

**District of Columbia Commission on Aging
Draft Meeting Minutes¹ for
Wednesday, March 22, 2017**

Commissioners Present

Romaine Thomas; Brenda Atkinson-Willoughby; George Arnstein; Barbara Hair; Charles Hicks; Grace Lewis; Clarence “Buddy” Moore; Carolyn Nicholas; Guleford Bobo; Shelia Dean; and Marguerite Pridgen.

Ex-Officio Members

Eric Riley, DCPL; Raka Choudhury, DDOT; and Veronica Longstreth, DOH.

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

Laura Newland, Executive Director; Tanya Reid, Executive Assistant; and Michael Kirkwood, General Counsel.

Guests Present:

Vivian Grayton, Seabury Resources for Aging; and Tinya Lacey, Seabury Resources for Aging.

Call to Order

Romaine Thomas (Chairwoman) called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

Inspiration

Chairwoman shared an inspirational quote about aging from “Disrupt Aging: A Bold New Path to Living Your Best Life at Every Age,” by author Jo Ann Jenkins, CEO of AARP.

Review and Approval of Minutes

The meeting minutes from the Commission’s February 22, 2017, meeting were reviewed and approved, upon the condition that Commissioner Brenda Atkinson-Willoughby’s name be included to reflect she was also in attendance.

Introductions

Chairwoman recognized the ex-officio members present and asked them to introduce themselves. The following members were present for the introductions:

1. Veronica Longstreth - ex-officio member from the Dept. of Health.
2. Eric Riley - ex-officio member from the D.C. Public Library.
3. Raka Choudhury - ex-officio member from the D.C. Dept. of Transportation.

¹ The final (approved) meeting minutes will be posted on Wednesday, April 19, 2017, the Commission’s next meeting date.

Presentations

A. Taste Testing Request: Jackie Geralnick, Public Health Nutritionist, DCOA

After approximately five years, a request for proposals (RFP) was issued at the beginning of the fiscal year for vendors interested in contracting with DCOA to provide meals at the wellness centers, community dining sites, and for the home delivered meals program. After evaluating the various proposals DCOA will conduct a “taste test” to help it determine its next meals vendor.

The agency is seeking seniors from each ward to participate in the taste test. Ms. Geralnick would like to have at least twenty (20) seniors total but the total number will depend on the number of contractors who present successful bids. Commissioners who are interested may email Tanya Reid, Executive Assistant, DCOA to express an interest. Also, lead agencies have been asked to identify seniors who would like to be on the tasting panel. The tastings will be conducted in mid-April.

Questions/Concerns:

Commissioner Pridgen: What has changed since the last RFP? According to Ms. Geralnick, changes regarding fresh fruits and veggies have been made. DCOA is requiring that fish be included on the menus weekly. If milk is on the menu there must be a non-lactaid alternative. For home delivered meals, the way DCOA is informed that meals have not been delivered has changed. Also, a low carb and/or diabetic friendly meal option is now required for home delivered meals.

Commissioner Lewis: Is there a nutrient profile? Yes. The federal dietary guidelines must still be met.

Commissioner Pridgen: In terms of past performance, do the organizations have to have previously served seniors? Are you giving priority to organizations that have previously delivered meals to seniors? DOCA does ask what experience companies have with seniors and working with District agencies; however, they do not receive preference because of it.

B. D.C. Public Library Update: Eric Riley, Coordinator for Community program and Public Partnerships, D.C. Public Library (DCPL)

Mr. Riley helps develop and coordinate programs for adults ages 20 years or older. Specifically, his role is to ensure they have a suite of age-friendly and accessible programs. Some of the highlights from Mr. Riley’s handouts include:

- Referenced various age-friendly programs that are delineated by Wards; the programs are hosted in various locations around the city.
- Referenced the February calendar for the Tenleytown branch.
- Have hosted a coloring program at the Washington Senior Wellness Center in Ward 7.
- MLK branch will be closed for 3 years. The interim space will be open in April.
- Tax services are being offered at various branches around the city.

Questions/Concerns:

Commissioner Atkinson-Willoughby: Why are there no programs at some of the locations? How is it determined where the programs will be? Are the large print and audio book collections in every library for seniors? Yes. Large print and audio books are available for seniors in every library. The handouts are a “selection” of various programs; they are not a representation of the full scope of programs that are offered to the public.

Commissioner Moore: Is the audio book program connected with the Library of Congress’s Talking Books program via the Center for Accessibility? Yes, it is.

Commissioner Nicholas: Are there any history/genealogy programs currently being coordinated? Programs have been conducted at the MLK branch. Also, there is information on the DCPL’s website the public may access. The workshops on ancestry and genealogy will resume when the staff at MLK is reassigned.

Chairwoman Thomas: Were the age-friendly programs coordinated with the Age-Friendly Taskforce? No. However, DCPL is in the age-friendly plan as a site for technology initiatives for seniors. DCPL is bringing its programs in alliance with the age-friendly plans but is not being asked to do so.

Chairwoman Thomas: What is your most urgent need at the DCPL in terms of seniors? Do you have enough resources to serve and work with seniors? Age-friendly activities are part of the adult services plan. So, any staff person works with all adults; we don’t have staff dedicated to seniors.

Commissioner Pridgen: In terms of broader outreach, do you play a broader role disseminating information to seniors? All neighborhood libraries have a general information area. DCPL doesn’t actively solicit that information; sister agencies and community partners are asked to provide us with that information.

Commissioner Nicholas: Is the Northeast library the only one that offers intergenerational programming? No. Adult programming is for all ages; and it is offered at other locations.

C. Update on Office on Aging- Laura Newland, Executive Director DCOA

Upcoming Events: Director Newland referenced the “Upcoming Events” handout provided to the Commissioners. She discussed the following events:

1. Centenarian Event- April 2017
2. Senior Symposium- No dated has been set
3. Ms. Senior DC- It will be held in June. DCOA will update a list and send it out to the Commissioners. Director Newland urged the Commissioners to attend because it is so much fun! Also, the agency is still looking for contestants.
4. Senior Picnic- June 29. It is hosted in conjunction with the Department of Parks and Recreation.

5. Mayor's State of District Address- March 30. The Mayor will highlight her investment in DCOA's Safe at Home program, primarily because the budget went from \$1 million to \$8.5 million.

Budget Town Halls: Mayor releases her budget on April 4, 2017. Director Newland conducted eight town halls last year. She will have two weeks from when the Mayor presents her budget until DCOA's budget oversight hearing. During that time, the week of April 10, 2017, the Director will host three (3) town halls. DCOA will bus seniors to three locations for the town halls; and lunch will be provided. Director Newland and her team will also try a virtual town hall for people who cannot make it to a physical location. Seniors will be able to submit questions virtually.

Director Newland will present her budget town hall presentation to the Commission. In order to do so, she requested that the Commission move its April meeting up one week because it is currently scheduled after DCOA's budget oversight hearing on April 25.

Outreach: Karen Dorbin, DCOA's Director of Communication, and Director Newland have been discussing ways to improve DCOA's communication and how to improve outreach to isolated seniors. They've been discussing DCOA's Ambassadors program and enhancements to it. It is open to anyone 18 years of age or older. Ambassadors will be given specific tasks to perform and will be trained throughout the year (e.g., emergency preparedness, etc.). Some of the trainings will still be held at DCOA and others will be held in the community. This is so we meet people in the community.

In addition, an Ambassadors Academy will be established; it will require more of a time commitment for participants as it relates to engaging the community. The academy will be a self-selected group of people. Director Newland will meet with them on a quarterly basis as another avenue for her to hear from the community directly. This will be a big push for DCOA in 2017!

Questions/Concerns:

Comm. Atkinson-Willoughby: How will the Ambassadors Academy be different than the Commission? Commissioners must be appointed and it is (roughly) two commissioners per Ward. The ambassadors program will be a lower threshold, in terms of being a participant and it will have a focus on training. Commissioners may participate. However, unlike the Commission, who shares with the agency, DCOA will share with and train the ambassadors.

Chairwoman Thomas: AARP introduced something similar. We'd hope that our mini-commissioners would be given the opportunity to participate.

Comm. Moore: Is the Symposium scheduled to be held at Dunbar again? DCOA has been having a hard time securing a location because there are year round activities in the schools, like summer school. Also, DCOA was asked not to hold it in August; so, now it's being held in June.

Comm. Atkinson-Willoughby: Does it have to be at a government facility? No. But the facility must hold at least 800 people, be accessible, and permit food to be catered or brought in.

Comm. Hair: We had a lot of difficulty at Dunbar; so, if you could find another place it would be better for seniors. According to Director Newland, overall, she and her team got positive comments from Dunbar.

Committee Reports

- A. Elder Abuse and Financial Exploitation** - Comm. Nicholas: The Elder Abuse Prevention Committee's sub-committee, Law 21-166 Financial Exploitation Enforcement, is moving forward and has scheduled a meeting with the OAG about enforcing the law.
- B. Health and Wellness** - No report.
- C. Transportation** - No report.
- D. Education and Employment** - Comm. Atkinson-Willoughby is excited the ex-officio members are on board because she'd like to meet with District agencies to discuss programs offered to seniors and discuss the mechanisms for informing seniors of their offerings. She'd also like to educate caregivers too. She hopes to have some recommendations in the fall.
- E. Governance** - No report.

Ward Reports

- Ward One - Comm. Moore: trying to sign-up as many people as possible in Ward 1 to register for Seabury Connector. The process is very complicated. Comm. Moore is in the process of compiling a questionnaire for persons who use the card to help establish a better process.
- Ward Two - Comm. Arnstein: The West End library is working well. There's a West End village that is also working well.
- Ward Three - No Report.
- Ward Four - Comm. Nicholas: There have been complaints about transportation and the loss of staff (two case managers) at the lead agency. Also, an oven is broken and hasn't been repaired. Councilmember Bonds has a new staff person representing Hispanic seniors who was in attendance at the recent mini-Commission meeting.
- Ward Five - Chairwoman Thomas: Vivian Grayton, of Seabury, is here and was asked to take back the concerns and work with Commissioner Moore regarding Seabury. The Chairwoman also shared information regarding a robbery scam involving accessing owners' cars via their keyless entry. Comm. Dean advised persons with key fobs to put them in the freezer to prevent the interception of the key fob via an application installed on a mobile device.

- Ward six - No report.
- Ward Seven - No report.
- Ward Eight - Comm. Bobo: An issue with transportation exists; however, it is not with DCOA. The lead agency is trying to collaborate with DPR. They have a short window, 10 am to 2 pm, to pick-up and drop-off people that we would like to have widened.

New Business

April's meeting date change to April 19, 2017. Comm. Arnstein motioned to move the meeting date to April 19, one week earlier than planned. Comm. Lewis seconded his motion. All ten commissioners present voted to hold the meeting on the April 19. No one opposed the motion.

The Commission's retreat will be discussed at the next meeting.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Announcements

According to Director Newland, the DC courts are warning residents of a recent telephone scam. Calls are being made that appear to be from the Courts but are not. A voicemail asks residents to make payments for money owed on outstanding court matters. The DC Courts never solicit payments by telephone. Therefore, residents are advised to be on the lookout and be careful. A handout, from the DC Courts, was provided.

Comm. Hicks: He shared information regarding an event commemorating the assassination of Dr. King. Provided the group with a handout.

Comm. Moore: There will be a book review on March 29 at the Bernice Fonteneau SWC. The author will be Carolyn Nicholas. Comm. Moore shared the flyer with the group.

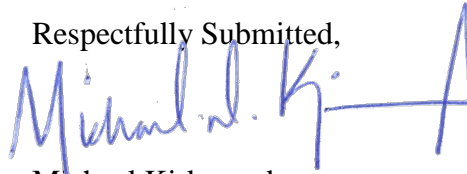
Thanks to Commission Moore, Carolyn Nicholas was interviewed by the Seniors Zone on Monday morning about the new law, Law 21-166 Financial Exploitation of Vulnerable Adults Amendment Act, and efforts to get it enforced.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:56 p.m.

These minutes were recorded by Michael Kirkwood, General Counsel, D.C. Office on Aging, and were formally approved by the Commission on Aging on ~~date~~ April 19, 2017.

Respectfully Submitted,



Michael Kirkwood
General Counsel
District of Columbia Office on Aging