



Montgomery County Commission on Aging
Public Policy Committee Minutes
April 10, 2025

Present: Morris Klein and Kate Stein (co-chairs); Liz Barnes, Linda Bergofsky, Wayne Berman, Janice Zalen, Dixie Butler (commissioners); Kuo-Hwa Wang (community); Leslie Frey, Peter Illig (staff)

Morris called the meeting to order at 9:32 am.

Summary of recently completed General Assembly: Morris noted that Sine Die, the end of the GA session came on April 7. He had shared a summary of which bills we were tracking had passed. For the most part, some of the most potentially impactful proposed legislation was not successful.

Linda and Kate then explained what happened with SB376, the nursing home inspection delegation authority bill. SB376 was amended in the Government Operations And Health Facilities Subcommittee; the amendments were recommended by the State and changed the conditions under which delegation would be allowed and removed any cost sharing obligation. The amended bill was passed out of the HGO Committee and the House of Delegates to the Senate. Ultimately, the conference committee amended the bill to include only required reporting from OHCQ to the Area Agencies on Aging. Senator Kramer inserted the original language into the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025 (BRFA) and it has the same effect as if the bill had been passed; the language in the BRFA includes both delegation authority and cost-sharing. The language gives Montgomery County the option to request an MOU for delegation authority and cost sharing until 3/31/29. The Committee discussed the utility of setting up an inspection unit, given that the BRFA imposed a sunset date. Once the AAA gets the first mandated report on July 1, 2025, the County would be in a better position to decide next steps.

The Committee also discussed what other actions the Commission should consider with regard to nursing home quality monitoring. These include briefing the County Executive and County Council (this will occur at a very high level within County government), fixing the relationship

between the CoA and OHCQ, and repairing the LTCO function and getting it back on track. Linda will write a letter of thanks to Senator Kramer, Peter will confirm when senior County officials will be briefed and he will invite Drs. McGhee and Johnson to the next PPC meeting to help strategize about the current state of the LTCO office. Janice will brainstorm a letter we could send to Tia Witherspoon once both the County and the State have had a chance to process what has happened. It was also suggested that PPC do a better job of engaging with other committees around legislative priorities so that we can share the work during session. Similarly, it was suggested that we also reach out to other Commissions to help plan for the next General Assembly session.

County Council Activities: Kate provided an overview of some recent bills of interest passed by the County. Bill 3-25, is a homeowner's tax credit that expands the pool of eligible residents, increases the net worth and income limits, and raises the eligible appraised value. ZTA 25-03 and PILOT will expedite the office to residential space conversion. Under Bill 6-25, DHCA will be able to recover \$1.5 million in unpaid fines against landlords.

Linda gave an overview of the CE's proposed budget, i.e. essentially level funding for Services for Seniors with no increase in FTEs but in effect, it is a decrease given that the population of eligible residents is growing. Committee members discussed the CE's budget and the disconnect between County demographics (25% of residents are age 60 and over) and a 3.5% property tax increase required to support MCPS. Commissioners are encouraged to raise the issue of the costs of launching a nursing home inspection program in their discussions with County Council members. Dixie will prepare some talking points about the legislation to share in our calls with County Council members.

There was also considerable discussion about Councilmember Mink's bill to charge \$20,000 in fees to homeowners who request a permit to tear down their existing homes. Because there are so many nuances to the potential effects of the bill, the Committee opted not to take a position.

Other Issues: Linda gave a brief overview of the Urban Institute research proposal that, if funded, would provide the County with the equivalent of \$90,000 in free consulting on housing. She also mentioned the productive meeting between members of the AIC Committee and the Housing Opportunity Commission. Committee members acknowledged Betsy Carrier's contribution to both of these collaborations.

Kate gave an overview of the Public Forum. The Forum planning committee has established an explicit goal of meeting with legislators over the summer with specific policy proposals. She also raised the importance of helping displaced Federal employees, e.g. a WPA program that helps people enter into the education field. She asked us to consider what other kinds of

impactful programs could we propose, e.g. private sector involvement, entrepreneurship, inter-generational, and through Worksource Montgomery. We agreed to share this with other Committees and with the Commission.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:43 am.