

Communications Committee Meeting
Minutes
3/21/22

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89329960229?pwd=bnYxdHhBQ0ZtQkp2QW5Cd3owcFhldz09>

Attendees

CoA Members

Jean Dinwiddie, Co-Chair
Beverly Rollins, Co-Chair
Virginia Cain
David Engel
Eddie Rivas
Barbara Selter
Marsha Weber

Staff

Jennifer Long, Montgomery County
Joelle Modderman, Montgomery County Public Information Office
Tracy O'Connor, Montgomery County Public Information Office

Roll Call

Jean Dinwiddie called roll. The group approved the February 2022 minutes.

50+ in Montgomery County Update

Jean reported that the April show will feature Larrisa Johnson from the County's Department of Environmental Protection, Ali Soltani of HandyPro of DC, and Jim Resnick from the County's Department of Fire and Rescue who will discuss home safety and home energy audits. The May program will have a gardening theme and one topic will be on container gardening.

Outreach to Retirement Communities

Beverly Rollins stated that she has not taken any action on this since the last Communications Committee meeting. Before the last meeting, however, she did send emails and letters to County Assisted Living facilities and also to the County Councilmembers asking them to make efforts to publicize *50+ in Montgomery County*. While she did not receive any responses from the Assisted Living facilities, she did hear back from a few of the Councilmembers who noted that they would put something in their periodic emails about the program. Beverly stated that she will make an effort to contact Stuart Rosenthal and Steve Gurney to get contact information regarding other older adult communities, as suggested by CoA member, Mary Sweeney. Marsha Weber

asked that Beverly make any lists that she receives available to staffer, Shawn Brennan, so that Shawn can send out publicity for the CoA's May forum. Jean noted that the Communications Committee will ask the Executive Committee about paying for the postage of mailing information to these communities.

Jean reminded everyone that the 50+ Planning Committee meets the 1st Friday of each month.

Fact Sheet in Collaboration with Age-Friendly Regarding County Resources for Older Adults

Jean asked Committee members what additions the CoA can add to the older adult fact sheet based upon the Age-Friendly Communication Workgroup *Beacon* ad. She suggested adding information about Villages, and the members agreed. David Engel said that he would send Jean some information about Villages that can be included. Beverly suggested that the Committee members look at the draft fact sheet and send suggestions to her and Jean by March 28. She also said that we need to be cognizant of space limitations on the fact sheet. Jean stated that the CoA has one column of space. Items to include will be: Village information, a reference to the 240-777-3000 number, and also possibly a reference to the 311 number. The comment was made, however, that the 311 does not specifically supply HHS information, it is more generic – it is an extension of 411 but it is for County issues. Jean said that the fact sheet will need to be approved by the full CoA and Eddie Rivas stated that it will be given an expedited approval process. The fact sheet needs to be sent for printing by April 5, a month before the CoA's public forum. David suggested that Committee members look at the County's Senior Site and also pull some information from the Age-Friendly site. Jean stated that she will ask Age-Friendly senior fellow, Marcia Pruzan, about the approval process from Age-Friendly. Virginia Cain suggested that a reference be made to Montgomery County's participation in the Partners in Care initiative. Barbara Selter stated that she would contact someone with that initiative to see what status they are in with regard to their operation. Jean suggested some wording for fire and safety for older adults be added to the fact sheet, but she said that could be optional. David stated that he will put the fact sheet together and send it to Barbara to send to the full CoA for a yes or no vote.

Website Update

With regard to the discussion of redesigning the CoA website, David noted that he has been speaking with staffer, Kyung Lee, regarding updates. The CoA's website and the Senior Site are largely up-to-date. They have both been getting more views recently.

David submitted a substantial change to Kyung based on work generated by the Age-Friendly group about housing information for older adults. It was a change to the entire Senior page. Seeing how long it takes to make these extensive changes will give the CoA an idea of how long other major changes will take. David will continue to work with the Age-Friendly group to see what it wants updated.

As for the CoA's website, David stated that he is going through Tremayne Jones to make changes. He is working to incorporate 2021 CoA meeting archives on the website. With regard to the interface of the CoA's website, it's now in alphabetical format but could be more

user-friendly. It would be great if the CoA could revamp its website, using the Commission on People with Disabilities' website as an example. Until that is done, David stated that he is trying to pare down the number of general topics on the alphabetical listing; he wants to categorize them better to narrow the number of them on the site.

A comment was made about adding the County's "Senior News" email to the CoA's website, but, unfortunately, it does not have a weblink, it is just sent out monthly with no link. David suggested that the CoA put items of interest on a rotating banner at the top of its website and provide a link for people to sign up for "Senior News." He said that he will investigate adding a "Sign Up for Senior News" link.

CoA Ambassador Program/Speakers' Bureau Brainstorming Session

Jean began the conversation about initiating a CoA ambassador program by asking the questions: What it should look like? What would be involved? Who/what groups would be targeted? What would be its mission?

Barbara stated that there are certain topics that are of general interest to older adults. It would be great if the CoA could get experts to address organizations that advocate for or work with that age group. Eddie asked, "How would the CoA select who it would endorse as a speaker?" Marsha asked how the CoA would do this – by compiling a list of experts? Would the CoA be the middleman? Barbara responded that the CoA could ask experts to be on its list of experts to address organizations. Not an exhaustive list, but some suggested speakers. Jean asked who the list would be supplied to – who would be the audience? Barbara responded that it would be a volunteer commitment. The ambassador registry would be on the CoA's website and the CoA could publicize that it has a registry.

David commented that Marcia Pruzan has made it clear that the CoA does not promote specific non-County resources. If the CoA compiles a list of speakers then it might appear that it is making recommendations that it should not make. Maybe the Commission could add presentations to its website that have been given at its meetings but not recommend specific individuals.

Virginia Cain suggested that the CoA could possibly have a hybrid model: maybe indicate that the CoA could help organizations find speakers, but also have CoA members reach out. Eddie stated that if Commissioners reach out to other organizations, it should have a short page of talking points that all of the members should use. Jean commented that the CoA should solicit from the public what the CoA should be advocating for. David noted that a few years ago the Communications Committee developed some good talking points, and members could start with those. Barbara suggested that the CoA solicit from other groups what issues it should be looking for. Jean stated that she has a presentation that former CoA chair, Is Schoenfeld, gave her and she and Beverly can reference it to add to the set of talking points.

Beverly also mentioned the liaison program where CoA members would be liaisons to other organizations. Barbara stated that she would bring it up at the next CoA meeting.

New Projects Discussion

- Jean stated that she will bring up the possibility of having another Senior Summit at an upcoming meeting of the Age-Friendly group.
- Barbara said that Odile Brunetto sent her a list of survey questions that the CoA drafted in 2014 or 2018 for candidates for County Executive to respond to. Barbara said that she would forward the list to the Communications Committee for review. Eddie suggested that the CoA refine Odile's list and give it to the League of Women Voters and ask them to present it. He stated that the Public Policy Committee should take the lead on this.

Adjourn