



BALTIMORE CITY COMMISSION ON AGING

MEETING MINUTES

Title	COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING		
Date	February 18, 2020	Meeting Time	9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
Chairpersons	Barbara "Reba" Cornman Betsy Simon	Meeting Location	John Booth Senior Center 2601 E. Baltimore Street

Attendees:

COMMISSIONERS		Status	STAFF		Status
Allan Jensen, M.D.		√	Heang Tan		-
Elizabeth Tanner, Ph.D.		-	Omar McBee		√
Barbara 'Reba' Cornman, Co-Chair		√	Jim Macgill		√
Stephanie Brooks-Wiggins		-	Chrystle Samuels		√
Barbara C. Brody		-	Jose Jimenez		-
Lloyd H. Buckner		-	Lori Fagan		-
Bishop Dr. J. L. Carter		-	Beverly Harris		-
Susan Francis, Esquire		-	Nicole Foster		-
W. Daniel Hale, Ph.D.		√			
Elizabeth F. Johnson		-			
Rev. Lee Michaels		-			
Hon Sharon Middleton, Councilwoman		√			
Tracey Murray, DNP		-	EX-OFFICIOS		
David L. Roth, Ph.D.		-	Michael Braverman		-
Betsy Simon, Co-Chair		√	Michael S. Harrison		-
Sarah Matthews		-	Randi Walters, PhD		-
Thomas Cudjoe, M.D.		√	Reginald Moore		-
Rev. Lee Michaels		-	Chris Ryer		-
			Letitia Dzirasa, M.D.		-
INVITED GUESTS			REPRESENTATIVES		
Pamela Paige		-	Sean Bloodsworth, DSS		-
Allen Jones		-	Holly Freishtat, Planning		-
Dr. Margaret Pittman		√	Alice Huang, Planning		√
			Alice Kennedy, Housing		-
			Leslie Yancey, Rec & Parks		√
			Nicole Hart, Housing		√

I. Welcome and Call to Order

- **Co-Chair Reba Cornman** called the meeting to order at 9:11 AM.
- **Co-Chair Betsy Simon** announced effective immediately, she is stepping down as co-chair citing a capacity increase in the Z-Hap program and caring for family.

II. Review and Approval of Minutes

- **Councilwoman Sharon Middleton** moved to approve the minutes of the January 2020 meeting, seconded by Betsy Simon with the unanimously vote in favor.
- **Dr. Allan Jensen** mentioned that there are two separate bus stop issues that the Commission should have answers to: why stops were moved from in front of senior centers/housing and polling stations; citing that the Commission should have answers as to why those stops were moved.
- **Councilwoman Sharon Middleton** noted that incumbent Secretary Greg Slater's office should be contacted via local delegates and senators with those general questions that are affecting the entire city.
- **Co-Chair Reba Cornman** suggested that we make the invitation to MTA to present at the March meeting.
- **Co-Chair Betsy Simon** suggested staff reach out to Armstead Jones of the Baltimore City Board of Elections to provide voter education, including the process and things that have changed. She highlighted the general problems of accessibility of bus stops by older adults and the disabled in proximity to polling stations.
- **Alice Huang, Planning** stated that the MTA trying to better educate folks about the process of informing and shaping how bus stops are laid out in the city. And so one of the things is they're trying to get more awareness of like, this is the process of this is when we like want comments to come in.

III. Commission Vacancies

- **Co-Chair Reba Cornman** highlighted that there are vacancies on the Commission. She mentioned suggestions on how best to communicate with members who do not attend meetings to ask what their plans are moving forward.
- **Co-Chair Betsy Simon** expressed that calls to members to simply ask if they are okay or are in need of assistance should be the first step, followed by official letters to communicate about attendance and inquire their willingness to continue as members would be a way of communicating next steps for filling vacancies.
- **Thomas Cudjoe** agreed that calling members first, followed by official letters was a good way to communicate with the members. He additionally suggested that the Commission look into the possibility of having members to call in during the meetings. He noted that he did not know if making the call in procedure available would discourage in person attendance but the ability would increase engagement.
- **Co-Chair Reba Cornman** spoke of the legislation, citing that the Mayor may remove members who have missed 4 or more consecutive meetings. She expressed that move can

be “heavy handed” but she noted that that has been no communication with some of these members.

- **Co-Chair Betsy Simon** reminded that this body represents the Mayor and prior to any communication, the group gets directions from Deputy Commissioner Tan to be sure that as board members, the board be made aware of any stipulations about our reaching out on behalf of the Mayor.
- **Allan Jensen** agreed and added that candidates should be made aware of the requirements for persons to remain members on the board should be listed as well (meetings, responsibilities, duties, etc.).
- **Councilwoman Sharon Middleton** noted that a best practice of how the Commission can shore up its process was to look at the Women’s Commission and its website, application process and requirements. The Women’s Commission could assist with establishing a foundation of the process.
- **Thomas Cudjoe** suggested adding a representative of immigrant communities.

IV. Annual Report

- **Co-Chair Reba Cornman** stated that the commission should have an annual report wanted to the members to work on a report that we can be completed by the end of June, prior to summer break. The report should list the things previously discussed, the number of things that we care about and issues raised; including the content of our meetings and make note of our interest with hopes to making a more robust commission.
- **Assistant Commissioner Jim Macgill** stated that each year, the Division of Aging submits an Area Plan to the State which the Chair of the Commission signs off on. He believes that there was a concept that the Area Plan was also the Annual Report of the Commission but noted that he believes the Commission should have its own annual report.

V. 2020 General Assembly Legislation

- **Assistant Commissioner Jim Macgill** highlighted some of the current legislative bills, specifically one that are applicable to the Division and older adults in the City:
 - HB 0150 – The budget is processed through the General Assembly in the form of legislation. The Maryland Department of Aging has had their budget hearings before both the Senate and the House, requesting \$2 million to be distributed among three programs (Senior Care, Senior Assisted Living Group Home Subsidy Program, Congregate Housing Program).
 - HB 320 – This bill is designed to address the issue of abuse and exploitation of both older adults and vulnerable adults/adults with disabilities. Bills include deceptive trade practices, exploitation, etc., looking to make the penalties for this kind of crime more serious, and in some cases, pull resources like Attorney General's Office to address the needs of vulnerable adults.
 - HB 456 – This bill is to require Maryland Department of Health to begin to incorporate information about brain health, Alzheimer's disease and related

dementia into public health outreach and messaging. The bill has wide bipartisan support and is the right in highlighting the importance of brain health.

- HB 498 – The General Assembly passed a law to establish an aging in place grant program to be administered by Maryland Department of Aging with the Area Agencies on Aging, which includes nonprofits as eligible grantees but no funds were appropriated in last year's budget for it. The new bill would require the governor to include a million dollars in the annual budget for purposes of this grant program. It also amends the bill from last year's legislation, requiring 10% to go to the senior village program.
- HB 564 – This is a program that Aging administers (Senior Assisted Living Group Home Subsidy Program); with a current subsidy of \$650 a month. The bill wants to increase the subsidy to \$1,000 a month beginning FYI 2024 (the subsidy would be linked to the consumer price index and could increase as inflation increases).
- HB 1163 – This is a bill that got introduced last year, known as a Medicaid program was called the Community Options Waiver designed to provide home and community based services for people who would otherwise qualify for placement in a nursing home under Medicaid (a 20-year old program that has existed in one form or another). But with Medicaid waiver programs, you can cap the number of people who can enroll (approximately 3000 to 4000 people). This bill would raise the cap to 7500 and require the Maryland Department of Health to notify at least 7500 eligible candidates (most likely the wait list). It would also create a State task force to revise the State's Medicaid Waiver Programs. This bill would help expand the program to 7500 people and have a significant fiscal impact, so there is likely some real pushback, particularly from the Maryland Department of Health Medicaid program. If we at least get a task force to look at these waiver programs, I think that would be a good step in the right direction because these waiver programs could be a major factor in giving people the option to stay in their own homes, opposed to having to move into a nursing home.
- HB 1423 – This bill comes out of an experience that we in Baltimore City experienced where last spring, the Maryland Department of Aging notified us in April that they were going to change the funding formula for nutrition programs and reduce our funding for the fiscal year. This put us in quite a quandary to lose hundreds of thousands of dollars for a program. This bill requires the Department of Aging to provide up to six-months' notice of any changes to funding formulas before they are implemented, allowing for adequate planning and time to seek ways to sustain programs.
- HB 1471 – This bill is also a particular interest to Baltimore City and addresses the guardianship program. Baltimore has the largest public guardianship caseload in the state of Maryland at 190 individuals; with four case managers. Each case managers handles about 45 clients and our clients tend to have more complex needs than any other group of clients. This bill would cap the caseload for a case

manager at 26 clients per person which is more in line with national standards. This bill will have a fiscal impact as it will require this more funding so we expect some resistance to promulgating this bill.

- HB 0966 – This bill addresses some issues that actually were raised at the Interagency Committee on Aging as there are a number of unlicensed assisted living facilities that tend to operate in sort of an underground/shadow kind of economy. This bill will attempt to strengthen the penalties for those non-conforming practices where the Attorney General's Office could seek an injunction against providers operating without a license. It also introduces the concept of civil penalties for those who are make referrals to unlicensed assisted living facilities. Clients living in these facilities could be subject to abuse and very poor care, so this bill tries to address the beginning of the process.
- **Councilwoman Sharon Middleton** noted an influx of homes that operate without licensure and requested that the list of bills be disseminated as soon as feasible. She also informed the group that she is in a position to bring these bills supported by the Commission, to City Council and Maryland Board of Counties legislative group.

VI. Commission Roundtable

- **Co-Chair Betsy Simon** provided a brief recap of the Planning Committee: Some of the items on the Planning Committee's agenda were addressed at today's meeting (guardianship, vacancies). Another item discussed was identifying the responsibilities based on the City Code, and looking at vacancies based on the need. We realize what the Commission could be doing but we are finding few people to do it and that's when the vacancies become quite obvious. Dr. E. Fran Johnson and Dr. Pittman highlighted the need for the coordination of City agencies and external non-profits as those entities may possess the data to support some of the initiatives the Commission deem necessary to move forward on. The committee suggested inviting City agencies to the Commission meetings to present on how they serve the older adults of the City. Left to discuss is how to engage the Division's staff and other external organizations (faith based, Greek letters). Next meeting is scheduled for March 4, 2020.
- **Councilwoman Sharon Middleton** noted the importance of completing the Annual Report, especially during an election cycle where we have the opportunity to highlight the success and issues of the aging population in our City.
- **Alice Huang, Planning** informed the group that her is sending out their Census reminders at March 12, 2020 and is looking for places to hold roundtables.
- **Co-Chair Reba Cornman** suggested senior centers being a great place for round tables and discussions on Census 2020. She added some of the senior housing buildings that offered computer rooms, hospital locations, quality care, Affinity group on Aging, and the entire network. She asked that Alice Huang craft a statement that could to share with people with specific contact information.
- **Assistant Commissioner Jim Macgill** informed that the Division have a couple of vacant positions they are moving forward to fill (Chief of Client Services Assistant Commissioner for Operations and Senior Centers). Caregiver Conference is June 24,

2020. Speaking of Census 2020, computers are being delivered to senior centers to assist with that effort.

VII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 AM.