

<b>MEETING MINUTES</b>	<b>COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING</b>		
<b>Date</b>	August 11, 2020	<b>Meeting Time</b>	10:00 AM- 11:35 AM
<b>Chairperson</b>	Barbara “Reba” Cornman	<b>Meeting Location</b>	Zoom meeting

## Attendees:

<b>COMMISSIONERS</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>STAFF</b>	
Barbara ‘Reba’ Cornman, Acting Chair	√	Heang Tan	√
Allan Jensen, M.D.	√	Amanda Smith	√
Barbara C. Brody		Erika McClammy	√
Betsy Simon	√	Molly Martin	√
David L. Roth, Ph.D.		Raia Contractor	√
Elizabeth F. Johnson	√	James Macgill	√
Elizabeth Tanner, Ph.D.	√	Jose Jimenez	√
Bishop Dr. J. L. Carter		Christian Dambreville	√
Rev. Lee Michaels		Kaitlyn Ecker	√
Sarah Matthews	√	<b>EX-OFFICIOS</b>	
Hon Sharon Middleton, Councilwoman		Letitia Dzirasa, M.D.	
Stephanie Brooks-Wiggins		Chris Ryer	
Susan Francis, Esquire	√	Michael Braverman	
Thomas Cudjoe, M.D.	√	Michael S. Harrison	
Tracey Murray, DNP	√	Randi Walters, PhD	
W. Daniel Hale, Ph.D.	√	Reginald Moore	
<b>INVITED GUESTS</b>		<b>REPRESENTATIVES</b>	
Elizabeth Briscoe, MD Philanthropy Network	√	Sean Bloodsworth, DSS	
Lauren Averella, Civic Works	√	Holly Freishtat, Planning	
Michael Friedman, AARP	√	Alice Huang, Planning	√
Margaret Pittman, Morgan State University	√	Alice Kennedy, Housing	
Nichole Battle, GECO	√	Leslie Yancey, Rec & Parks	√
Stephanie Carideo, the Associated	√	Nicole Hart, Housing	√
Roshelle Kades	√		
Nikki Barr, Myerberg Senior Center	√		

## I. Welcome and Call to Order

Ms. Cornman called the meeting to order at 10:04 AM. She welcomed the Commission members and guests.

## II. Review and Approval of Minutes

Approval of the July meeting minutes was deferred since they were not included in the Commission packet.

### Report from Ageism and Racism Committee

On behalf of the Committee, Dr. Hale read the statement previously submitted to the Commission as part of the meeting packet. The statement was the recommendation from the Committee to the Commission. The Committee proposed that the Commission on Aging endorse and explore ways to support a research initiative led by Dr. Margaret Pittman of the Morgan State University School of Social Work that will involve exploring, listening to, and documenting the ageism and racism experiences of African American and other older adult Baltimore City residents. This research effort is tentatively scheduled to begin immediately following approval by Morgan State University's Institutional Review Board, which will be meeting in September.

Dr. Hale said that Dr. Pittman would lead this research effort as an independent project, at no cost to the City, and that it could potentially result in journal publications, conference presentations, and a report of findings to the Commission. After the delivery of the report, the Commission and the Health Department could decide if Dr. Pittman should be engaged as a consultant to assist in the conducting of public hearings.

Dr. Hale moved to support the Committee recommendation, seconded by Ms. Simon. After a discussion, the Commission voted unanimously in support of the Committee recommendation.

## III. Letter to Mayor Young re November Election

The Commission reviewed the draft letter to Mayor Young, stating the Commission's concerns about the barriers to older adults participating in the November election. Concerns raised included:

- Whether the general public would understand the process for applying for, receiving, and completing absentee and mail-in ballots.
- Whether post offices would process ballots in a timely and accurate manner.
- A need for a task force to address the need for community education to assist older adults in navigating the voting process, given the challenges created by the pandemic.
- Whether Commission members individually should contact the City Board of Elections.

Ms. Matthews moved to approve the letter to the Mayor from the Acting Chair, as drafted; Dr. Johnson seconded, and the Commission members voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

#### IV. Commission on Aging Annual Report

Ms. Cornman updated the Commission on the status of the Annual Report, which is mandated under the Commission's enabling legislation. A draft of the report had been included in the Commission's email packet. Ms. Cornman said that her plan was to finalize the report by the end of the month. She asked that Commission members provide comments on the draft and provide brief biographical statements to be included with the report.

#### V. Status of 2020 Census

Ms. Cornman noted that Census completion rates were lower in the City, compared to other jurisdictions. She asked how Commission members could be involved. Ms. Simon said that the Commission needs to be more visible, on this issue and others. She suggested that after each Commission meeting, the Commission issue a bulletin stating concerns and issues on which the Commission is focusing. Ms. Tan said that the staff would need to work with the Commission to ascertain how it could support this idea.

#### VI. Update by Deputy Commissioner Heang Tan

Ms. Tan updated the Commission as follows:

- At the time of the Commission meeting, COVID 19 cases were rising in the City. Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) staff are monitoring the status of assisted living and senior housing sites, watching for case increases.
- The Department is planning for flu vaccinations in the fall. This will be challenging this year. In the past the Area Agency on Aging has provided flu shots through the senior centers, which are currently closed due to the pandemic.
- The Area Agency has received conditional approval for the FY 2021 Area Plan from Maryland Department of Aging.
- Despite the Department's best efforts, the State cuts to the City's nutrition programs enacted last year will remain in effect for the fiscal year that began July 1.
- The Area Agency is preparing for Medicare Open Enrollment which will begin October 15. The SHIP program provides assistance to older adults needing help navigating Medicare, either to enroll for the first time, or to change their Medicare plans.

Ms. Tan said that the Health Department Aging team has now been working in the pandemic response for five months, and that the prolonged nature of the response is taking a toll. In addition, the Department, like other City agencies must now address employee furloughs and layoffs, due to the drop in City revenues. She is planning staff training designed to support the staff and to give them tools for self-care and resiliency. Ms. Cornman noted that

partnering nonprofits have also worked hard during the pandemic. Dr. Hale moved, seconded by Dr. Johnson to express the Commission's appreciation for the work of the staff and partners, and the Commission voted unanimously in favor.

## VII. Updates by Commission Members and Partners

Ms. Cornman relayed a question in the chat from Ms. Nikki Barr, Director of the Myerberg Center, who had to leave the meeting early: When would senior centers be allowed to re-open? Ms. Tan said that the Maryland Department of Aging had recently sent an inquiry to Area Agencies on Aging about this. She said that while center re-opening is in the future, the Area Agency was working on a plan that would allow for centers to address the needs of participants.

Ms. Liz Briscoe noted that Kelly Hodge Williams, Baltimore site director for PCs for People is advocating for computers for low income families, to assist with distance learning. Ms. Briscoe said that she was concerned that the tech concerns of grandparents raising grandchildren need to be included in the planning.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:35 AM.