

District of Columbia Commission on Aging
Minutes of October 28, 2015 Meeting

Commissioners Present:

Romaine Thomas, Chairperson; Ronald Swanda, Vice Chairperson; Brenda Atkinson-Willoughby; Charles Hicks; Samuel McCoy; Carolyn Nicholas; Nathaniel Wilson; Constance Woody; Robert Louis Jackson; Janet Heisse; George Arnstein

DCOA Staff Present:

Deputy Mayor Brenda Donald; Laura Newland; Garret King; Tanya Reid; Brian Footer; and Antonette Dozier

Guests Present:

Heather Foote, Ward 1 resident; Joe Harris, Ward 5 mini-commission; Sadaf Ahmad, Alzheimer's Association; Vivian Grayton, Seabury; Kim Whatley, Chief of Staff for Attorney General Racine; Attorney General Karl Racine; People's Counsel Sandra Matavous-Frye; Arick Sears, Office of the People's Counsel; Jean Gross-Bethel, Office of the People's Counsel; Maria Acosta-Velez, Verizon; Leah Lumeya, Seabury Ward 6

Call to Order

Chairperson Thomas called to order the regular meeting of the D.C. Commission on Aging ("the Commission") at 10:15 a.m., October 28, 2015 at 500 K St. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.

Inspiration

Chairperson Thomas provided the inspirational quote by Dr. Ethel Percy Andrus, "It is has been widely said that whatever many may say about the future, it is ours – not only that it may happen to us, but it is in part made by us."

DCOA Update

Deputy Mayor Donald reported on what she had been doing the past few months serving as DCOAs Interim Director; learning more about the work of DCOA, how it fits into the broader context of partnerships with other District Government agencies such as Department of Healthcare Finance and Adult Protective Services, and how it's services can be more efficiently utilized.

She provided information on an upcoming program DCOA is launching in collaboration with the Department of Housing and Community Development. The program will be “nimble” and provide small grants to get home modifications such as chairlifts, grab bars, etc. to help individuals stay in their homes longer.

Deputy Mayor Donald provided an update on Age- Friendly City (AFC). She reported that the Mayor adopted AFC as one of her priorities. She also reported that all agencies involved with AFC must build it into their agency’s performance plan.

She provided accolades to DCOA’s staff for not having “missed a beat” despite the many changes that have occurred within the agency.

Deputy Mayor and Chairwoman Thomas gave a brief update on the search for the Executive Director. They reported that they could not say much other than that the Commission has played a greater role in the selection process than in the past and that they are still searching.

A brief question and answer ensued.

Presentations by Guest Speakers

Attorney General Karl Racine presented about his role as the District’s first elected Attorney General. He reported that the Office of the Attorney General’s charter is 1) to be the District’s Chief Law Officer (represent the agencies and provide advice to the Mayor and the Government), 2) act in the public interest at all times. This can sometimes be challenging; however he encouraged the commission to hold him accountable.

He stated that his office works to defend senior’s rights and protect seniors from elder abuse which generally refers to any known, intentional, or negligent act that causes harm or creates a serious risk of harm to an older person by a family member, caregiver, or other person in a trust relationship with the senior. He gave statistics of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation cases in the District. He stated that the office also assists senior adults who are victims of domestic violence and are seeking civil protection orders.

Attorney General Racine also reported that his office is focused on consumer protection. He stated that seniors are often targets of consumer fraud because they have spent their life “taking care of business” and are now collecting retirement. He fielded a few questions.

People’s Counsel Sandra Matavous-Frye gave an update on the Pepco/Exelon merger. She reported that Exelon is now proposing to the Public Service Commission \$78 million in benefits instead of their initial proposal of \$14 million. She discussed how the money will be split into six

(6) key provisions. People's Counsel Matavous-Frye reported that the \$78 million will not be recovered by consumers. A brief question and answer period ensued.

Mario Acosta-Velez gave a report on the work that Verizon was doing with the District's seniors. Verizon has a program called Senior Technology Training in which Verizon goes to senior centers, apartment buildings, etc. and trains seniors on how to use their smartphones, tablets and other wireless devices, even if it is not a Verizon product. The program also teaches seniors how to protect themselves online. A brief question and answer period ensued.

Approval of Agenda

The members of the Commission on Aging approved the Agenda and also approved the minutes without corrections.

Committee Reports

- **Health and Wellness:** Commissioner Swanda reported that the Nutrition Taskforce has worked to identify how to get Home-Delivered Meals to those with the highest need.
- **Elder Abuse:** Commissioner Nicholas reported that the committee had a great 1st meeting with a representative from 7D police department attending; however the 2nd had no participation.

Retreat Feedback

Commissioners agreed that overall the retreat was good. There was a recommendation to adjust time for the sessions.

Other Matters

Chairwoman Thomas reported that she and Vice Chairman Swanda met with the Chair of the Council, Phil Mendelson; Councilmember Bonds; and Councilmember Todd while on summer break.

Chairwoman Thomas thanked Tanya Reid and Antonette Dozier for their work and commitment for the Commission on Aging.

Commissioner Nicholas urged that the Commission pushes Councilmember McDuffie to schedule a hearing for the Elder Financial Exploitation bill introduced by Anita Bonds.

Due to the holidays, the meetings for November and December will be held on the 3rd Wednesdays instead of the 4th Wednesdays.

Adjournment

Upon motion and unanimous approval by the members of the Commission on Aging, the October 28, 2015 meeting of the Commission on Aging was adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

These minutes were recorded by Tanya Reid, Executive Assistant, D.C. Office on Aging, and were formally approved by the Commission on Aging on November 18, 2015.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'TR', is written over the typed name 'Tanya Reid'.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tanya Reid
Executive Assistant
District of Columbia Office on Aging