

**District of Columbia Commission on Aging
Meeting Minutes for
Wednesday, January 24, 2018**

Attendance

Commissioners present: Carolyn Nicholas; Buddy Moore; George Arnstein; Guleford Bobo; Barbara Hair; Charles Hicks; John Giacomini; Barbara Lee; Carolyn Matthews; Marguerite Pridgen; and Mary Taylor.

Ex-Officio Members: Veronica Longstreth, DOH; and Caser Barreto, DDOT.

Members of the Public: Ms. Betty Florence, Chair, Ward 4 Mini-Commission; Mr. Sam McCoy, former Commissioner and Ward 4 Mini-Commission member; and Ms. Veronica Ingram, Ward 4 Mini-Commission, member.

D.C. Office on Aging (DCOA) Staff Present: Christian Barrera, Special Assistant; Karen Dorbin, Director of Communications; and Michael Kirkwood, General Counsel.

I. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at approximately 10:01 a.m.

II. Review and Approval of Minutes

The meeting minutes from the Commission's November 15, 2017 meeting were reviewed and approved with the following correction: Commissioner Mary Taylor nominated Carolyn Nicholas to serve as Chair of the Commission.

III. New Business

A. 2018 Performance Oversight

The Chair, Carolyn Nicholas, brought Councilmember Bonds' questions concerning the 2018 Performance Oversight Pre-Hearing to the attention of the Commissioners.

B. 2018 Agenda

The Chair referred to her proposed work plan for the Commission she prepared for the calendar year. She emphasized that it is not concrete and, therefore, is up for discussion and/or revision by the entire commission.

The Chair handed out a copy of the Commission's mission to the members present. A discussion ensued regarding the Commission's focus on advising the Mayor, DCOA and other District agencies regarding programs and services offered to seniors. Upon conclusion of the discussion, the Chair expressed the importance of the Commission making connections with other District agencies.

Senior Wellness Centers

Commissioner Matthews expressed concerns about homeless persons being released from shelters in the mornings and them not having a place to go. She proposed that Senior Wellness Centers be opened early for homeless persons during inclement weather.

After further discussion, the Chair inquired if Matthews' idea of opening the Senior Wellness Centers early was a recommendation the Commission should make. Commissioner Hair made a motion that the Commission recommend that persons be permitted to remain in shelters in inclement weather. Commissioner Matthews seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a majority consent. Commissioner Hicks asked for the recommendation to be forwarded to the Director and the Councilmember and/or Committee with oversight.

Commissioner Matthews further inquired if the Senior Wellness Centers could open one half hour early. Upon conclusion of the discussion, she motioned for the Commission to recommend for Senior Wellness Centers open one on half our early, during inclement weather, to accommodate persons who might be left out in the cold and those persons be given access to at least the entryway of the centers. Her motion was seconded and approved with a majority vote. Commissioner Hicks requested for both recommendations to be made to DCOA's Director and then forwarded to the Councilmember and/or Committee with oversight.

Commissioner Bobo expressed it was his impression Director Newland agreed to speak with someone at DPR and the wellness centers about opening early. He also recalls when the centers were opened early in 2016 additional funding was required.

Underserved Seniors

According to the Chair, Long and Foster has a program that identifies seniors in D.C. and she asked, "Why don't we?" According to her, the housing committee has been talking about visiting seniors in their homes because there are a lot of people in DC that need services but are challenged with identifying who and where those seniors are located.

Commissioner Matthews asked if the commission could get a list of underserved seniors.

According to Commissioner Pridgen, such data does exist. However, the Commission may not get it, based on the information requested, due to privacy laws. But there is information you can get that is publicly available that may be beneficial.

Commission's Mission

Someone inquired if the Commission's focus was limited to seniors or if it also includes persons with disabilities.

Commissioner Bobo suggested the group include persons with disabilities, as part of the Commission's mission, because there are seniors who have disabilities. Indeed, "persons with disabilities and seniors are synonymous."

Commissioner Moore inquired if the group was taking on more than it could handle.

Commissioner Pridgen pointed out how the Commission is challenged with getting data and/or information on seniors and, therefore, thought it might be too much to try and get data on adults with disabilities.

Commissioner Matthews wondered if Councilmember Bonds would have access to the data (e.g. names, ages, etc.) sought by the Commission. However, the Chair thought perhaps the Commission should provide such data to Councilmember Bonds.

Commissioner Pridgen, before the next meeting, agreed to brainstorm and ask around for data on the unserved and/or underserved seniors.

The Chair established an ad-hoc committee for data. In addition to the Chair, Commissioners Pridgen, Bobo and Taylor agreed to serve as members.

Commissioner Lee implored the other commissioners to report the needs of fellow residents on their blocks because it “takes a village.” For example, she knows all of her neighbors and when she is aware of one of them needing something she’ll report the need.

In the interest of time, the Chair asked the group to first agree what the Commission’s work plan would be and then focus on how to carry it out.

DCOA’s Service Delivery Model

According to Commissioner Pridgen, she assumes there are a lot more seniors who need assistance but are not getting it. There may be more “reaching out” that needs to be done to reach the underserved and/or un-served.

Commissioner Matthews inquired whether DCOA would be able to get additional funding to address the un-served and/or underserved because DCOA may have a limited budget and may need additional funding to address the needs of the un-served and/or underserved.

According to Commissioner Hicks, DCOA prepares a budget and submits it to the Mayor. Once the Mayor decides the funding amount for each agency they agencies accept it; “you won’t find a Director who would disagree or contradict their boss.” The final budget, for the entire city, is agreed upon or approved by the council. The Commission can ask DCOA for data and make a recommendation that more dollars be put towards certain things. According to Commissioner Hicks, the Commission cannot legislate anything but we can make recommendations and that can be powerful if done correctly.

IV. Commission Committee Reports

The Chair inquired if there was a **governance committee** and whether someone was chairing the committee. No one knew the identity of the current chairperson; however, Commissioner Hicks shared that Sam McCoy served as the previous chairperson of the committee. He also recommended the Commission review the purpose of the committee and then decide whether to continue it. The Chair agreed to put the committee on hold.

Commissioner Pridgen is currently chairing the **housing committee**. According to her, the committee has met and is moving forward. The committee is looking at any issues dealing with seniors and housing. It will focus on seniors having safe, quality housing. One of the items the committee will focus on is the District Opportunity to Purchase Act (Act). The members recently reviewed it to discuss its applicability to seniors. And they discussed what, if anything, in the Act would help seniors. The Chair expressed the need for a charter for the housing committee. Commissioners Bobo, Moore, and Taylor are committee members.

The Chair called on the **education and employment committee**. Hearing from no one, she asked if anyone was interested in chairing it. However, M. Kirkwood advised her the committee was currently chaired by Commissioner Atkinson-Willoughby, who was not in attendance.

The **transportation committee** is chaired by Commissioner Hicks and there are three to four other commissioners who serve as members. Commissioner Hicks expressed his willingness to relinquish his chairperson role if another Commissioner were interested in serving as the chair. Commissioner Taylor agreed to take over and serve as chairperson. Additionally, Commissioner Matthews agreed to serve as a committee member.

Commissioners Bobo and Moore agreed to co-chair the **health and wellness committee**, which had previously been chaired by Ron Swanda, former vice-chair of the commission. Commissioners Matthews and Hair agreed to serve as committee members.

The Chair agreed to continue to serve as the chairperson of the **elder abuse and financial exploitation committee**.

V. Presentations

DCOA Update: Director Newland is conducting town halls at wellness centers and dining sites. She is soliciting feedback from seniors on the agency's state plan, which will be submitted in July. She will present her slides with the Commission at the next commission meeting.

The Chair invited Providence Hospital to present at the Commission's meeting next month. Also, in March 2018, she intends to ask someone to present on HIV/AIDS.

Commissioner Hicks offered Michael Coffman as a suggestion for someone to consider for a presentation on HIV/AIDS because he is a good person to work with regarding the subject. He also agreed to pass along Coffman's contact information to Commissioner Matthews. Commissioner Hicks has a friend that works at NIH who is assisting with a study on seniors and HIV. He will get information about it and follow-up with the Chair.

Commissioner Pridgen suggested this might be an opportunity to bring in and/or connect with the ex-officio members because it would be helpful to hear from them and engage with them. DCOA staff agreed to forward a list of ex-officio members to the entire commission.

Commissioner Bobo recommend that the DC Housing Authority be included among presenters and expressed his desire for a presentation from its representatives on how its addressing seniors' housing needs.

Commissioner Hair expressed her desire to hear something on health; and she would like a presentation on how to stop unwanted telephone calls.

VI. Ward Reports

According to the Chair, the Ward 4 mini-commission will hold its officers elections next month. They have a slate of officers they will present. Ms. Veronica Ingram, Ward 4 Mini-Commission, has been nominated to be the chairperson of the mini-commission. The Chair invited her this morning and she is here to find out how the Commission operates. She's been attending mini-commission meetings for a couple of years and recently accepted the nomination to serve as chairperson. The Chair expressed to Ms. Ingram the Commission's desire for mini-commissioners to serve on its committees.

Although the Chair inadvertently forgot to include mini-commissions on the agenda, she expressed the need for one in every ward because they are a great way to get information about the community.

Wards seven and eight, according to Commissioners Bobo and Taylor, are merging its mini-commissions. According to Commissioner Bobo, Ward 8 was active since the last official meeting. During the holidays, MPD hosted seniors from Ward 8 with a banquet recently; it was like a senior ball. MPD also hosted an event where officers passed out toys. Similarly, DC FEMS came out and gave out 100 plus turkeys to seniors. There was a celebration on the Spirit of Washing for New Year's Eve and it was a good turnout. Also, DCOA recently coordinated an awesome program with DPR and the Senior Zone; it was exceptionally well-received by seniors. It was an outstanding day for DCOA.

VII. Announcements/Public Comments

Commissioner Arnstein inquired who will do the Commission's presentation before Councilmember Bonds. The Chair stated she will represent the Commission and will share her prepared remarks with everyone. Her written responses are due to Bonds's office on or before February 2, 2018.

Commissioner Hair requested her mailing address updated to reflect the following address: 4136 2nd Street, SW, Washington, D.C. 20032

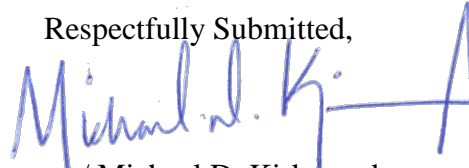
Similarly, Commissioner Arnstein requested his email address, ga304n@gmail.com, is his correct email address.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:47 a.m.

These minutes were recorded by Michael D. Kirkwood, General Counsel, D.C. Office on Aging, and were formally approved by the Commission on Aging on Wednesday, February 28, 2018.

Respectfully Submitted,



/s/ Michael D. Kirkwood

Michael D. Kirkwood

General Counsel

District of Columbia Office on Aging