

**District of Columbia Commission on Aging
Meeting Minutes for
Wednesday, December 14, 2016**

Commissioners Present

Romaine Thomas; Ron Swanda; Brenda Atkinson-Willoughby; George Arnstein; Clarence “Buddy” Moore; Carolyn Nicholas; Constance Woody

Ex Officio Members Present

Mary Terrell, Department of Employment Services (DOES); Raka Choudhury, District Department of Transportation (DDOT)

D.C. Office on Aging (DCOA) Staff Present

Laura Newland, Executive Director; Michael Kirkwood, General Counsel; Tanya Reid, Executive Assistant; Aurora-Delespin Jones, Program Manager

Guests Present

Cesar Barreto, ADA Coordinator at DDOT; Gail Kohn, Age-Friendly D.C.; Harold Cash, Solomon Plan; Janice Williams, Hattie Holmes Senior Wellness Center

Call to Order

Romaine Thomas (Chairwoman) called the meeting to order at approximately 10:05 a.m.

Inspiration

Chairwoman thanked the Commissioners for their work, interest, and all that they do, share, and give to society. The Commissioners took a moment of silence in honor of Commissioner Jackie Arguelles.

Review and Approval of Minutes

The meeting minutes from the Commission’s November 2016 meeting will be reviewed during January 2017’s meeting.

Presentations

A. Age-Friendly DC (AFC DC) Report: Gail Kohn

Gail Kohn reported that in 2017 AFC DC will send a report to the World Health Organization comparing, domain by domain, the beginning of the initiative in 2012 to how the city looks in 2017.

AFC DC will be having listening sessions to help with the report. Therefore, they will need facilitators and scribes. The scribes will mainly be students. Commissioners were asked to take the training to become facilitators. They were also asked to form groups of 25 – 30 people to conduct listening sessions between the end of January to no later than March 31, 2017. The training will be held January 24th from 1pm – 5pm at the Wilson Building, room G9 and February 4th, 10am – 3pm at the R.I.S.E Center. Food will be served.

B. Walkability and Safety: Cesar Barreto, ADA Coordinator, DDOT

DDOT makes sure people have access to all forms of transportation (Metro, Walking, Biking, Driving, etc.), regardless of any construction or road closures. Access matters. In order to insure that there is access for everyone, a compliance inventory is done. In order to prioritize barriers, they do public outreach. DDOT uses technology such as satellite imagery to collect ADA compliance data (crosswalks, sidewalks, median crossings, etc.) DDOT's goal is to have barriers identified before citizens call them in.

DDOT uses ADA guidelines as a minimum requirement. They also follow the Public Right-of-Way Accessibility and DDOT guidelines. The latter is more stringent than both the ADA and Public Right-of-Way Accessibility guidelines.

DDOT handles bus stops, bus shelters, sidewalks, cross walks, median crossings, curbs, curb ramps, etc. However, they do not handle driveways. Driveways are to be fixed by the owner. The permits will let the owners know when their driveway is non-compliant.

In FY17, the DDOT ADA team received money allotted for sidewalk restoration.

DDOT's Director has created a new Division, the Senior Affairs Division. The new coordinator will take over the Age-Friendly City, as a new taskforce member, and Access DC.

Commissioner Atkinson-Willoughby recommended public education regarding drivers and bikers. Response: DDOT has a Pedestrian and Bicyclist Coordinator. They are currently developing an education system. They work under the 3 E's. Education (training for bikers and drivers), Enforcement, and Engineering (bike lanes, etc).

She also pointed out that having meters at the ends of the blocks sometimes prove to be difficult for seniors. Response: DDOT has regulations that indicate you must have a certain amount of meters per block.

Commissioner Moore invited Cesar to come to the Ward 1 Senior Wellness Center to make a presentation. Response: Will come out.

C. Senior Villages Request for Application - Aurora Delespin-Jones, Program Manager, DCOA

Applicants for the grants should be able to do 3 things:

- 1) Establish membership support and scholarship for senior villages
- 2) Present a design and program for developing new villages in Wards 7 & 8
- 3) Provide capacity building and technical assistance support to all senior villages across the city

Commissioners were requested to share knowledge about their Wards. The Commission's role will not be one of determining the grantee, but will serve as a resource and provide information about the seniors they serve. If applicants call, feel free to provide information to them via email, as that information can be shared with the others. However, this is voluntary.

D. DCOA Update - Laura Newland, Director, DCOA

Holiday Party: It appears that we had more people and Councilmembers present than in years past. Director Newland told the Commission that DCOA is open for suggestions for improvement. We did an analysis to see whether we are reaching new people or the same people who attend our wellness centers and meal sites. We compared the number of meals ordered on days like the holiday celebrations to normal business days and discovered that the meal orders only decreased a small amount. This indicates that we are reaching people that don't attend our normal activities.

Meal Site Closures in Ward 5: Starting January 1, 2017, the meal sites at Israel Baptist Church and one of the sites at Fort Lincoln will be closing based on the recommendation of the Ward 5 Lead Agency. All affected members are in close proximity to other meal sites and will still have access to meals.

Hattie Holmes Senior Wellness Center: Director Newland informed the commission that there will be a change in grantee at Hattie Holmes Senior Wellness Center. Vida Senior Center is the grantee for Hattie Holmes. However, the interim provider is Mary's Center until the end of FY 17. Mary's Center currently runs Bernice Fonteneau Senior Wellness. They were selected as the interim provider because they are familiar with running wellness centers. In addition, DCOA is looking to increase our health and wellness activities and Mary's Center has the same interest.

Vida Senior Center has another grant with DCOA. That grant is on a conditional basis. DCOA is working with them to get on track. If Vida loses that grant, DCOA will figure out a way to continue providing services to the effected seniors.

Chairwoman Thomas asked that the commissioners are made aware of changes happening in their wards before they are made. Executive Director Newland agreed.

Vice Chair Swanda asked what decision the agency made regarding the restructuring of the agency's operations. Response: Based on feedback from the Commission, Senior Service Network, and the community, the agency decided not to make structural changes. Instead, DCOA will focus on our community strategy, relationship building, and the development of trust in the community.

Highlights of the Needs Assessment:

Close to 900 surveys were completed either electronically or on paper across all 8 wards. The surveys were based on the Age-Friendly Domains.

- The median age of District seniors is 70
- 55% of District seniors live alone
- 1/4 of seniors live below 150% of the poverty line (for a household of 1 live on \$18,000/annually)
- 1/3 of seniors self-reported having a disability

Two levels of the Needs Assessment

- 1) Based on the survey results, what were the community-driven priorities?

- a. The highest figure was that 77% of seniors rated preventing falls and other accidents as very important. It was also rated as the highest unmet need, about 40% of seniors said it was an unmet need.
 - b. Across all of the domains, there was a lack of effective communication. For every domain about 20% of seniors indicated they don't know where to go for the services.
- 2) The providers surveyed gave answers different than the seniors. When asked what is important for seniors, their ratings did not match the rating of seniors.
- a. 98% of service providers rated transportation to healthcare as very important compared to the 66% of seniors. Transportation was also listed as the biggest problem for DC seniors. It did not rank in the senior's top 5 issues.

The Director believes that the discrepancy is due to the providers seeing the direst issues. This tells her that budget and programmatic decisions can't be solely based on provider input.

Next Steps for DCOA:

- Develop a robust communications strategy
 - o Targeted to seniors facing economic hardship and higher risk of social isolation
- Empower individuals to make long term care decisions by educating seniors.
- Get more feedback from seniors about what is important to them, adapt our program accordingly, and empower service providers to do the same
- Amplify District senior's voices not just the provider's voices. Make sure the providers are listening to the seniors as well
- Expand opportunities for seniors to participate in the decision-making process
- In order to be a national leader, DCOA needs to empower and assist service providers in coming up with innovative solutions to the problems they are facing.
- Prioritize the customer experience within the DCOA service-delivery model

E. Solomon Project – Harold Cash

Mr. Harold Cash shared his idea for the Solomon Plan with the Commission to determine whether he should proceed with his idea. He reported that the Solomon Plan was not initially targeted to seniors. However, he discovered after a meeting with a senior that it was the best plan of action.

The Solomon Plan means that Mr. Cash and his partner will split the senior's home. This means that Mr. Cash will work with seniors, who have homes without a mortgage, to turn the home into two condos. The senior will live in one unit and Mr. Cash would sell the other unit. The profit of the sale would go to Mr. Cash and his partner.

Mr. Cash will pay for the relocation of the senior while renovations were done. The seniors will return to a "brand new" home; however they will only own one portion or one condo in the home.

If seniors fall into the 10% - 15% bracket they will not have to pay capital gains. An addendum with the real estate contract will be made to ensure that the seniors are not taken advantage of.

Commissioner Swanda informed Mr. Cash that it was not appropriate for the Commission to tell him if he should proceed.

Committee Reports

A. Health and Wellness: Vice-Chair Swanda reported that the Uniformed Paid Leave Act passed the first reading of the Council by a 9:2 margin. The second reading will take place on December 20th. He passed out information on PACE describing how it works and its benefits.

B. Mini Commission: Commissioner Moore postponed the Mini Commissioner report until January.

Ward Reports

There were no Ward reports.

New Business

There was no new business.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Announcements

Commissioner Arnstein informed the Commission that there will be several new members at January's meeting. He asked about orientation for them. Chairwoman Thomas indicated that an orientation will be scheduled.

Chairwoman Thomas asked the commissioners to call Tanya Reid if they will miss meetings.

Commissioner Nicholas pointed out that Ward 7 Councilman Elect Vincent Gray recognized the passing of the Financial Exploitation of Vulnerable Adults and the Elderly Amendment Act at the Holiday Party.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:02 p.m.

These minutes were recorded by Tanya Reid, Executive Assistant, D.C. Office on Aging, and were formally approved by the Commission on Aging on January 25, 2017.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'TR', written over a vertical line.

Tanya Reid
Executive Assistant
District of Columbia Office on Aging