communities. She asked whether the County could print flyers and mail them to retirement communities. No responses were received from any of the letters that Beverly sent out to assisted living facilities. Barbara Selter suggested that possibly some of the CoA's treasury could be spent on this effort. David Engel stated that the YouTube viewer numbers have increased a bit. Chuck suggested that we reach out to radio stations. Chuck also suggested that GROWS send out information about 50+.

Jean reminded everyone that the 50+ Planning Committee meets the first Friday of each month. Getting information out to various organizations about the program will be discussed at the next meeting.

Website Update

David said that each month he sends a message to staffer, Kyung Lee, to update the episode of 50+. Also, David checked links on the County Senior website and found several incorrect links; he asked Kyung to correct those. David also checked the CoA's website and found that archived

Committee minutes are now included, i.e., individuals can now look at 2021's Committee minutes. There is more work to be done. Marcia Pruzan asked whether we should contact the organizations who have the bad weblinks and let them know that their links are bad. David responded that things change, and the links need to be updated, but it is difficult to keep up with them.

David said that he recently got a web traffic report, but he is not sure what he is going to do with it. Beverly commented that it is important to have someone monitor the sites to ensure that the weblinks are current and correct.

Virginia Cain noted that after the library presentation the Communications Committee asked that a "Senior Tab" be placed on the library website, and shortly afterward one was placed there. She asked whether the library website should be linked to the CoA's website and the Montgomery County Senior website. David responded that it is included on those websites. Jean stated that she also noticed that the Vital Living Network is still on the website, even though the Vital Living Network is defunct. David responded that some things regarding the link to the Vital Living Network should be maintained but he is putting that on the back burner for now and is currently concentrating on the links on the CoA and the Senior Site. David will also contact staffer, Tremayne Jones, about keeping 2021 meeting minutes and presentations on the website. He is also working on better organization of the CoA meeting information on the CoA website.

Chuck suggested that we add the Villages to the list of contacts that get press releases.

New Projects Discussion

Jean discussed the factsheet that the Committee could develop in collaboration with Age-Friendly regarding County resources for older adults. It will be an evergreen document and Marcia Pruzan's document could be a starting point. Jean, David, and Marcia will work on the factsheet.

Jean reported that May 5 is the date of the CoA's Public Forum. A Save-the-Date press release will be issued soon. Staffer, Shawn Brennan, is working on that press release.

As for publicity for *50+ in Montgomery County*, the Committee could approach the Public Information Office to use part of the \$20,000 that Office has in its budget for CoA activities. Marsha Weber added that the Committee should ask the CoA Executive Committee to set aside money for publicity; the Committee should ask for some of the CoA's funds to be directed for Communications Committee activities. David suggested that the Committee may even want to print envelopes to send out the pamphlets.

Adjourn