

**D.C. Commission on Aging
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday March 24, 2021
10:00 a.m.**

Commissioners Present

Guleford Bobo, Chairperson; Carolyn Matthews Vice Chairperson; Gloria Whitfield; JoAnne Hersh; Grace Lewis; Maria Wilson; Barbara Hair; Barbara Lee; Hattie Pierce, JoAnn Hersh, Veronica Ingram, Heather Foote, Nancy Miranda

DACL Staff Present

Laura Newland, Director, Garret King, Chief of Staff, Tanya Reid, Administrative Support Manager, Lance Holt, Staff Assistant

Ex-Officio Members Present

Cesar Barreto, DDOT; Danilo Pelletiere, DHCD; Dr. Sheila Jones, DHS; Veronica Longstreth, DOH; Amelia Siemson, Councilmember Bonds Office; Nana Bailey-Thomas, DDOT; Mary Terrell, DOES

- I. **Call to Order**
Chairperson Bobo called the meeting to order at 10:05 am. He began the meeting with a moment of silence.

- II. **Review and Approval of Minutes**
The February meeting minutes were approved.

- III. **Presentations**
 - a. **Laura Newland, DACL**
Oversight Hearing will be May 14th at 12:00 pm. The agency has a new program called Senior Pet Connect. It is working with the Humane Pet Alliance, in connecting seniors with animals either in person or virtually. More information can be obtained by contacting the office via email at DAcl.communications@dc.gov. Also, if someone needs assistance pre-registering for vaccinations the agency can connect them someone to assist.

The Director stated that the agency is having conversations with seniors and providers about reopening. The Director would like the Commission's feedback. Commissioner Bobo asked when will the Congress Heights Center open. Laura responded that the center is on track with expansion and she is working with DGS for a time frame. Garret added that a permit has been granted, he will follow up with the agency and the Commission as to when the construction will begin.

Chairman Bobo asked about the meal delivery for the seniors. Laura responded that this will not change.

Vice Chairperson Matthews commented that in the Washington Post newspaper there was information about the Stimulus Debit Card and what to look for, those who have not received it.

IV. New Business

a. Housing Discussion

Topics that were discussed at the committee meeting:

- Increase in single family home capacity
- Increase in senior housing with some form of oversight: that protects the seniors from predators
- Suggestions regarding the Grandparent Program
- Separate entry with security for seniors that coexist in buildings with other occupants for seniors.
- Request the Office of the Attorney General to address safety at senior buildings. In the manner they are addressing apartment dwellings.

Vice Chairperson Matthews added that she would like someone from the Department of Housing to attend a Commissioner's Meeting. She questioned why there wasn't more accountability.

Chairman Bobo mentioned that the housing authority is getting out the housing business and they are issuing vouchers, they are getting away from building. A lot of the complexes have been turned over to private companies.

Commissioner Pierce wanted to know how a senior applies for vouchers.

Commissioner Hersh responded by saying there are different layers.

Danilo Pelletiere added that the difference between his agency, DHCD, and the housing authority is that DHCD administers several programs largely as financial institutions.

Chairman Bobo added that certain communities of the city are trying to avoid affordable housing communities by having the community declared as an historic area. The Office of Planning is addressing this.

Vice Chairperson Matthews added that the Real Property Tax issue is like a second mortgage for seniors.

b. Transportations Discussion

Chairman Bobo discussed the problem with the service bicycles that are being abandoned over the city and the lag time of not being picked up for a few weeks.

Nana Bailey Thomas responded that she will be on the issues that are being presented and will follow up.

Cesar Barreto mentioned that the companies involved in the scooter, bicycle programs if they are left behind and not addressed properly, as part of the terms and conditions with the company are eligible for discontinuation out of the program. If a scooter or bike is parked improperly, a service request should be submitted through 311. They do have a certain time frame to address this request.

Vice Chairperson Matthews mentioned that the traffic pattern for the Bernice Fonteneau Senior Wellness Center at 3531 Georgia Avenue NW needs to be addressed. Cesar was familiar with the area and would reach out to the traffic signal engineering division of DDOT.

Chairman Bobo attended a Transportation Committee meeting. He provided a contact at Department of For-Hire Vehicles, Tyren Stover, to come and speak on various issues like TransportDC, Senior Med Express and the discontinuation of Taxi-To-Rail program.

V. **Ward Reports**

Ward 1: Vice Chairperson Matthews has been receiving complaints about Property Taxes, they are pricing the seniors out of their homes. She suggested to Mayor Bowser and Councilmember Bonds that property tax bills should be treated like a utility bill, to be paid monthly.

Ward 4: Commissioner Wilson reported that a building at 4618 14th St. NW is proposed to be turned into 99 units.

Ward 5: Commissioner Pierce is working with Johns Hopkins on getting more vaccinations for the public. She also reported that there is a serious traffic issue at the senior apartment building at 3298 Ft. Lincoln Drive.

Ward 8: Chairman Bobo reported that vaccinations will be given out at Our Lady of Perpetual Health, the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center and the ARC.

Commission Whitfield reported that on March 23rd that she helped with vaccinations being given out at the ARC. 300+ people received their vaccinations.

VI. **Ex-Officio Reports**

Aimelia Siemson, DC Council: Stated Councilmember Bonds encourages everyone to get their vaccination. If anyone knows of someone needing help registering or getting to the vaccination site, they can call Councilmembers Bonds' office.

She also stated anyone who has concerns about housing or other constituent issues could contact Councilmember Bonds' office.

DC Health: Veronica Longstreth reported that as of March 19th, seniors 65+ living in the District, that there have been 50,308 people vaccinated or 60.2 percent.

DOES: Judge Terrell reported that she would forward the Commission on Aging's meeting notice to Ms. Robinson, so that she can provide an update on the other programs the Department of Labor is offering to seniors.

David Quick, DCPL: Reported that the take-out plus services will start the week of March 29th. This will be done by appointments. Call the branch for information. People will have access to 4 to 5 computers again. www.dclibrary.org/reopen. Also, at MLK library will start providing tax assistance. AARP is also providing some level of tax assistance at those branches. www.dclibrary.org/incometax

DHS: Dr. Jones reported that DHS continues to operate the PEPV program. There are 366 people between the three sites. There is also waiting list of 366 as people are moved off the list to permanent housing. They are also still operating the quarantine sites.

DPR: Cecily Mendie informed the Commission that there will be a Virtual Spring Program, registration began on March 23rd. These classes are being offered for March and April with the hope to provide some socially distant, in person programming in May. Here are the programs that are currently being offered: Three Virtual Functional Fitness Classes (Chair, Cardio Dance and Strength & Resistance) Jewelry Making Instruction, Quilting Instruction, Senior Book Club, Line Dancing, Mindful Meditation. To register, seniors must go to DPR.dc.gov. There will be fitness clinics that will begin in May, in collaboration with DACL to any questions reach out to Cecily.Mendie@dc.gov or 202-391-1374.

VII. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 11:28am.

These minutes were recorded by Lance Holt, Staff Assistant, DC Department of Aging and Community Living, and were formally approved by the Commission on Aging on April 28, 2021.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lance Holt

/s/ Lance Holt

Lance Holt
Staff Assistant
DC Department of Aging and Community Living