



ARLINGTON COMMISSION ON AGING

c/o Agency on Aging, DHS

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Meeting Summary September 20, 2021

PRESENT: Linda Kelleher, Chair; Jim Richardson, Vice-Chair; Cheryl Beversdorf, Kate Chutuape, Linc Cummings, Herschel Kanter, Cynthia Schneider, Juan Carlos Velazquez, Martha Villanigro-Santiago, Andrea Walker, William Way

EXCUSED/ABSENT: Chloe Burke, Delegate Alfonso Lopez, Naci Powell, Sophie Shen

STAFF: Maimoona Bah-Duckenfield, Jim Baker, Rachel Coates, Helen King, Deborah Warren

GUESTS: Yordanose Amanuel, David Ansell, Sharleka Ashton, Tom Daly, Katie Holmes, Claire Jacobsen, Audrey Kremer, Eileen McCartin, Joan McDermott, Jim Morris, Bonnie O'Leary, Mitch Opalski, Lori Pollari-Welbes, Jim Ruff, Michelle Thomas, Alistair Watson, Erica Wood, Wendy Zenker

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Kelleher called the meeting to order and asked guests to identify themselves via the chat function.

II. Approval of the July Meeting Minutes

On a motion made by Vice Chair Richardson and second by Commissioner Kanter, the minutes from the July meeting were unanimously approved as written.

III. Chair's Report/Executive Committee

- a. Chair Kelleher introduced Audrey Kremer, PhD, who is an applicant for one of the vacant Commissioner seats. Two additional vacancies for Commissioners are being recruited with outreach to the Arlington Coalition of Black Clergy and other key stakeholder organizations. The Commission voted to approve Dr. Kremer to the Commission on Aging and the County Board will formally approve at their September meeting.
- b. On a motion made by Commissioner Cummings and seconded by Vice Chair Richardson, a revision to the bylaws amending requirements from the previous wording "reside in Arlington County" to "reside or work in Arlington County" was unanimously approved. The revised bylaws were unanimously approved and will be shared with the County Board for formal adoption.

IV. Staff Reports

- a. Arlington Agency on Aging (AAA)
AAA Director Helen King began by commending Commissioner Cummings on winning a Gold Medal at the recently held Arlington Senior Olympics. AAA Staff have processed over 1,300 calls from residents since July to assist with rent, utilities and food. A pop-up farmer's market was held at Culpepper Gardens in August with plans for a return market visit during the fall.
- b. Community Supports & Coordination Bureau (CSCB)
Bureau Chief Rachel Coates reported that the County Board had approved the continuance of virtual meetings as the pandemic continues. Arlington now has more than 70% of all adults vaccinated with a 4.3% Covid-19 positivity rating. The Adult Day Program at Walter Reed Community Center returned to in-person programming during July and is planning a virtual Open House later in the fall for its growing interest list.
- c. ADSD Staff Report

Division Chief Maimoona Bah-Duckenfield reminded Commissioners that this month is Hispanic Heritage and that National Caregiver Month is in October. She introduced DHS Assistant Director Deborah Warren who noted that the Department had ramped up services in all its Divisions to meet increased needs during the pandemic. The new Marcus Alert Guidelines are in the final planning stages and will be used to set up new resources including additional staffing, a new medical transport vehicle and a secure database providing information to 911 call centers on residents and their family members who may require emergency mental health services instead of a police response.

V. Committee Overview of FY 2022 Plans

a. Housing and Community Supports

Commissioner Schneider reviewed current activities and goals which include: 1) Promoting affordability and accessibility; 2) Increasing services to assist older residents wishing to remain in a home of their choice; 3) Ensuring affordability of assisted living facilities. This last goal includes designating 5% of ALF and nursing home units as auxiliary grant units.

b. Legislative Committee

Commissioner Kanter noted that the Legislative Committee will be support NVAN on outreach to elected officials regarding sponsors on priority items for the upcoming Legislative session in January 2022. Priorities included permitting virtual meetings and public participation under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act rules, expanding tenant eviction protections, increased funding for VICAP and mandating paid sick leave benefits for direct care and assisted living and nursing home staffs. The Annual Legislative Forum held with the Alexandria COA and other community stakeholders is scheduled for November 4th.

c. Long-Term Care Residences

Ms. Bah-Duckenfield briefed Commissioners on this new committee formed in 2020. Committee members liaise with assisted living and nursing home staffs and residents—with a liaison still needed for Manor Care. A recent meeting included a presentation from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on licensing guidelines. A chair is still needed for this committee.

d. Positive Aging, Inclusion and Enrichment

Commissioner Cummings reviewed the four Age-Friendly Domains the “PIE” committee has focused on: Social Participation, Civic Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion and Outdoor Spaces and Facilities. He noted the 2021 meetings have included discussions on supporting disabled residents beyond ADA requirements, expanding digital equity for isolated seniors, how to start up inter-generational activities such as Fairfax’s *GrandInvolve* program, support for Volunteer Arlington and creating a new Walking School Bus program.

e. Public Information and Outreach

Commissioner Beversdorf noted the goals of improving interactions between residents/caregivers and ADSD/AAA services. Members are also working to establish a Senior Ambassador Program with a focus on increased outreach to minority residents.

Commissioner Velazquez reviewed efforts to update the Commission’s outreach PowerPoint presentation – including adding the new county logo – and participating in efforts to ensure that Covid vaccination planning covers underserved communities based on similar efforts established during the 2020 census count.

f. Transportation Safety and Accessibility

Commissioner Richardson outlined four areas under review by the committee including safety, accessibility, affordability and signage clarity. Joan McDermott acts as liaison with the County's Commission on Transportation. William Way coordinates with the Vision Zero staff. Jim Feaster monitors bicycle and pedestrian matters. Wendy Zenker monitors volunteer and public transportation services. The current pandemic has increased the need for volunteer drivers to assist residents with rides to medical appointments and rides to pickup curbside grocery and shopping orders. Commissioner Way's grant proposal to fund the placement of safety (See-Me) flags at designated crosswalks was approved and will result in 10 new safety installations throughout the county. The Committee's future will focus on creating senior-centric transportation maps and seeking medical transport improvements.

VI. Liaison Reports

- a. Age-Friendly Arlington: No Report
- b. Alliance 55+/Senior Adult Council: A written report will be sent to AAA staff.
- c. Alexandria Commission on Aging: No Report
- d. Arlington Neighborhood Village (ANV): Wendy Zenker noted that membership had increased during the past year. Recruiting for three vacant ANV board seats was currently in progress.
- e. Coalition to Improve Advanced Care (CIAC): No Report
- f. Commonwealth Council on Aging: No Report
- g. Dementia Friendly Arlington: Commissioner Villanigro-Santiago expressed her thanks to ADSD's Gelarah Bassiry for her assistance with ongoing virtual training sessions.
- h. Falls Prevention Alliance: No Report
- i. Northern Virginia Aging Network (NVAN): No Report
- j. Steering Committee on Older Persons: No Report

VII. Old Business

- a. Commissioner Schneider noted that the County Board had approved rules to permit conversion of residential units into hotel rooms. The Board also asked the County Manger to monitor and report back on the impact of this rule change on local housing.

VIII. New Business

Commissioner Villagnigro-Santiago noted the newly proposed "Commonwealth Connect" program to improve digital equity and affordability throughout Virginia. The complete report on this proposal can be accessed the via <https://commonwealthconnect.virginiainteractive.org/sites/default/files/CIT%20Documents/Commonwealth%20Connect%20Report.pdf>

IX. Announcements and Public Comment

- a. Arlington resident Philip Schneider asked the Commission to review current regulations on residential neighborhood lighting fixture spillage in an effort to reduce overly bright lights shining on private property. He noted that the City of Falls Church had enacted regulations to cover this concern and that Arlington County should do the same. Chair Keller asked Mr. Schneider to send a proposal to AAA staff for review and referred him to speak with County Board members directly on this issue.

- X. A motion to adjourn was made by Vice Chair Richardson and seconded by Commissioner Kantor. The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

NEXT MEETING:

Monday, October 18, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.