

**District of Columbia Commission on Aging
Draft Meeting Minutes for
Wednesday, September 26, 2018**

Attendance

Commissioners: Carolyn Nicholas, Chairwoman; Guleford Bobo, Vice Chairman; Barbara Hair; Charles Hicks; Barbara Lee; Grace Lewis; Carolyn Matthews; Mary Taylor; Nancy Miranda; Constance Woody

Ex-Officio Members: David Quick (DCPL);

Members of the Public: Vivian Guerra (DDOT); Irene Kang (DC Council); Ernest Postell, Ward 6 resident

D.C. Office on Aging (DCOA) Staff Present: Laura Newland, Executive Director; Tanya Reid, Administrative Support Manager; Darlene Nowlin; Community Relations Specialist

I. Call to Order

Carolyn Nicholas (Chairwoman) called the meeting to order at 10:05 am.

II. Review and Approval of Minutes

The meeting minutes from the Commission's May 2018 meeting were reviewed and approved with corrections.

III. Presentations

D.C. Office on Aging Update

Executive Director Laura Newland (Director) gave a brief update on the Arthur Capper fire. DCOA has been working with other social service and emergency agencies to work with the residents. 161 units out of 162 units were occupied; all occupied units were affected. People were transported to the hospital or skilled nursing facilities but with non-life-threatening injuries as a result of the fire. The Director is impressed with the coordination, the Mayor has made this a key priority, all of the agencies have pulled together. The District is out of the "Emergency" phase and is now in the second stage of "Recovery". The Department of Human Services (DHS) is taking the lead on the response. DCOA is providing lunch and dinner at the hotels for the impacted residents; case manager support, which include the high medical or at risk clients. Every household is being assigned a case manager to help identify and secure long-term housing. Case managers are working with residents staying at the hotel as well as those staying with family. Residents are not allowed back in the building; however, trained professionals are

prepared to go in and get what they can. The building management and owners are working to determine which units are safe to access.

Medical needs are being addressed by Department of Healthcare Finance and the Department of Health. Residents are getting their prescriptions refilled. DCOA is providing food to residents in temporary housing, but this is a short term solution. DCOA will work with DHS to find a long term solution. The Arthur Capper Community Foundation are taking donations, cash is preferable. One hundred percent of the donations will go to the residents. Serve DC is the point of contact for volunteerism. Volunteer opportunities will develop as the situation stabilizes.

Commissioner Hicks asked about housing availability for low-income and homeless seniors waiting for housing. How will the Arthur Capper residents be prioritized? Also, how are the seniors' mental health being addressed? The Director responded by stating that events like this are devastating to those directly affected and the community. Somethings are replaceable, and the District is working to replace those things. For the things that are not replaceable, the District is helping the residents with grieving and moving through the sense of loss. The Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) is also involved. The Red Cross, DBH, and trained Social Workers are working with clients. The Director told the DCOA staff to make sure no one is forgotten, but she knows that they will not be able to make everything better. The hotel placement is short term housing, residents will be moved into permanent housing. The Arthur Capper apartment building was privately owned and managed but was subsidized by the Housing Authority. The building's managers have not determined if the building is recoverable, or if will it be torn down and rebuilt. Currently, the plan is to replace the units with the same affordable housing unit. Placement for the displaced is priority. The Housing Authority is working to identify available units. It will be a long a process and take several months. With large scale incidents like this, the impacted residents will take priority.

Commissioner Lewis asked about renter's insurance. The Director reminded the Commission that the building was low-income. The District is working to identify which residents, if any, had renter's insurance.

Commissioner Matthews informed the Director and the Commission that ANC Commissioner Kent Boese is working with Councilmember Anita Bonds on Real Property Tax Relief. Commissioner Boese is requesting that all Senior Wellness Centers go to the Wilson Building on October 15, 2018 to talk with Councilmember Jack Evans and Councilmember Phil Mendelson about moving the bills related to property tax.

The Director updated the Commission on the transportation grant for Seabury. There are four components of the transportation grant (daily medical trips, group trips, ConnectorCard, and home-delivered meals). DCOA competes their grants on a schedule, FY19 the transportation grant was competed. The scoring criteria was preset before applications were received, the applications went through three review phases (independent reviewers, DCOA program staff review, and the Director's review). Cost is not the only factor when selecting a grant recipient, things like customer service and customer experience are also considered.

Seabury was awarded three of the components (group trips, ConnectorCard, and home-delivered meals); Yellow Cab was awarded the medical transportation component. With Yellow Cab seniors will be able to book appointments 24 hours/7 days a week; potentially book up to 30-minutes in advance, schedule their medical appointments earlier in the morning or later in the afternoon. The agency is working to make the transportation as smooth as possible but expects that some kinks will need to be worked out for the first three months, the Director encouraged the Commissioners to inform her if they hear of issues.

Commissioner Hicks asked how DCOA's partnership with Yellow Cab will be impacted by their partnership with Transport DC. The Director informed the Commission that the agency is aware that some seniors will choose to get to their medical appointments through DCOA's free program rather than pay \$5 through Transport DC. There are few differences in the two programs. DCOA's program is only for seniors 60+ going to medical appointments, and the \$5 Transport DC program covers a wider range of people ages 18 – 59 and it is not just for medical appointments.

The agency is not doing an aggressive outreach for the new program. Clients who received medical transportation through Seabury are grandfathered in. New clients will have to register. There will be stricter residency verification processes. The agency does not want the process to be overly burdensome, there will be a list of accepted documents.

Commissioner Lewis asked how seniors will be able to identify their cab, because there are often a lot of cabs at medical appointments. Director Newland will work with Yellow cab for a solution.

Commissioner Miranda asked if drivers will be equipped to handle disabled clients. The Director informed the Commission that Yellow Cab's drivers will be required to take appropriate training. Also, Yellow Cab is required to have a certain number of handicap accessible vehicles.

Commissioner Hicks wanted to put on record that the retreat was great. He also motioned to send a letter to the Council in support of the resolution that ANC Commissioner Boese is working on for tax relief for seniors. The Commission approved.

Chairwoman Nicholas asked if Councilwoman Bonds' Chief of Staff, Irene Kang, could explain the bill that Councilwoman Bonds proposed to change DCOA to a department. Irene Kang explained that the bill is currently "very simple." The original bill proposed by Councilman Barry changed the agency to a department and moved Adult Protective Service (APS) to DCOA. Councilwoman Bonds' bill does not include the APS portion, it changes the name and provides the authority. The bill also added in the mission statement from the DCOA website; the DC Code does not currently have a mission statement for DCOA. The bill also added in the prevention of elder abuse, exploitation, and neglect to the mission statement.

Commissioner Hicks motioned that the Commissioners send a letter to the Councilmembers in support of the bill transitioning the Office on Aging to the Department of Aging and Community Living. Commissioner Lewis second the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Irene Kang said there will be a hearing. The Commissioners will be invited to attend and provide their expertise. The change is a move to have people begin thinking differently about DCOA.

Chairwoman Nicholas asked for feedback on the draft 2018 Commission on Aging Retreat report. Commissioner Hicks reiterated that he thought the retreat was well organized and informative. He recommended working on the timing. He believes the Commission needs to stress housing needs of seniors. He made a recommendation to set a priority for housing for seniors, including homeless seniors and senior returning citizens.

Vice Chairman Bobo provided Commissioner Giacomini's update in his absence. Commissioner Giacomini agreed with document but was concerned about the length of the document.

Commissioner Matthews pointed out that the report Chairwoman Nicholas provided was very thorough. She thanked Chairwoman Nicholas for the work she put into the report. Commissioner Hicks motioned that the recommendations in the report be sent to the Office on Aging's Director, the Council, and the Mayor. Commissioner Matthews 2nd the motion, all Commissioners were in favor.

IV. Interim Leadership

Chairwoman Nicholas brought up the topic of establishing interim leadership after her last meeting in October. The Commissioners will table the discussion until the October meeting.

V. New Business

Vice Chairman Bobo pointed out the health and wellness needs assessment for Wards 2 & 3 in the Commissioner packets. This is an effort to find a way to meet the needs of the community without having a wellness center.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:12 PM.

These minutes were recorded by Tanya Reid, Administrative Support Manager, Office on Aging, and were formally approved by the Commission on Aging on October 24, 2018.

Respectfully Submitted,



Tanya Reid
Administrative Support Manager
District of Columbia Office on Aging