

District of Columbia Commission on Aging

Minutes of October 22, 2014 Meeting

Commissioners Present:

Romaine Thomas, Chairperson; Ronald Swanda, Vice Chairperson; Jaqueline Arguelles; Don Colodny; Barbara Hair; Charles Hicks; Grace Lewis; Samuel McCoy; Carolyn Nicholas; Brenda Williams; Brenda Atkinson-Willoughby; Constance Woody

DCOA Staff Present:

Dr. John M. Thompson; Jerry Kasunic; Tanya Reid; Deborah Royster

Guests Present: Barbara Klein, resident of Ward 3; Joe Harris, Ward 5 Mini-Commission; Sue Barnes, Ward 5 Mini-Commission; Vivian Grayton, Seabury Resources for Aging.

Call to Order

Chairperson Thomas called to order the regular meeting of the D.C. Commission on Aging (“the Commission”) at 10:05 a.m., October 22, 2014, at 500 K St. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.

Inspiration

Chairperson Thomas offered appreciation for the blessing of the members of the Commission on Aging to work together as a group to serve seniors in the District of Columbia.

Approval of Minutes of September 24, 2014 Meeting of the Commission on Aging

The minutes of the September 24, 2014 meeting of the Commission on Aging were approved by the members of the Commission on Aging with one minor correction.

DCOA Update

Dr. Thompson provided an update on key activities of the Office on Aging. He stated that the Mayor’s Annual Senior Holiday Celebration will be held on Wednesday, December 10, 2014, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the D.C. Armory. He also reported that he recently met with members of the Senior Advisory Commission, and that this was a productive meeting focused on continuous improvement of DCOA’s transportation and food services programs. Dr. Thompson also discussed the need to improve service coordination with other D.C. Government agencies that serve seniors, including Adult Protective Services and the Department of Housing and Community Development. He discussed DCOA’s objective to upgrade DCOA senior wellness

centers, and noted that capital funding will not be available for this purpose until 2018 or 2019. Finally, Dr. Thompson welcomed and introduced Jerry Kasunic, who was recently hired as the Deputy Director of the Aging and Disability Resource Center.

A brief period of questions and answers followed. Chairperson Thomas thanked Dr. Thompson for his presentation. Vice-Chairperson Swanda congratulated Dr. Thompson and his team, and Deputy Mayor Otero for the extraordinary changes they have implemented to improve DCOA programs and services and enhance the quality of services provided to seniors and persons with disabilities in the District of Columbia.

Officer Elections

Chairperson Thomas turned the agenda over to Commissioner McCoy to conduct officer elections. Commissioner McCoy presented the following recommended slate of officers for the Commission on Aging:

- Chairperson: Mrs. Romaine Thomas
- Vice Chairperson: Mr. Ronald Swanda

Commissioner McCoy opened the floor for additional nominations, and there were no additional nominations. The members of the Commission on Aging voted unanimously to elect Mrs. Romaine Thomas and Mr. Ronald Swanda as Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, respectively, of the Commission on Aging.

D.C. Age Friendly City Update

Vice-Chairperson Swanda reported that the Age Friendly D.C. Task Force is scheduled to meet with Mayor Gray to discuss the final report, which will be released in November 2014. The members of the Commission on Aging discussed the need for implementation of the D.C. Age Friendly City Initiative to continue as part of the transition process, and unanimously approved the following motion:

The members of the Commission on Aging strongly recommend that the findings and conclusions of the D.C. Age Friendly City Task Force are implemented by the incoming administration of the next Mayor of the District of Columbia, and the Commission on Aging strongly supports Dr. Thompson to manage the implementation process. The members of the Commission on Aging also strongly encourage the newly elected Mayor of the District of Columbia to include seniors and advocates of senior issues on the transition team.

Committee Reports

Elder Abuse and Financial Exploitation Prevention

Commissioner Nicholas distributed draft goals and objectives for the Elder Abuse and Financial Exploitation Prevention Committee, and the members of the Commission on Aging agreed to review and discuss the committee's proposed goals and objectives at the November 19, 2014 meeting of the Commission on Aging.

Governance

Commissioner McCoy reported on the status of pending legislation before the Council of the District of Columbia, including a rent control amendment that would limit rental increases for seniors; and legislation that would prevent persons who fail to meet certain criteria, i.e., so-called clean hands, from serving as guardians for incapacitated adults. The members of the Commission on Aging also agreed to invite Chairperson Mendelson, Counsel of the District of Columbia, and the newly elected Attorney General of the District of Columbia to the next meeting of the Commission on Aging; Chairperson Thomas appointed Commissioners McCoy, Hicks, and Nicholas to follow up and extend these invitations.

Ward Reports

- **Ward 1**

Commissioner Arguelles reported that this is her last meeting, and she emphasized the need for the Commission on Aging to continue to represent grass roots community interests. Chairperson thanked Commissioner Arguelles for her many years of service on the Commission on Aging.

- **Ward 4**

Commissioner McCoy reported that he attended a meeting of the Ward 4 mini-commission, and that the commission expressed concern that it was not able to obtain funding from the Ward 4 lead agency for the commission's outreach activities. Dr. Thompson advised that Ward 4 mini-commission announcements and other pertinent information can be disseminated at no cost in community announcements of local media publications and on the DCOA website, and he encouraged the Ward 4 mini-commission to pursue these alternatives. Commissioner Hicks also recommended that the Ward 4 mini-commission seek funding from the Advisory Neighborhood Commission for Ward 4.

Other Matters

Chairperson Thomas noted that she recently received the 2014 Annual Andrus Award from AARP DC, which recognizes “AARP Volunteers who have made a difference in their communities in ways that support AARP’s mission, vision, and strategic direction, and that inspire others to volunteer.” The members of the Commission on Aging congratulated Chairperson Thomas for receiving this distinguished award.

Adjournment

Upon motion and unanimous approval by the members of the Commission on Aging, the October 22, 2014 meeting of the Commission on Aging was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

These minutes were recorded by Deborah M. Royster, General Counsel, D.C. Office on Aging, and were formally approved by the Commission on Aging on November 19, 2014.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Deborah M. Royster", written over a horizontal line.

Deborah M. Royster
General Counsel
District of Columbia Office on Aging