



## COMMISSION ON AGING

c/o Agency on Aging, DHS

2100 Washington Blvd. 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Arlington, VA 22204  
TEL 703-228-1700 FAX 703-228-1174; TTY: 703-228-1788  
Email: arlaaa@arlingtonva.us

### MEETING SUMMARY

April 20, 2015

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Nels Andersen, James Feaster, Gordon Hasenei, Cragg Hines, Joan McDermott, Mitchell Opalski, Patricia Sullivan, Andrea Walker, Lena Wang, , Lincoln Cummings, Valerie Crotty, Laurie Young

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Barbara Favola\* Erica Wood\* \* Excused

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

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

II. **Presentation on Affordable Housing study – Russell Schroeder, Principle Housing Planner and Candice Rose, Commission Liaison:** Focus has been to look at needs of long-term residents wanting to age in place including challenges and solutions. Economic diversity as well as age are important. Renters over 85 years old have the highest cost burden in the County. Affordable housing supports the community and provides opportunity to age in the community if individuals need to downsize.

The committee has finished the review and proposed changes and suggestions in the presentation. Most housing stock is multifamily in Arlington. The County is losing affordable housing stock but is contributing more housing to the affordable housing stock. The future forecast is an additional 30,500 households will be in Arlington in 2040. 17.7% of housing stock will need to be affordable. The goal is to maintain the current housing access and current trend as the population grows with no major changes.

The implementation will include financing the affordable housing investment fund which generates \$3 of outside investment for every \$1 of county investment; land use – accessory dwelling ordinance changes to allow aging in place including caregiver suites; services – housing choice vouchers (section 8) and housing grants - 30% of vouchers are elderly households whereas 35% of housing grants are elderly households. 80% of rental assistance recipients live in committed affordable housing.

One identified issue is to ensure affordable housing is distributed geographically by including affordable housing in all of the community development plans.

As raised in the CoA letter, the low/moderate income funding for clients in housing communities such as Claridge house should remain as committed affordable housing. The policy intends to maintain these units as housing stock.

#### Questions and responses:

1. **Question (Joan McDermott):** Appendix B is an implementation schedule with agencies as leads for different parts and a timeline for each element. Is one person overseeing the plan?  
**Response:** Ultimately, it is the County Manager. However, much of this will be overseen by the housing division. Appendix B illustrates how the county will maintain priorities. Ms. McDermott requested the Commission go on record stating their concern that issues will be missed or lost if there is no one person in charge, particularly those issues related to aging.
2. **Question (Cragg Hines):** Will the county require universal design from builders?

**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.**

**Response:** There is currently no expertise on this issue. However, language from the state encourages universal design but does not require it. One would have to work with the builders and some believe it devalues the building/unit. There are some people who need it but do not want it.

3. **Question (Valerie Crotty):** Is there county tax relief for low income owners?

**Response:** Yes, there is and it applies to house and condo owners. There is some controversy about this because the county loses 4.32M per year due to tax relief. Some say it should be tax deferral rather than forgiveness. It is not a simple application process and some people don't get through it who should get tax forgiveness.

4. **Question (Joan McDermott):** How many staff look at accessory units and is there a need for additional staff? Where is the accessible dwelling unit revision in the plan? Will it be reviewed quickly?

**Response:** There are currently 10 staff and the county limits the number of additional accessory dwellings to 28 per year. The process of getting a permit to get an accessory dwelling might need to be reexamined. As the result of current policy, there may be a lot of illegal accessory dwellings. When the process was created eight years ago, it was probably overly restrictive. There is a lot of willingness to revisit the process. There is a public safety argument for making the process easier to be legal and then they can be inspected. There is a caretaker ordinance that is useful but many are unaware of it.

5. **General Comment (Linc Cummings):** We are doing well in addressing these issues. Perhaps not fast enough or hard enough but we are going in the right direction.

III. **Minutes Approval:** Unanimously approved the March 16, 2015 meeting minutes as presented with a request to correct Valerie's name from "ie" to "y". The Chair requested the notes from the public engagement forum be attached.

#### IV. **Chair's Report (Joan McDermott)**

- Congratulate Mitch Opalski: Received Lois Van Valkenburgh award in Alexandria for commitment to seniors in need.
- Thank you note from Susan Lane: Acknowledged Susan's note to the Commission.
- NVAN: Presentation on March 17<sup>th</sup> on Physician Orders for Scope of Treatment (POST) which improves end of life care throughout the system. This program goes beyond advance directives and addresses comfort measures. It requires communication to make it work throughout the community.
- Voting Machine Open House: Will be held on May 9<sup>th</sup> at 2100 Clarendon Blvd. The original plan was for people to look at four vendors under consideration. However, the state suddenly decertified the current voting system in April. A new system had to be adopted immediately. The open house will display the new system which will include a paper trail. The cost to the county will be \$750K for scanners. Ms. Crotty commented that the state made a significant change giving a new requirement for photo IDs to vote. This affects seniors more than others because some do not have driver's licenses. She recommended emailing the County's General Registrar, Linda Lindberg to offer the opportunity for people to register to vote and get a photo ID at the open house.
- Lee Center and Culpepper Garden articles – gave highlights on these two Arlington Connection articles and circulated to the Commission.
- Brenda Cox email: The Senior Information Fair at Lomax Baptist Church will be held on Saturday, May 2 from 9:00am -1:00pm on senior information and services.

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

- Thank you to the committee for role in the forum: There were 62 participants which is a record high for the event. Asked Commissioners to keep the message from the community alive in the sub-committees.
- Aging specialist position: AAA is interviewing for the position (0.5 FTE position) searching for experts in policy, nutrition and outreach on an as needed basis.
- Arlington County Board press release on FY2016 budget: Budget approval is April 21<sup>st</sup>. It does not include a tax rate increase, but the average home owner will still pay more in taxes. 2.6M in cuts will be accepted by the Board, but cluster care will not have a budget cut. Also, no cuts to the pedestrian bike program. \$725K to support CSB as well as additional animal control staff. Step pay increases are included, retirement fund will be fully funded and the live where you work grant has been added back into the budget.
- Transportation brochure: new inserts; page 4 – Metro travel training for older adults who want to learn to use metro rail or bus. This program is underutilized currently. Arlington Neighborhood Villages is in the brochure as well, transportation is the number one request at the villages. The Shepard center is also in the brochure.
- Volunteer appreciation week: (April 13<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>) Thanked Commissioners for their support and advocacy over the past year. Ms. Bah-Duckenfield gave Commission members an appreciation gift for their service of a credit card carrying case with the Arlington County logo on it. Ms. Crotty recognized Ms. Bah-Duckenfield's recent presentation at her condo highlighting all of the benefits the County provides to seniors.

VI. \*\*\*\*5 minute Exercise break led by Lena Wang

VII. Committee Reports

- Budget (Mitch Opalski): Maimoona Bah-Duckenfield provided an update on the budget earlier.
- Legislative (Joan McDermott): It did not meet in March but met on April 5<sup>th</sup>: NVAN supported bills that passed included: written notice of hospitalization observation status; home care workers will get a pay increase; \$500K increase for public guardianship program. County board candidates should be made aware of the growing older population in Arlington and should be asked questions at forums about aging. Questions can be provided by the legislative committee for anyone participating in forums.
- Membership (Linc Cummings): There are seven possible candidates, and interviews will be set up in April/early May.
- Public Information and Outreach (Gordon Hasenei): Finalized PowerPoint and all of the charts for presentation. Plans to meet with Ms. Bah-Duckenfield to give feedback and revisions before it is finalized. Also, created a logo and a sticker for cell phones.
- Social Media/Technology (Laurie Young): Many Facebook hits on the public forum. Captured pictures of Committee of 100 presentation on aging in place.
- Senior Centers (Andrea Walker): Visited Arlington Mill. It has a congregate meal and 55 plus programs. AFAC, ASPAN, and DHS are all there. It is a multi-floor building that has some challenges and benefits. Arlington Mill is growing. Their advisory board has requested a dance floor and a senior lounge. Walter Reed Senior Center director is being hired. Michael Peter of the Department of Parks and Recreation will discuss Senior Center fundraising at May's meeting.
- Strategic Planning (Joan McDermott): March meeting included brainstorming needs for Arlington older persons. Top 5 highlighted were: senior is at the table in planning, get word out on services, require universal design in county facility, address pedestrian issues and expand villages. AARP Livable Communities was a key topic. AARP will present on topic at the June meeting.

- Supportive Services and Housing (Meredith Eisenhart): Assistive technology program is underway. First presentation is scheduled for June 19<sup>th</sup> at Culpepper Garden.
- Transportation (Cragg Hines): Next meeting: June 9<sup>th</sup> and will focus on planning a senior-centric tour of transportation projects.

#### VIII. Liaison/Meetings Reports

- Alexandria Commission on Aging (Linc Cummings): Many similarities between Alexandria and Arlington, only real difference is Alexandria is smaller and does not have the resources Arlington has.
- Alliance for Senior Programs (Nort Beckerman): Free concerts started April 19. Their intention is to sponsor 55 plus programs and are finding more sponsors. They also funded the 55 plus assistive technology suit case.
- Arlington Interfaith Council (Joan McDermott): Meeting tonight to discuss whether they will disband because attendance is very low, has been in existence since 1966.
- Arlington Neighborhood Villages (ANV) (Patricia Sullivan): It is renewal time.
- Community Development Citizens Advisory Council (CDCAC) (Linc Cummings): Bus tour was held at the last meeting on affordable housing communities and services offered.
- Arlington Community Facilities Study (Mitch Opalski): Lots of background information. Planning phase has not begun yet. Have not kept pace in economic development, specifically with the vacancy rate. The new director of Arlington Economic Development from DC plans to turn things around.
- Emergency Preparedness Advisory Commission (Valerie Crotty): focus on fully funding fire and police. Looking for a permanent member from CoA to get word out and present to seniors. A suggestion was made that there be someone from the Senior Adult Council to represent seniors.
- Housing Study (Candice Rose/Erica Wood/Patricia Sullivan): See presentation above.
- Long-Term Care Residences Commission (Nels Andersen/ Lynwood Sinnamon): Met at the Capital Caring (CC) Hospice Inpatient Facility. Had a presentation from CC Director. It is a 15 inpatient facility with 60 staff members with palliative care services. Most services are covered by Medicare Part A. They do not turn anyone away because of the inability to pay.
- Pedestrian Advisory Committee (Jim Feaster): No report
- Steering Committee/Older Persons (Lena Wang): Next meeting - May 15<sup>th</sup> on Villages movement
- TRIAD (Maimoona Bah-Duckenfield): Is on hold.
- Transit Advisory Committee (Fran DeSilva): Update on Columbia Pike transit stations. Next meeting on April 28 at Arlington Mill. New Metro cars on blue line, next on red line. Steve Yaffe is looking for feedback on changes to ART and Metro services, exploring new services on Columbia Pike and Crystal City.
- Vertical Village (Mitch Opalski): Vertical Villages transferred to Volunteers of America (VoA) Chesapeake office. They have found funding for the director position through the summer and looking for additional funding through grants and a way to sustain the program. Eddie Rivas no longer has a physical office. Participation remains low, there are people who could benefit who are not participating in the program. Overall, not a lot of growth in the program. Five to six people use the grocery loop. Lots of time spent on referrals to county programs.

- IX. **Old business** Discussed community engagement forum –Words describing the forum included: energetic, imaginative, new people, fast paced, localized, and diversity. Some said it was hard to hear the facilitator. A suggestion was made to change the location - Have groups be in different rooms to help with those who are hard of hearing. Ms. Bah-Duckenfield will keep these suggestions in mind and explore Arlington

Mill as a location for next year.

- X. **New Business:** Real Estate Tax Relief Program: Ms. McDermott set the context. She shared that the current Commissioner of Revenue wants to take the program back from Economic Independence Division (EID). Falls Church and Arlington are the only municipalities where DHS administers the program and there is a \$25K state grant if the program is run by the Commissioner of Revenue. Ms. Bah-Duckenfield commented that the Aging and Disability Services Division (ADSD) has a close relationship with EID and collaborates with them frequently. ADSD staff always keep tax relief referral in mind when assessing clients. The Personal Advocate program has volunteers who assist individuals complete the tax relief program application. It is valuable for it to be housed in DHS to foster collaboration.

Amy Yorczyk, DHS Program Manager for Real Estate Tax Relief: Personal advocates will go to people's home to help gather documentation that is needed for real estate tax relief applications. Arlington homeowners 65 or older or permanently disabled are eligible for the program. The maximum income level is \$99,472; and max asset level \$344K not including the home. Max income for full exemption is about \$55K; income between \$55K and \$99K taxes can be deferred until the house is sold. If assets are between \$344K and \$544K the senior can defer payment but will have to pay all owed taxes when the house is sold. Cost of the program in FY2014 was \$4.32M. The program served 999 households; 707 had full exemption; 36 were deferral only. Everyone who receives tax relief gets an application sent to them the next year. After the first year, the application process is shorter. Residents only have to re-verify info every 3<sup>rd</sup> year. Once someone is approved, the Treasurer's office is notified. If an application is pending, the applicant does not need to make a payment until a determination is made.

**Questions and Responses:**

**Question:** For seniors carrying a mortgage, the mortgage company pays the taxes. How is this handled?

**Response:** A check would be sent back to the mortgage company who would rework the senior's payments.

**Question:** When was the criteria last updated?

**Response:** In 2008. The max income level is still higher than all other local jurisdictions; most local municipalities are at \$72K.

**Question:** Why is it under Commissioner of Revenue in other jurisdictions?

**Response:** There were some issues with services when it was moved. DHS knows about the services offered in the county and can make better referrals to programs such as Adult Protective Services and housing assistance and offer more services to potential clients. ADSD has a lot of information on clients served referred to tax relief and shares that information with EID.

Ms. McDermott offered three options to the Commission - leave at DHS, recommend to move to Commissioner of Revenue or study in more detail before giving advice.

**Commission Vote:**

Ms. Crotty made a motion that the Real Estate Tax Relief program remain at DHS and recommended there be more outreach. Mr. Cummings seconded it. Discussion on motion: Mr. Opalski moved to further research the issue. Needs someone or something from the Commissioner of Revenue, maybe a written statement from both parties. Two supported and six opposed. The motion failed.

Mr. Opalski moved to further research the issue. It was seconded. Eight approved. The motion passed unanimously.

**XI. Announcements and Public Comment:**

- White House Conference on Aging – rather than focusing on the limitations of aging older adults across the country they want to focus on the opportunity of aging.
- Plans are being made for a joint meeting of the LTCRC and the CoA in June.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 a.m.