

**District of Columbia Commission on Aging
Meeting Minutes for
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

Attendance

Commissioners: Guleford Bobo, Chairman; Carolyn Matthews, Vice Chairwoman; Barbara Hair; Barbara Lee; Grace Lewis; Alice Love; Mary Taylor; Nancy Miranda; Hattie Pierce

Ex-Officio Members: Veronica Longstreth (DOH); David Quick (DCPL); Veronica Longstreth (DOH)

Members of the Public: Hector Rodriguez (DC Council); Ron Swanda (Former Ward 6 Commissioner); Jo-Anne Hersh (Ward 2 Resident); Katharine Dixon (Rebuilding Together); Riley Conrad (Rebuilding Together); Elizabeth Scott (Rebuilding Together); Erika Cooksey (Howard University Hospital); Ingrid Hill (Ward 7 Mini-Commission)

D.C. Office on Aging (DCOA) Staff Present: Laura Newland, Director; Garret King, Chief of Staff; Tanya Reid, Administrative Support Manager;

I. Call to Order

Guleford Bobo (Chairman) called the meeting to order at 10:10 am.

II. Review and Approval of Minutes

The meeting minutes from the Commission's January 23, 2019 meeting were reviewed and approved without correction.

III. Presentation(s)

D.C. Department of Aging and Community Living (DACL) Update

Director Laura Newland (Director) gave a brief overview of DACL's Performance Oversight Hearing. During the hearing concerns about space and potential waitlist were expressed; however, there were also a lot of compliments about the service providers. The overall tone was positive. DACL flagged a few items to follow-up on: figure out the waitlist for case management and the capital funding for the expansions and refreshers.

The Department's focus the Mayor's second term is ending social isolation and loneliness and figuring out how to create objective measures for that. Nothing will change about the current programming. The current programming is all related to getting people more engaged in the community; this will be a new way of looking at and evaluating the work. The agency is focusing on social isolation and loneliness because they affect a person's overall health. The health community is open and interested in working with the agency on this effort.

Commissioner Hair asked the Director why she could only use taxis the first fifteen days of the month to go everywhere; however, she could only use taxis for health appointments or to go to

work the last fifteen days of the month. The Director responded that the taxi program was TransportDC and the reason was cost. The only criteria to use the service is the client must be eligible for Metro Access; income is not a requirement.

Commissioner Miranda asked if intergenerational programming had been looked at to help with loneliness. The Director responded that the agency partnered with JumpStart which is an after-school reading program and seniors volunteered with the program. The agency also does Cupid Kid's – a program that allows elementary school kids to write Valentine's Day cards to homebound seniors and the homebound seniors can write a card back. The Chairman stated that the grantees also play a role with intergenerational programming. Congress Heights Senior Wellness Center is located next door to a daycare center and is one block away from a school. Both the daycare and the school come to the center for activities, where the seniors interact with the children. The Director commented that Congress Heights is unique; some wellness centers prefer not to do intergenerational programming.

Commissioner Lewis congratulated the Director on becoming a department. She asked if the change would allow senior programming at other District agency fall under "one roof." The Director responded that it would not. There are a lot of programs that affect seniors, and the agency would not be able to take it on and be effective. She used the example of sidewalks; seniors are concerned about sidewalks, but the agency is not equipped to handle those types of issues. There are advantages to having different agencies control different programs.

Rebuilding Together

President and CEO Katharine Dixon informed the Commission that Rebuilding Together had served Virginia for more than 30 years. Rebuilding Together's main goal is to keep people in their homes in a safe manner and in communities with "rich" amenities. The organization's core program goes into the home of low-income homeowners and provides free, safe, and healthy home repairs. DACL's Safe at Home program serves people ages 60+ and/or someone with a disability, and who are low income; Rebuilding Together serves people who are any age.

According to Ms. Dixon, the Mayor approached Director Newland about piloting a program that would help moderate-income seniors 60+ and people with disabilities. Safe at Home currently serves residents who have an income lower than 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI). The pilot will serve residents who have an income of 80% - 100% of the AMI. The criteria is similar to Safe at Home: ages 60+ and/or have a disability and own your home in the District. There is a three or four-page list of acceptable home adaptations (handrails, lighting, etc.), and there is \$6,000 cap.

The application process:

1. Client calls a number to receive an application
2. Rebuilding Together mails out an application
3. Client completes and returns the application with necessary financial documentation
4. Rebuilding Together schedules a home visit with the client and an occupational therapist
5. Based on the home visit, Rebuilding Together will send a bill to clients home

6. Based on the client's income, DACL will pay between 25% and 50% of the cost of the adaptation
7. The client determines if they want to have the work completed
8. If the client chooses to move forward, Rebuilding Together will send the vendor out to complete the work

Chairman Bobo asked if a client calls for Safe at Home but does not qualify, will they be connected to Rebuilding Together. Katharine Dixon responded yes.

Elizabeth Scott conducted a focus group with the Commission to help Rebuilding Together fine-tune the program. The Commissioner's provided comments such as having the application available online, making sure the vendors are from the District, and having occupational therapists who speak multiple languages.

IV. Committee Reports

Transportation

Commissioner Taylor attended a meeting where sidewalks were discussed, DDOT will be working on the timing of the traffic lights.

Housing

Commissioner Love attended several meetings at the end of January and the beginning of February. Topics discussed: Tenants Right to Purchase, Elder Housing Resources, Concerns about Providence Hospital and the new hospital coming to St. Elizabeth East.

Health & Wellness

The Chairman visited three wellness in the past month. He made note that Model Cities will be putting together a behavioral health bulletin board.

V. Ward Report

Ward 1

Commissioner Miranda met with Jose Gutierrez, a senior and founder of DC Latino pride. Isolation was one of the issues facing the LGBTQ community. Mr. Gutierrez needs help with citizenship classes and administrative help in completing the citizenship application.

Ward 4 and 8

Chairman Bobo stated that Ward 4 had a spa day in January and Ward 8 had one in February. Seniors can get hair cuts, nails done, etc. It is a day to promote wellness. At Ward 4 Councilmember Todd's office gave out a packet that had a variety of information.

Commissioner Hair informed the Commission that there is an active Village in Ward 8. The Village will be going on a trip in June. Overlook and Bald Eagle rec center partnered together and had a successful Valentine's Day event.

Ward 5

Commissioner Lewis informed the Commission that the next Ward 5 Mini-Commission would take place on March 16th.

VI. General Discussion

Chairman Bobo stated he was contacted by Commissioner Giacomini who questioned if apartment buildings had to be ADA compliant. DCRA informed Chairman Bobo that a building's inspection is based on when it was built. If the building had major renovations, it would need to be brought up to code.

Commissioner Lewis informed the Commission that Councilmember Todd wants to increase the Homestead Exemption to \$125,000 per year. If the legislation is passed, it would cost the city approximately \$40,000,000 per year. The Senior Advisory Coalition requested input from the Commission. Commissioner Love had concerns that it would take away some of the other initiatives that are currently in place. She believed the Council should reject the tax cut. Former Vice Chair Swanda did not believe the plan was a good idea. Vice Chairwoman Matthews suggested to the Mayor that property taxes be tiered.

VII. Public Comments

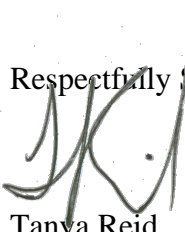
Hector Rodriguez stated that if the Commissioners emailed him the concerns about the property tax assessments, he would share them with Councilmember Bonds.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:53 AM.

These minutes were recorded by Tanya Reid, Administrative Support Manager, DC Department of Aging and Community Living, and were formally approved by the Commission on Aging on March 27, 2019.

Respectfully Submitted,



Tanya Reid
Administrative Support Manager
DC Department of Aging and Community Living