

**D.C. Commission on Aging  
Virtual Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday November 18, 2020  
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; Nancy Miranda; Hattie Pierce, JoAnn Hersh, Mary Taylor

**DACL Staff Present**

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

**Ex-Officio Members Present**

Councilmember Anita Bonds; Amelia Siemson, Councilmember Bonds Office; Vivian Guerra, DDOT; Danilo Pelletiere, DHCD; Dr. Sheila Jones, DHS; Veronica Longstreth, DOH

I. **Call to Order**

Chairperson Bobo called the meeting to order at 10:06 am. He began the meeting with a moment of silence.

II. **Review and Approval of Minutes**

October meeting minutes were approved without correction.

III. **Presentations**

a. **Laura Newland, DACL**

Since COVID-19, APS referrals have not increased, they remain steady. DACL sent out mailers to over 80,000 seniors in the District. The new elder abuse office in the Office of the Attorney Generals office has been busy. There has been an increase in fraud and financial abuse cases. Most of these referrals are coming from banks and financial institutions.

DACL sent out a half-page mailer to the District's seniors. The mailing list was consisted of seniors 60+ who were registered to vote and DACL's client list. The mailer included contact information for Adult Protective Services, Child Protective Services, and the Domestic Violence Hotline.

Director Newland addressed why there is a difference in age for services. DACL considers anyone 60+, this comes from the federal Administration for Community

Living age. DACL uses this age because they receive funding from the federal government.

The second month of FY21 has started. DACL is working with its grantees to setup for a successful fiscal year and to ensure that they remain engaged with their participants. There has been a lot of focus on virtual activities; however, on 20% - 25% of the participants are engaging.

For Thanksgiving, there will be a client calling list. The meal participants will get a special Thanksgiving meal. DACL is thinking ahead toward the other holidays.

Commissioner Matthews mentioned there are a lot of activities happening simultaneously and some are not comfortable or do not know how to sign on. She believes a hinderance is not knowing how to access the virtual platforms. Director Newland's responded that it may be time for a technology refresher course.

Chairperson Bobo commented that Ward 8 has a contest and that seems to encourage more participants to get online.

Commissioner Hersh said that Iona has a biweekly newsletter that offers technology refresher information.

Commissioner Matthews brought up that depression, mental health issues and other aspects are holding some seniors back. Director Newland is having the grantees do a mini assessment to see which participants need higher touches.

Councilmember Bonds noted that isolation is a factor. She offered to help in any way she could.

#### IV. **New Business**

- a. Chairperson Bobo reminded the commissioners they needed to attend at least 70% of the meetings to be compliant. Vice Chairperson Matthews reminded the Commission that they must complete the agenda set forth at the 2019 retreat.

#### V. **Committee Reports**

Commission needs to revamp the committees. There is currently no one on the governance committee. Hattie Pierce offered to work on the housing committee with Commissioner Miranda. If there are any commissioners interested on working on any of the committees contact someone already on that committee.

## VI. Ward Reports

**Ward 1:** Concern about the mental health of the seniors. Weatherization and LIHEAP programs are very successful.

**Ward 5:** Commissioner Lewis stated her church has over 2,000 members and the members contact each other to make sure they all are doing well.

Commissioner Pierce mentioned that she has taken on six seniors to help get them food and she makes calls at least 12 seniors. There are other members in the Fort Lincoln community who have done the same. She encourages other Commissioners to contact seniors.

**Ward 7:** Commissioner Taylor has been delivering food on Saturdays to seniors who cannot get out.

**Ward 8:** Chairman Bobo mentioned that Ward 8 Councilmember White will be taking donations for turkey give away on Wednesday November 25<sup>th</sup>. United Medical Center has a van that does COVID-19 testing senior centers. Several other Commissioners mentioned they'd seen the van throughout all wards.

## VII. Ex-Officio Updates

**D.C. Council:** Councilmember Bonds updated that 350 turkeys will be given away on Monday November 23<sup>rd</sup>. Councilmember Bonds suggests that everyone do whatever they can to reach out to someone, even if only for a few moments. It really helps people, even those who are not shut in.

She also mentioned that oversight hearings will begin in a couple of months. They will be done differently, this year. In addition to the numbers and other information that are normally requested, the Council will drill down to discover what can really be done to make a difference in the population we serve.

Councilmember Bonds asked if the Commission had looked into the type of housing seniors would like in their community. Is it senior only buildings, or seniors mixed in with other families, low-level townhomes, etc.? She also asked what feedback the Commissioners were getting for assisted living and parking.

Vice Chair Matthews said it was a combination of accommodations. More assisted living is needed for seniors. Chairman Bobo agreed with Vice Chair Matthews. He also discussed there being more housing units and not adequate parking. He mentioned there

should be some units dedicated to people with wheelchairs and similar devices. As a real estate agent, Commissioner Miranda has found that people are seeking multigenerational living, quality air circulation, and outdoor spaces. She stated she would follow up with Councilmember Bonds on housing/real estate.

**DHCD:** Danilo Pelletiere informed the Commission that the Emergency Rental Assistance is available, it is administered through the Department of Human Resources. You do not need to be evicted to receive funding. Residents can apply multiple times. The COVID-19 Housing Assistance Program (CHAP) can fund up to 80% median family income; however, most people are extremely low-income.

The Fortitude and Delta Towers will have a ribbon cutting ceremony. DHCD has closed on two senior projects, Abrams Hall, on former Walter Reed campus, and Spring Flats. DHCD is surveying the landlords as to what they need for assistance so that they can maintain their properties and mortgages. He will follow-up in November's meeting.

Danilo will send a list of senior projects that they have and send it to Tanya Reid.

**DOH:** Veronica Longstreth followed up on Councilmember Bonds' housing discussion, she noted that housing should be affordable and meet wheelchair regulation. She also discussed COVID fatigue, people are not as vigilant as they need to be. People in long-term care facilities have not seen their families in a long time. She reminded Commissioners they can go to [coronavirus.dc.gov](https://coronavirus.dc.gov) to find the available testing sites.

**DHS:** Dr. Sheila Jones discussed the need for affordable assisted living. There are many seniors who have no place to go. DHS along with other partners have established three sites where older adults who are medically vulnerable with no place to go can come, but it is only temporary. Some have home health aides and it would be great to have affordable housing with room for the home health aides.

**DDOT:** Vivian Guerra provided updates from the Age Friendly City Taskforce meeting. She mentioned DDOT was able to increase the timing of pedestrian crossings at almost 100 intersections. They focused on areas where older adults said there was not enough time to cross the street. They also engaged with the bicycle advisory council on older adult bicycle management about things such as adaptive bikes. WAMTA is looking to increase scooter corals around metro stations. They completed the pilot on "No Right Turn on Red", at this time it is unknown if it will continue. The Department for Hired Vehicles has added some local grocery stores within DC borders to the Transport DC program. DFHV through the Senior MedExpress program they added deliveries of meals and food items. The Circulator will continue to suspend fares.

VIII. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 11:47

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 December 16, 2020.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Lance Holt*

/s/ Lance Holt

Staff Assistant

DC Department of Aging and Community Living