

**District of Columbia Commission on Aging
Meeting Minutes for
Wednesday January 25, 2017**

Commissioners Present

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

Ex-Officio Members

Mary Terrell, DOES; Sheila Jones, APS; Eric Riley, DCPL; Raka Choudhury, DDOT.

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

Laura Newland, Executive Director; Garret King, Chief of Staff; Tanya Reid, Executive Assistant; Michael Kirkwood, General Counsel; Alice Thompson, Community Outreach Specialist.

Guests Present

Gail Kohn, Age-Friendly DC; Steven Walker, Mayor’s Office of Talent and Appointments

Call to Order

Chairwoman Thomas (Chairwoman) called the meeting to order at approximately 10:07 a.m.

Inspiration

Chairwoman asked the group if anyone would like to share an inspiration; there were none offered.

Review and Approval of Minutes

The meeting minutes from the Commission’s November and December meetings were reviewed; hearing no corrections the minutes were approved as read.

Presentations

A. Steven Walker, Director, Mayor’s Office of Talent and Appointments

After making brief remarks, Director Walker conducted the swearing-in of the following new Commissioners: Guleford Bobo, Shelia Dean and Marguerite Pridgen.

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

Director Newland mentioned that Commissioner Argüelles will not be returning to the Commission due to health complications.

Wellness Centers

Washington Senior Wellness Center recently hired a new project Director selected by East of the River (Lead Agency). East of the River is the interim provider for Congress Heights Wellness center. Also, Mary’s Center is the interim provider at Hattie Homes currently.

Town Halls

Director Newland asked the commissioners to attend as many town halls as possible because it's important for seniors to understand they have a voice in the community and have the attention of the agency.

Commissioner Moore received feedback from someone at Hattie Holmes that the town hall could only be attended by members of the wellness center. According to Director Newland, that was a miscommunication and she reiterated that the town halls are open to the community.

Needs Assessment

All of the commissioners were provided with a copy of the needs assessment. Director Newland reminded the Commission that a request for applicants to conduct the needs assessment was distributed to a broad network. George Washington University was the selected applicant. As a result of some of its findings, DCOA intends to enlist the assistance of the community to help identify isolated seniors and where they are located geographically in the District. Also, DCOA will ask the Commission to assist with this effort.

Laura briefly mentioned some of the assessment's highlights. For example, for nutrition, the assessment identified what a priority scale would look like for each program. In addition, one out of three seniors self-identified as having a disability. There are likely seniors who don't know they have a disability and, as a result, probably aren't accessing services beneficial to them. DCOA is considering partnering with other agencies to devise a campaign to help folks be more comfortable with disabilities.

Commissioner Willoughby suggested, for the second time, finding a champion for some of the issues to assist the agency with its communication strategy.

Commissioner Hicks suggested that the Commissioners connect with and establish relationships with their respective ANC commissioners.

Director Newland made an impassioned plea: "Help us reach even more seniors and help us identify what we can be doing better!"

Commissioner Nicholas mentioned a concern regarding Adult Protective Service (APS). Afterwards, a brief discussion ensued about APS and a provider's dissatisfaction with it. Commissioner Nicholas inquired about staffing issues at APS. In response, Dr. Jones, APS Director, stated she does not currently have any staffing issues because staffing has increased, as well as the educational level and professionalism of the staff. She also mentioned relationships with sister agencies that have helped improve APS's operations and/or outreach. Lastly, Dr. Jones shared that APS has data issues.

Commissioner Atkinson-Willoughby requested that Dr. Jones be invited to speak at the next meeting.

Questions/Concerns

Commissioner Arnstein mentioned broken sidewalks and asked how to get them fixed. Raka Choudhury, the DDOT ex-officio member of the Commission, agreed to follow-up afterwards with information from her agency regarding sidewalk repairs.

Someone asked if DCOA has a tentative date for the 2017 Senior Symposium. According to Director Newland, DCOA is holding a date in June and is considering using another school because of the extremely positive response regarding the use of Dunbar High School.

Commissioner Hicks encouraged that there be discussions held (at the Symposium) regarding what DCOA “does and does not do” in order to educate seniors about what they can expect from the agency.

C. Age-Friendly D.C. (AFDC) Report, Gail Kohn, AFDC Program Manager

Progress Meeting

2017 is the year in which AFDC will look back and see how much progress has been made since the initiative began. February 16, 2017, is the next task force meeting, which will be held from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., at 800 21st Street, NW. The meeting is open to the public with the goal of increasing the agency’s visibility and information sharing efforts.

Also, task force committee co-chairs can anticipate upcoming meetings regarding the progress of the initiative. In October the city will report to the World Health Organization (WHO) on its progress. This meeting will be the final meeting for the 10 committees to report on their progress.

Other places conducting the initiative have experienced a gap between their first initiative and their second one. Ms. Kohn is hoping to avoid a gap for DC’s plan.

AFDC is working with DDOT on sidewalk issues. Indeed, additional money has been allocated in the city’s budget to repair/replace sidewalks.

Community Consultations

Consultations are being scheduled to reach approximately 1,000 people across the city. The February 4, 2017 meeting will be held at the R.I.S.E. center for facilitators and note takers involved in the consultations.

Lastly, Ms. Kohn highlighted that every AFDC domain has a report in DCOA’s Needs Assessment. She suggests food security and caregivers should be added to future surveys to obtain information about these subjects. She also provided a handout listing the 12 AFDC areas of inquiry or domains.

Questions/Concerns

Commissioner Nicholas asked why elder abuse and financial exploitation were changed to “legal issues.” Ms. Kohn’s response was that it made these topics more inclusive and broader. Gail mentioned that the changes, unfortunately, are not as descriptive.

D. Mini-Commissions, Buddy Moore, Commissioner

Commissioner Moore presented the draft “Operating Guidelines” for the mini-commissions. According to him, the draft document is written in a way that permits each ward to decide whether to have a mini-commission. Commissioner Moore and Swanda will hold a special meeting between now and the Commission’s February meeting to make revisions to the draft guidelines.

Commissioner Moore drafted a document for Ward 1 only; it’s a two page document. However, it is not significant and therefore may be used as a template. It divides the wards into quadrants; for example, there are four quadrants in ward one.

Commissioner Pridgen suggested that ANCs are another way to conduct outreach to the broader community.

Commissioner Lewis asked if a meeting could be scheduled for the “special meeting” to revise the document. It was agreed the meeting would be held on Wednesday, February 15, 2017, (the day before the performance oversight hearing) at 10 a.m. February 8th was recommended as alternate date if the 15th could not be confirmed.

Committee Reports

A. Elder Abuse and Financial Exploitation-

Commissioner Nicholas gave out two (2) handouts: DCOA 2016 Needs Assessment and an article entitled “DC Agency Fails Elderly and Disabled Adults in Need, Report Says.”

B. Health and Wellness

Vice-Chairman Swanda mentioned the recent passage of the Uniform Paid Leave Act. Commissioner Atkinson-Willoughby shared that D.C. government is exempt from employees’ full leave or benefits being impacted by the passage of the law.

C. Transportation

Commissioners Moore and Hicks want to ensure that seniors are familiar with the Connector Card program managed by Seabury Resources. Seniors must be income eligible. Also, Lyft participates in the program.

D. Education and Employment

Commissioner Atkinson-Willoughby asked if she could reach out to other committee chairs for assistance and/or collaboration; it was agreed she was permitted to do so.

Additionally, Chairwoman mentioned that some of the committees may need to be restructured to allow for participation of new commissioners. Note: The chairpersons are listed on the agenda; and the Chairperson should report who is on their committees to the Commission as a whole.

Orientation for new members will be conducted; new members were asked to pass a note to Vice-Chair Swanda regarding their availability so an orientation can be scheduled.

E. Governance

No report.

Ward Reports

There were no ward reports.

New Business

Election of Officers: Commissioners Hicks and Hair will be heading up the election committee. Hicks recommended the Commission's new officers be elected in June. Waiting until June will permit new members to be oriented and/or to become familiar with the Commission.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Announcements

Alice Thompson, DCOA Community Outreach Specialist, invited commissioners to attend the outreach events DCOA conducts in the community. Specifically, she extended an invitation for the DCOA Community Health and Wellness Fair to be held on February 13, 2017, in collaboration with the American Kidney Fund at the Model Cities Senior Wellness Center. She provided each of the members with a flyer that included additional details.

On Monday, January 30, 2017, Ms. Thompson will be at the DC Jail to discuss services inmates may take advantage of upon their release. Also, on February 10, 2017, the Howard Dental School will be giving free dental screenings; Ms. Thompson can be contacted for details; however, all DCOA events are listed in the *Senior Beacon*.

Chairwoman mentioned that the Ms. DC pageant is on the horizon. She has been adopted to be a part of the Cameo Club, an imaging building club for seniors.

Commissioner Hicks mentioned various Black History month programs sponsored by the DC Black History Celebration Committee. He provided handouts for several of them. The kick-off event will be held at the African American Civil War Museum.

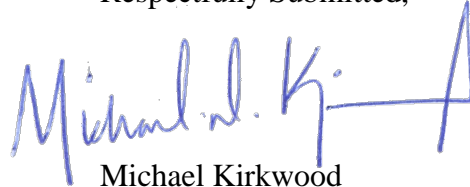
Commission Hair shared that she recently went to the MGM casino, played the penny slot machines and won \$10K!!!

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 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 February 22, 017.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Kirkwood". The signature is stylized, with the first name "Michael" written in a cursive-like font, and the last name "Kirkwood" written in a more blocky, but still cursive, font. The signature is positioned above the printed name and title.

Michael Kirkwood
General Counsel
District of Columbia Office on Aging