

Draft – May 29, 2014

**District of Columbia Commission on Aging
Minutes of May 28, 2014 Meeting**

Commissioners Present:

Romaine Thomas, Chairperson; Ronald Swanda, Vice Chairperson; Jaqueline Arguelles; Don Colodny; Barbara Hair; Charles Hicks; Grace Lewis; Carolyn Nicholas; Brenda Williams; Nathaniel Wilson; Constance Woody

DCOA Staff Present:

Dr. John M. Thompson; Tanya Reid; Laura Newland; Sara Tribe; Carissa Gilbert; Brian Footer; Gail Kohn; Camile Williams; Antonette Dozier; and Deborah Royster

Guests Present:

Ms. Vivian Grayton; Mr. Joe Harris; and Ms. Sue Barnes

Call to Order

Chairperson Thomas called to order the regular meeting of the D.C. Commission on Aging (“the Commission”) at 10:05 a.m. on May 28, 2014 at 500 K St. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.

Condolences

Chairperson Thomas informed the members of the Commission on Aging of the passing of poet, singer, and author Maya Angelou earlier this morning. Chairperson Thomas also noted the recent passing of Ms. Angela Carley, a resident of Ward 5. The Commission on Aging observed a moment of silence to honor the memory of these outstanding individuals.

Approval of Minutes

The Commission approved the draft minutes of the January 30, 2014 meeting with corrections noted. The Commission also approved the draft minutes of the April 23, 2014 meeting without corrections.

DCOA Update

Dr. Thompson introduced the following new members of the DCOA team: Sara Tribe, Associate Director, Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC); Brian Footer, Policy Analyst; Laura

Newland, Special Assistant for Community Living; and Garret King, Deputy Chief of Staff, DCOA. Dr. Thompson also introduced Ms. Carissa Gilbert, a rising senior at the University of Pennsylvania, who is working with Ms. Newland as an intern in the Deputy Mayor's office. Dr. Thompson thanked Mr. King for his leadership of the DCOA nursing home transition team pending Ms. Tribe's appointment as Associate Director, ADRC.

Dr. Thompson reported that, in the near future, DCOA will establish 16 new partnerships, including a program with Sibley Hospital for seniors with Alzheimer's disease; a program with Johns Hopkins University focusing on falls prevention; an intergenerational program; and a program on food conservation with the National Foundation to End Senior Hunger. Commissioner Williams emphasized the need to also develop programs focusing on homeopathic and preventive approaches to health care.

Dr. Thompson also emphasized the need to continue to expand and rebrand DCOA programs and services to reach larger audiences. In this regard, he noted recent budget increases proposed by Mayor Vincent C. Gray and approved by the Council of the District of Columbia that will enable DCOA to offer extended morning, evening and weekend hours at DCOA senior wellness centers. He also noted that an additional \$500,000 has been authorized for additional home support services. In addition to this initiative, Dr. Thompson noted that DCOA will upgrade the agency's IT system, and will also continue to expand transportation and meals services, including meals programs for home bound seniors.

Dr. Thompson noted that DCOA will provide support to the Department of Parks and Recreation for the June 5, 2014 annual seniors picnic, and invited all of the Commissioners to participate in this upcoming event. The members of the Commission discussed their concerns about transportation services that were provided by DPR for the 2013 annual seniors picnic. Dr. Thompson stated that he will follow up with DPR to obtain a list of pick-up locations for the June 5, 2014 annual picnic.

Age Friendly D.C. Update

Gail Kohn reported on the Age-Friendly City (AFC) DC Initiative. She reviewed the timeline for implementation of this initiative (attached), which includes: (1) the June 13, 2014 submission of recommended actions by city-wide task force committees focused on the ten Age-Friendly City DC domains; (2) July 20, 2014 distribution of a draft strategic plan for public comment; (3) the completion of neighborhood walk-throughs on September 6, 2014; (4) the adoption of a strategic plan by the Age Friendly DC Task force on September 18, 2014; and (5) implementation of the strategic plan commencing in October 2014.

Committee Reports

- **Health and Wellness:** Commissioner Swanda reported that the Health and Wellness Committee will focus on sexual health and wellness, including the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV. He stated that the committee will also continue to focus on expanding and upgrading DCOA senior wellness center to meet current needs and interests of seniors. Commissioner Swanda also encouraged each committee to coordinate with the corresponding domain of the Age Friendly DC Initiative to provide information and feedback for inclusion in the strategic plan that will be developed by the Age Friendly DC Task Force.
- **Transportation:** Commissioner Hicks reported that he attended a recent meeting sponsored by AARP focusing on accessibility for seniors, in public transportation, sidewalks, parking and other barriers that cause seniors to be isolated. He reported that this meeting provided valuable information and insight into these issues.

Ward Reports

- **Ward 1:** Commissioner Arguelles reported that she is working on a committee with the Department of Health to identify elder abuse and neglect concerns. She also attended an event in Ward 1 for seniors that included a fashion show that was very enjoyable for the participants.
- **Ward 4:** Commissioner Nicholas reported that the Commission on Elder Justice is advocating three bills that are pending before the Council of the District of Columbia to (1) expand the duties of the Office on Aging; (2) strengthen guardianship laws; and (3) increase penalties for elder abuse. She reported that she is working to form a coalition to advocate this legislation and encouraged the members of the Commission on Aging to support these legislative initiatives.
- **Ward 5:** Commissioner Lewis reported that the Ward 5 mini-commission recently conducted its final meeting before a scheduled summer recess. She reported that the Ward 5 mini-commission increased from three to five members since last year, and that its activities included coordinating guest speakers; working with the Department of Transportation to discuss transportation concerns; collaborating with the Office of Unified Communication to encourage the use of “Smart 311” by seniors; and working with the Metropolitan Police Department on community outreach issues. Commissioner Thomas noted that the May 7, 2014 Mayor’s Third Annual Seniors Symposium was very well attended and received by the participants. She also noted that budget town hall meetings for seniors are being held throughout the city.

- **Ward 6:** Commissioner Colodny reported that he is encouraging seniors in his neighborhood to use DCOA programs and services. He also recommended expanding services in Ward 6 to additional locations to serve seniors who do not live near the Ward 6 Senior Wellness Center. Commissioner Swanda reported that the Seabury Advisory Committee is evolving into a mini-commission for Ward 6, and that the committee continues to meet each month. He encourages seniors in Ward 6 to participate in this evolving mini-commission. Commissioner Swanda also reported that Councilmember Yvette Alexander will hold a hearing on health disparities among vulnerable populations, including seniors, on Friday, May 30, 2014 at 12 noon.
- **Ward 7:** Commissioner Woody reported that she continues to work with the Ward 7 Senior Wellness Center on issues that are relevant to its members.
- **Ward 8:** Commissioner Hair reported that Family Matters of Greater Washington recently sponsored a seniors luncheon. She also reported the Congress Heights Senior Wellness Center recently observed its 12-year anniversary and held a ceremony in honor of this occasion that was very well done.

Other Matters

Commissioner Hair reported that the televised Memorial Day ceremonies on PBS failed to reflect the diversity of persons serving in the U.S. Armed Forces, and she recommended that the Commission on Aging correspond with U.S. Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton to express the Commission's concern about this issue. Chairperson Thomas agreed to take this matter under advisement and, after investigating the relevant facts and circumstances, determine additional steps that may be appropriate.

The members of the Commission on Aging agreed to schedule a retreat on Wednesday, June 25, 2014 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Chairperson Thomas stated that further details concerning the location of this event will be provided in the near future after arrangements have been finalized. Dr. Thompson and Ms. Royster agreed to follow up to coordinate speakers and the location of the June 25, 2014 retreat.

The members of the Commission on Aging also agreed unanimously that the Commission will be on recess during the months of July and August, and will reconvene in September 2014.

Commissioner Hicks reported that officer elections are scheduled in September 2014. Chairperson Thomas stated that she will follow up with the Governance Committee and ask the committee to coordinate the elections process.

Adjournment

Upon motion and unanimous approval by the members of the Commission on Aging, the May 28, 2014 meeting of the Commission on Aging was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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

DRAFT