

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

Commissioners Present:

Romaine Thomas, Chairperson; Ronald Swanda, Vice Chairperson; Jacqueline Arguelles; George Arnstein; Don Colodny; Barbara Hair; Janet Heisse; Charles Hicks; Robert Louis Jackson II; Grace Lewis; Samuel McCoy; Carolyn Nicholas; Brenda Williams; Brenda Willoughby; Nathaniel Wilson; Constance Woody

DCOA Staff Present:

Dr. John M. Thompson; Darrell Jackson; Garret King; Gail Kohn; Tanya Reid; Deborah Royster; Eden Teklebrhane; Camile Williams

Guests Present: Barbara Klein, resident of Ward 3; Sadaf Ahmad, D.C. Alzheimer's Association; **(additional female guest name and affiliation?)**; Huey Battle, Washington Gas; Daminiq Branch, Washington Gas, Kelly Caplan, Washington Gas

Call to Order and Introductions

Chairperson Thomas called to order the regular meeting of the D.C. Commission on Aging (“the Commission”) at 10:05 a.m., on January 28, 2015, at the offices of Washington Gas, 101 Constitution Avenue, N.W.

Chairperson Thomas welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Commission on Aging and introduced new commissioners George Arnstein and Robert Louis Jackson II.

Presentation by Washington Gas

Mr. Huey Battle, Regional Manager, Community Involvement, Washington Gas, welcomed the members of the Commission on Aging to the headquarters of Washington Gas. He introduced his colleagues, Daminiq Branch, Volunteer Coordinator; and Kelly Caplan, Washington Area Fuel Fund Coordinator. Mr. Battle discussed the community involvement of Washington Gas, including (1) community outreach and engagement; (2) Washington Area Fuel Fund; and (3) corporate volunteerism.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Chairperson Thomas thanked Mr. Battle for providing meeting space at Washington Gas, and she also thanked Commissioner Brenda Williams for coordinating this event.

Approval of Minutes of December 17, 2014 Meeting of the Commission on Aging

The minutes of the December 17, 2014 meeting of the Commission on Aging were unanimously approved, as presented and without corrections, by the members of the Commission on Aging.

DCOA Update

Dr. Thompson provided an update on key activities of the Office on Aging. He discussed current and planned DCOA initiatives, including the intergenerational educational partnership with Jumpstart at Langdon and Noise elementary schools. He also discussed the “What a Waste” program designed to identify and reduce food waste in DCOA meal programs, while also producing compost used for fertilization. Dr. Thompson also stated that DCOA is overhauling its information technology database and developing a score card to monitor and measure the agency’s performance. Finally, Dr. Thompson reported that DCOA’s performance oversight hearing before the D.C. Council is scheduled on February 12, 2015, and that the agency’s budget oversight hearing is scheduled at April 23, 2015. He encouraged the members of the Commission on Aging to attend these scheduled hearings. A brief period of questions and answers ensued.

D.C. Age Friendly City Update

Ms. Kohn reported on the status of the D.C. Age Friendly City initiative. She reviewed the progress of this initiative, to date, and also discussed the income disparity among older adults in the District of Columbia. She reported that the District of Columbia has been selected by the World Health Organization as a pilot city to test key indicators that measure the effectiveness of age friendly cities worldwide. She also reported on the D.C. Age Friendly City business initiative and encouraged the members of the Commission on Aging to assist in identifying businesses that have adopted age friendly best practices. A brief period of questions and answers ensued.

Committee Reports

Chairperson Thomas reviewed the committee structure of the Commission on Aging and asked the commissioners to confirm their committee participation.

Housing

Commissioner Williams reported that the Housing Committee is focusing on housing needs of homeless populations, and the need for affordable housing for older adults. She invited all commissioners to participate in the committee’s activities.

Health and Wellness

Commissioner Swanda reported that the Health and Wellness Committee is focused on Medicaid issues, and on legislation that has been drafted that would limit payments by D.C. Health Link

for certain drugs. He also summarized conclusions about a recent study published on the health implications of divorce.

Transportation

Commissioner Hicks reported that the Transportation Committee is partnering with AARP to form a city-wide committee to evaluate transportation issues affecting seniors. He encouraged the commissioners to identify people in their respective communities who would like to participate in this initiative.

Education and Employment

Commissioner Willoughby reported that the Education and Employment Committee will develop recommendations based on the Age Friendly D.C. strategic plan, and will present them at the February 25, 2015 meeting of the Commission on Aging. She invited the commissioners to participate in this process.

Governance

Commissioner McCoy reported that Councilmember Anita Bonds has been appointed to serve as chair of the Committee on Housing and Community Development, which has oversight authority for DCOA. He also reported that, in December 2014, Mayor Gray legislation passed by the Council of the District of Columbia to create additional safeguards for persons serving as guardians in the District of Columbia.

Commissioner McCoy also reported that he has received complaints from seniors who have been advised that they are unable to engage in religious activities at DCOA senior wellness centers. Ms. Royster advised that federal regulations prohibit the use of funds authorized under the Older Americans Act for activities that promote a religious affiliation.

Ward Reports

- **Ward 4**

Commissioner McCoy reported that the East Rock Creek Village has been formally established and is recruiting members.

- **Ward 5**

Chairperson Thomas reported that she recently testified on behalf of the Commission on Aging at hearings pertaining to the Pepco/Exelon merger before the D.C. Public Service Commission.

- **Ward 6**

Commissioner Hicks reported on a planned celebration of African-American history in February 2015.

- **Ward 8**

Commissioner Hair reported that she is working with seniors in Ward 8 to develop a senior village to serve Ward 8. She also reported that the patrons of the Congress Heights Senior Wellness Center are pleased with recent improvements in the physical plant of the facility.

Adjournment

Upon motion and unanimous approval by the members of the Commission on Aging, the January 28, 2015 meeting of the Commission on Aging was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

These minutes were recorded by Deborah M. Royster, General Counsel, D.C. Office on Aging, and were formally approved by the Commission on Aging on February 25, 2015.