

**District of Columbia Commission on Aging**  
**Minutes of November 27, 2013 Meeting**

**Commissioners Present:**

Romaine Thomas, Chairperson; Jaqueline Arguelles; Don Colodny; Barbara Hair; Charles Hicks; Ruth Nadel; Ronald Swanda; Brenda Williams; Brenda Willoughby; Constance Woody

**DCOA Staff Present:**

John Thompson, Executive Director; Veronica Butler; Darryl Jackson; Deborah Royster; Jamal Jones

**Guests Present:**

Sandra Mattavous-Frye; Lawrence Jones; Jean Bethel; Herb Jones; Linda Jefferson; Sue Barnes; Vivian Grayton; Joseph Harris; Guleford Bobo; Sue Barnes

**Call to Order**

Chairperson Thomas called to order the regular meeting of the D.C. Commission on Aging (“the Commission”) at 10:10 a.m., November 27,, 2013 at 500 K St. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.

**Inspiration**

Commissioner Williams provided the inspirational message; a poem entitled “Too Busy.”

**Approval of Agenda**

The members of the Commission on Aging proceeded with the Agenda (attached) with correction noted (“Commission on Aging November 2013 Meeting”), pending formal approval upon reaching a quorum.

**Presentation by Sandra Mattavous-Frye, Esq., People’s Counsel, District of Columbia**

Chairperson Thomas welcomed Ms. Sandra Mattavous-Frye, D.C. Peoples’ Counsel, and members of her team to the Commission on Aging. Ms. Mattavous-Frye thanked the members of the Commission on Aging for inviting her to speak, emphasizing that the D.C. Office of the Peoples’ Counsel (OPC) has a lengthy history of collaborating with the Commission on Aging to advocate on issues related to regulated public utilities that are important to seniors.

Ms. Mattavous-Frye stated that OPC represents consumers on utility issues, and that educating, informing, and listening to seniors is a critical role of OPC. She stated that OPC's key goals include: consumer empowerment; maintaining affordable utility rates; and promoting electric reliability, energy efficiency, and sustainability.

Ms. Matavous-Frye discussed the pending Pepco rate case, filed in March 2013, where Pepco initially requested a \$52 million rate increase, notwithstanding the fact that Pepco received a \$24 million rate increase in 2012, and a total of \$74 million in rate increases in the last four years. She stated that the requested rate increase in the pending rate cases translates to an increase of \$5 to \$6 dollars in a consumer's monthly bill, and that Pepco has failed to justify this increase. She stated that major issues include: (1) revenue requirement; (2) 10.2 percent rate of return requested; and (3) construction costs for reliability improvements. She stated that Pepco has reduced its rate increase request to approximately \$45 million, and that OPC continues to oppose Pepco's rate increase request for the reasons set forth above. Ms. Mattavous-Frye requested that the Commission on Aging approve a resolution in support of OPC's opposition to the pending Pepco rate case.

Ms. Mattavous-Frye also discussed the issue of illegal switching, known as slamming, by certain alternative energy suppliers, and noted that these companies have preyed on seniors by falsely promising lower utility costs. She stated that, after OPC filed a petition with the D.C. Public Service Commission (DCPSC) requesting an investigation of these practices, the DCPSC opened a new regulatory proceeding and conducted hearings, where more than 20 witnesses offered compelling testimony in a public hearing on this issue. Ms. Mattavous-Frye stated that OPC is currently exploring the possibility of negotiating a settlement with Starion Energy, a company that is the subject of certain complaints about slamming practices.

A question and answer session followed Ms. Mattavous-Frye's presentation. Following this discussion, the members of the Commission voted unanimously to approve a resolution supporting OPC in its opposition to rate increases requested in the pending Pepco rate case.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The Chair noted that a quorum was now present and without objection, the Commission approved the agenda.

The Commission unanimously approved the minutes of the October 23, 2013 meeting of the Commission on Aging.

### **Office on Aging Update**

Dr. Thompson provided an update on key activities of the Office on Aging. He stated that DCOA recently published the D.C. Alzheimer's State Plan, and that this is the first time that the District of Columbia has adopted a formal plan to address the needs of Alzheimer's patients, and

their families and caregivers. Dr. Thompson emphasized the importance of increasing public awareness of Alzheimer's disease and noted that the publication of the D.C. Alzheimer's State Plan was featured in a recent Washington Post article.

Dr. Thompson reported that DCOA is revising the Washington Elderly Handicapped Transportation Service (WEHTS) to provide a greater scope of services to seniors, including medical appointments and other transportation services to meet the needs of seniors for social interaction. He stated that transportation services are coordinated through DCOA lead agencies.

Dr. Thompson also discussed the need to upgrade, enhance, and expand DCOA senior wellness centers to meet current needs of seniors, including evening and weekend hours. Dr. Thompson invited the members of the Commission on Aging to make suggestions for future improvements to DCOA senior wellness centers.

In response to Dr. Thompson's comments, Commissioner Swanda reminded the Commission that at its October, 2013 meeting, the Commission's Health and Wellness Committee reported its intention to review the standards and best practices of D.C.'s wellness centers, and make recommendations. He observed that organizational efforts were currently underway. . Commissioner Colodny and Commissioner Hicks stated that there may be a need for more than one senior wellness center in each ward. Commissioner Willoughby suggested that DCOA might pursue foundation funding to improve senior wellness centers. Ms. Sue Barnes recommended further study of senior wellness models in other countries to establish best practices for the operation of senior wellness centers.

### **DC Health Link**

Commissioner Swanda reported that D.C. Health Link, the D.C. health benefits exchange, is performing effectively and encouraged anyone without health insurance to subscribe for health care insurance benefits.

### **Committee Reports**

- **Education and Employment:** Commissioner Swanda reported that Commissioner Willoughby has agreed to serve as chair of the Education and Employment Committee.

### **Ward Reports**

- **Ward 3:** Commissioner Nadel reported that IONA publishes a monthly newsletter that recently included beautiful artwork composed by seniors with Alzheimer's disease.
- **Ward 4:** Commissioner Willoughby reported that she recently hosted a focus group for the D.C. Age Friendly City Initiative at her home and that the participants reported that

this was a valuable opportunity to provide community comments and perspective on the D.C. Age Friendly City Initiative.

- **Ward 5:** Chairperson Thomas reported that tickets are available to the Mayor's Annual Senior Holiday Celebration on December 19, 2013 and that interested persons should contact Ms. Vadonia Mallory at DCOA. Chairperson Thomas also acknowledged the presence of Ward 5 Mini-Commissioners Mr. Joe Harris, Chairperson, and Ms. Sue Barnes, and thanked them for attending this meeting. Chairperson Thomas also thanked Ms. Vivian Grayton for her presence and support. Mr. Harris stated that four new members recently attended the meeting of the Ward 5 mini-commission, and that they are graduates of the DCOA Senior Ambassador Program.
- **Ward 6:** Commissioner Swanda reported that efforts continue to establish a mini-commission in Ward 6. He also stated that the Hayes Senior Wellness Center in Ward 6 is not convenient for all seniors who live in Ward 6, and that this is significant health and wellness concern. He encouraged interested persons to work with the Health and Wellness Committee to formulate recommendations for improvements to DCOA senior wellness centers.
- **Ward 8:** Commissioner Hair reported that a town hall meeting was recently conducted at the Congress Heights Senior Wellness Center, and that it was a successful event.

### **Adjournment**

Upon motion and unanimous approval by the members of the Commission on Aging, the November 27, 2013 meeting of the Commission on Aging was adjourned at approximately 12:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Deborah M. Royster, General Counsel,  
D.C. Office on Aging

