



COMMISSION ON AGING

c/o Agency on Aging, DHS

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MEETING SUMMARY

July 21, 2014

Approved at the September 15, 2014 meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lincoln Cummings, Kristi Dudash, Gordon Hasenei, Sheila Hess, Thomas Kerwin, Joan McDermott, Donald Miller, Mitchell Opalski, Andrea Walker, Laurie Young

MEMBERS ABSENT: Molly Davis*, Cragg Hines*, Patrick Hope, Lena Wang*, Erica Wood* * Excused

STAFF PRESENT: Maimoona Bah-Duckenfield, Meredith Eisenhart, Aaron Kocian, Susan Lane

I. **Call to Order:** 9:00 a.m.

II. **Quality of Life Issues Related to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Aging – Dr. Imani Woody, CEO of Mary’s House for Older Adults, an LGBT Residential Housing Program in DC (See “Overview: LGBT Older Adults” handout)**

- There are about 3 million LGBT older adults in the U.S. currently and the number is growing.
- Florida has the highest median age. Virginia is in the middle near the U.S. median.
- The 2010 Census reported over 14,000 same sex couples in Virginia.
- The largest sub-population in the U.S. is the LGBT population, as it cuts across all other demographics. Although as diverse as the total population, LGBT older adults have experiences and realities unlike those of the general older adult population: being more isolated as they often have no children or families, not seeking medical and other assistance due to the fear of discrimination if outed, higher instances of substance abuse and suicide. Dr. Imani founded Mary’s House, an LGBT friendly residence, to reduce isolation for its LGBT residents.
- Forty years ago, homosexuality was removed as a pathology in the DSM, paving the way for social acceptance of LGBT persons, starting inclusion of LGBT as a group in non-discrimination acts.
- LGBT persons come out earlier today than the current LGBT older adults did because of greater acceptance now.
- Virginia has no state protections for LGBT persons, who can be fired, not hired, not promoted, not served by businesses, or denied housing for the sole reason of being LGBT, but there are pockets of local protections across Virginia now. (See www.equalrightscenter.org for more information.)
- Definitions of words often used in regard to the LGBT population were discussed, also what can be done to provide a “Safe Zone” where people are comfortable being who they are without fear.
- Broader recommendations were offered to help service providers and advocates understand how to help LGBT older adults have a better quality of life.

III. **Minutes Approval:** Unanimously approved the minutes of the May 19, 2014 and the June 16, 2014 meetings as presented.

IV. **Chair’s Report (Joan McDermott)**

- Northern Virginia Aging Network (NVAN): At the July meeting, heard about IDEAL (Insight into

The Arlington Commission on Aging, a body of residents experienced in matters concerning older people, advises the Arlington Agency on Aging and the Arlington County Board on aging issues.

Determinants of Exceptional Aging and Longevity). Researchers at the National Institute on Aging on the Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Aging are exploring this question through the IDEAL study. (See IDEAL handout for results and information on study participation.)

- Capital Improvement Program (CIP): The County Board had a CIP public hearing. Ms. McDermott sent a letter to the County Board with the CoA's comments on accessibility in housing and public facilities, receiving a response from County Board Chair, Jay Fissette. The County Board approved the 10-year \$219 billion CIP for 2015-2024 on July 19.
- Other: Former Delegate Bob Brink is now Assistant Commissioner for Aging at the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services. The AARP Public Policy Institute and AARP Foundation are hosting a conference on September 2 at the Washington Court Hotel, 10:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. on housing America's older adults. Tom Fonseca, a former CoA member and Chair of the Commission on Long-Term Care Residences, is being awarded the 2014 Virginia Elder Rights Coalition Award on July 24.

V. Director/Staff Report (Maimoona Bah-Duckenfield)

- Aging and Disability Services Division's (ADSD) aging study is under way. Ms. Bah-Duckenfield and Ms. Eisenhart are starting interviews this week and will incorporate status of items in the Elder Readiness Plan. They plan to conduct three to four interviews per month.
- Law Day is scheduled for October 9 at Goodwin House Baileys Crossroads. A breakfast "meet and greet" will start at 9:30 a.m. A three-person panel on fraud and scams will begin at 10:00 a.m. There will be vendor tables with information as well.
- The Federal FY 2015 Area Plan for Aging Services is underway. It will be submitted to DARS for their approval.
- The Customer Service Center has recently done some hires and is now fully staffed.
- Ms. Bah-Duckenfield and Ms. McDermott are meeting to create a calendar for next year's presentations so people will know presentation topics ahead of time. Many of them will be service providers who formerly spoke at the annual public hearing.

VI. Committee Reports

- Legislative (Joan McDermott): Working on a pre-General Assembly forum to be held at Fairlington Community Center on November 7. The NVAN Legislative Breakfast will be October 1 instead of October 2.
- Membership (Linc Cummings): Interviews are complete. Recommendations will be sent to the County Board in August for appointments in September for terms starting October 1.
- Public Information and Outreach (Gordon Hasenei): Commented on a flyer from the Commission on Long-Term Care Residences. Worked on the PowerPoint. This year, The Beacon's Virginia 50+ Expo will be on Sunday, October 26, at Ballston Common Mall from noon – 4:00 p.m.
- New Media (Laurie Young): The Supportive Services Committee's Aging in Place suggestions were in the 55+ Guide. They are working on identifying which classes at Senior Centers teach one how to age in place and highlighting them days before the class on the CoA Facebook page.
- Senior Centers (Sheila Hess): Year's visits were completed. Ms. Hess will meet with Ms. Johnson on the annual report. Ms. Hess, whose term is ending, was applauded for her work on the committee.
- Strategic Planning (Joan McDermott): Completed reviewing the Elder Readiness Implementation Plan status. When they get results from the ADSD study, the committee will look at next steps.
- Supportive Services and Housing (Joan McDermott): Continued to modify the Aging in Place flyer, adding funding resources for accessibility modifications. Will post this on the CoA Facebook page.

VII. Liaison/Meetings Reports

- Alexandria Commission on Aging (Jane King): The Executive Committee is reviewing their strategic plan while the Commission is off in July and August. Their new Commission Chair is Bob Eiffert.
- Arlington Neighborhood Villages (ANV) (Andrea Walker): ANV has been granted its 501(c)3 status. Program Director interviews were completed and an announcement is forthcoming. They are working on a new board of directors.
- Community Development Citizens Advisory Council (CDCAC) (Linc Cummings): Awaiting proposals.
- Emergency Preparedness Advisory Commission (Kristi Dudash): Continuing discussion on the impacts transitioning from copper wire to fiber optics has on communications in power outages.
- Housing Study: (Joan McDermott): At their June 26 meeting, they learned that the County's supply of affordable housing could meet the needs of those qualified. The challenge is that there is no coordination of the supply and demand, so the availability of modestly priced units is limited. The Study is hosting a forum on September 22, 6:30 – 9:00 p.m. at Washington Lee.
- Long-Term Care Residences Commission: Two new Commissioners attended the July meeting, and heard the RAFT presentation. The awards from the County Board for direct care workers in long-term care settings went very well.
- Pedestrian Advisory Committee: Still needs someone to be the CoA liaison to this group.
- Senior Adult Council (Andrea Walker): It is expected that the Travel Director position will be filled soon. Candidates for the Director of Aurora Hills Senior Center are being interviewed.
- Steering Committee (Lena Wang): The July program on senior scams through mail fraud by Ray Campbell, an investigator with the U.S. Postal Service, was very informative. The September 19 topic is Mental Health Issues and the RAFT program.

VIII. Old Business:

- Assistive Technology (AT) Suitcase: The Senior Alliance approved funding of \$1,172. The Arlington Chapter of AARP has offered to receive and distribute the funds. Nancy Connors, ADSD staff, will hold presentations on the AT Suitcase. Presentations will start at senior centers in spring 2015, followed by presentations to other groups.
- Follow-up on the Federal Reports of Declining Senior Populations in Arlington and Alexandria: Actual numbers are increasing, though percentages of total populations may be decreasing. Ms. Bah-Duckenfield has not heard of any funding impacts, but will report if she learns of any.

IX. New Business:

- NVAN 2015 Legislative Platform: Ms. McDermott reported on the items in the draft platform. Content has been approved by NVAN, but final wording is still in progress. The CoA will be asked to vote on the final version at the September meeting.

X. Announcements and Public Comment

- Cheryl Johnson: The Office of Senior Adult Programs is working with Home Depot on a free Do-It-Yourself class for seniors to help with aging in place. The Senior Adult Council's 60th Anniversary party will be on October 24 at the Rural Electric building. ANV is receiving \$30,000 from the Department of Parks and Recreation for their Program Director position.
- Joan McDermott: Discussed a program on National Public Radio about a study they did on the best and worst terms to use for older persons.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 a.m.