

**District of Columbia Commission on Aging**  
**Minutes of June 25, 2014 Retreat of the Commission on Aging**

**Commissioners Present:**

Romaine Thomas; Charles Hicks; Grace Lewis; Samuel McCoy; Carolyn Nicholas; Brenda Williams; Brenda Atkinson-Willoughby; Nathaniel Wilson; Constance Woody

**DCOA Staff Present:**

John Thompson; Camile Williams; Deborah Royster; Antoinette Dozier; Tanya Reid; Brian Footer; Sara Tribe; Darrell Jackson; Garrett King.

**Other Guests Present:**

The Honorable Anita Bonds and The Honorable Kenyan McDuffie, Council of the District of Columbia; Ronald King, Chief of Staff to The Honorable Yvette Alexander; Darryl Gorman, Director, Office of Boards and Commissions; John Cheek (Office of Boards and Commissions); Jennifer Valdivieso (Executive Office of the Mayor); Joe Harris; Sue Barnes; Laverne Stephens (Ward 5 mini-commission); Bettie Florence (Ward 4 mini-commission); Lamont Aiken, Constituent Service Director for Councilwoman Bonds; Jeanette Mobley, Chief of Staff to Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie; C. Buddy Moore (Ward 1); Judy Ponds; Robert “Michael” Vanzant (Ward 4)

**Welcome and Introductions**

Ms. Royster welcomed everyone to the June 25, 2014 retreat of the Commission on Aging. Ms. Royster thanked Ms. Amy Freeman, President and CEO of Providence Hospital for Providence Hospital’s kind gesture and generous hospitality of permitting the Commission on Aging to convene this meeting in the Ross Auditorium of Providence Hospital. Ms. Royster stated that Providence Hospital has a lengthy history of service to the poor and vulnerable populations – including seniors -- in the District of Columbia dating back to the Civil War. She also noted that the Providence Health Foundation has served with distinction as a DCOA grantee for many years, and currently manages the Model Cities Senior Wellness Center in Ward 5 and the Congress Heights Senior Wellness Center in Ward 8.

Ms. Freeman provided a warm welcome and greetings to the members of the Commission on Aging and assembled guests. She reported on recent accomplishments of Providence Hospital, including a major renovation and expansion of the hospital’s emergency room; recent

developments in the hospital's Center for Geriatric Medicine; and recent accomplishments at Carroll Manor.

Commissioner Williams provided words of inspiration, emphasizing the importance and value of practicing patience in daily living.

Ms. Royster introduced Chairperson Thomas and invited her to the podium. Chairperson Thomas welcomed the participants and introduced the members of the Commission on Aging.

### **Guest Speakers**

Chairperson Thomas welcomed Councilmembers Anita Bonds and Kenyan McDuffie to the retreat of the Commission on Aging. Councilmember Bonds summarized legislation recently passed by the Council of the District of Columbia, including the [Real Property Tax Relief Act of 2014], which exempts seniors 70 years of age and older, and who have owned their homes for 20+ years from the payment of real property taxes. She reported that this legislation was effectively repealed recently because funding to support this legislation was not included in the Budget Support Act approved by the Council of the District of Columbia on June 24, 2014. She urged seniors to remain vigilant and to continue to advocate for full funding for this legislative initiative in the future. She also urged the members of the Commission on Aging to continue strong advocacy efforts to support seniors in the District of Columbia.

Councilmember McDuffie acknowledged the participants, and expressed his appreciation for being able to be present, and for all of the efforts of seniors who have served the District of Columbia for many years. He stated that the progress and successes that the District of Columbia is currently experiencing is the direct result of all of the efforts of those who have lived in the city for many years, including seniors. Councilmember McDuffie also acknowledged the efforts of Councilmember Bonds to advocate on behalf of seniors, and noted that he supported efforts to increase the budget of the Office on Aging. He emphasized that the work of the Commission on Aging is extremely important and is a high priority. He urged the members of the Commission on Aging to continue their strong advocacy efforts on behalf of seniors in the District of Columbia.

Mr. Ronald King, Senior Policy Analyst to Councilmember Yvette Alexander, offered greetings to the members of the Commission on Aging and assembled guests, and reported that Councilmember Alexander was not present due to scheduled legislative hearings at the Council of the District of Columbia. Mr. King reported on Councilmember Alexander's recent successful efforts to identify an additional \$1 million in budget increases authorized by the Council of the District of Columbia to expand DCOA programs and services, including legal and transportation services, and recreational activities. Mr. King reported that Councilmember Alexander sends her congratulations to Mrs. Thomas and the Commission on Aging, and to Dr. Thompson, for their excellent advocacy on behalf of seniors in the District of Columbia.

Dr. Thompson reported on the activities of the Office on Aging. He thanked Mrs. Thomas for all of her efforts to organize an informative and productive agenda for the retreat of the Commission on Aging. He also thanked Councilmembers Alexander, Bonds, and McDuffie, and all of their staffs for their efforts on behalf of seniors in the District of Columbia.

Dr. Thompson stated that, in order for the District of Columbia to become an age friendly city, we must hold all stakeholders accountable. He also discussed DCOA budget increases from FY 2011 to FY 2014 that have been authorized by the Council of the District of Columbia, and emphasized that additional funding will continue to be needed in the future to enable seniors to continue to live independently in their communities for as long as possible. Dr. Thompson stated that it is also necessary to continue to overhaul programs and services offered to seniors in the District of Columbia to promote healthy and productive living for seniors, and to prevent social isolation. He stated that, although progress has been made, it is important for stakeholders to not become complacent. Dr. Thompson challenged everyone to continue moving the Commission on Aging in a positive direction, including the development of a strategic plan to guide the Commission in FY 2015 and future years.

Dr. Thompson acknowledged the DC OA team and thanked them for their efforts on behalf of seniors. He thanked all of the members of the Commission on Aging for their excellent work on the Commission on Aging and extended his best wishes for a successful and productive retreat.

Darryl Gorman, Director of the Office of Boards and Commissions, delivered a presentation entitled "Top 10 Things You Need to Know About Being a Commission Member." Mr. Gorman described the duties of the Office of Boards and Commissions, and also discussed the composition of the Commission on Aging. He summarized the role and activities of commissioners, and the requirements of the Open Meetings Act.

Commissioner McCoy discussed the operational framework of the Commission on Aging. He reviewed the enabling legislation for the Commission on Aging, and discussed the functions of the Commission on Aging, including serving as advocates for older persons in the District of Columbia, submission of an annual report to include recommendations; reviewing and commenting on the Annual State Plan; making recommendations on candidates for Executive Director of the Office on Aging; identifying cases of neglect and abuse involving older persons in the District of Columbia; reviewing legislation, regulations, and policies affecting older persons; and reviewing and commenting on the activities of the Office on Aging. He urged the members of the Commission on Aging to become familiar with the enabling legislation for the Commission on Aging.

Commissioner McCoy reviewed the committee structure that was established by the Commission on Aging in 2013: (1) Health and Wellness, chaired by Commissioner Ron Swanda; (2) Housing, chaired by Commissioner Brenda Williams; (3) Education and Employment, chaired by

Commissioner Brenda Atkinson-Willoughby; (4) Transportation, chaired by Commissioner Hicks; and (5) Governance, chaired by Commissioner McCoy.

Commissioner McCoy encouraged the members of the Commission on Aging to be visible in the community, including their respective wards. He also encouraged the commissioners to review the informational materials provided and to use it in responding to questions about the function and activities of the Commission on Aging and the programs and services provided by the Office on Aging.

Ms. Jennifer Valdivieso reported on recent activities of the D.C. Age Friendly City initiative. She reported that the Age Friendly City Task Force has created recommendations that will be incorporated into one document addressing all 10 domains of the Age Friendly City initiative.

Ms. Valdivieso reported that the draft age friendly strategic plan is scheduled for approval in July 2014. Thereafter, community meetings will be scheduled to receive public feedback on the recommendations, and the document is scheduled for final approval in September 2014.

Ms. Valdivieso also reported on the status of neighbor walk-through tours and encouraged the members of the Commission on Aging to participate in this process and to also encourage members of their communities to participate.

The members of the Commission on Aging participated in a strategic planning session. The commissioners formed three teams, focusing on (1) education; (2) housing; and (3) transportation.

Recommendations for transportation included:

- review how transportation services are scheduled;
- undertake efforts to increase public knowledge of transportation services provided by Seabury;
- increase focus on public safety, including pedestrian safety;
- identify funding sources to expand publicly financed transportation services, and review impact of funding current services (i.e., Metro Access) on available funding sources;
- increase available parking for seniors and persons with disabilities.

Recommendations for education and employment included:

- establish and strengthen employment opportunities for seniors on the basis of their prior experience, including education, employment, and volunteer experience; and
- improve collaboration among D.C. government agencies to increase employment and training opportunities for older persons.

Recommendations for health included:

- formalize a health advisory group with HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, STD, and TB Administration (HAHSTA);
- collaborate with DCOA to continue to expand health and wellness activities at DCOA senior wellness centers;
- increase community outreach and screening efforts for Alzheimer's and dementia, integrating programs and services across D.C. government agencies; and
- develop and disseminate a tool to use for medical visits and consultations to enable patients and caregivers to document important information and questions to be answered by health care providers.

After further discussion of these recommendations, Mrs. Thomas thanked the members of the Commission on Aging and all of the participants for their valuable contributions to the retreat of the Commission on Aging. She stated that the recommendations will be recorded and presented to the Commission on Aging for further consideration and approval.

The meeting concluded at approximately 3 p.m. Immediately thereafter, members of the Providence Hospital staff provided a brief tour of the hospital's newly renovated emergency room facilities.

These minutes were recorded by Deborah M. Royster, General Counsel, District of Columbia Office on Aging, and were approved by the Commission on Aging on September 24, 2014.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Deborah M. Royster  
General Counsel  
District of Columbia Office on Aging

