District of Columbia Commission on Aging

Minutes of September 24, 2014 Meeting

Commissioners Present:

Romaine Thomas, Chairperson; Ronald Swanda, Vice Chairperson; Jaqueline Arguelles; Don Colodny; Barbara Hair; Charles Hicks; Robert Louis Jackson II; Grace Lewis; Samuel McCoy; Carolyn Nicholas; Brenda Williams; Brenda Atkinson-Willoughby; Nathaniel Wilson; Constance Woody

DCOA Staff Present:

Dr. John M. Thompson; Tanya Reid; Gail Kohn; Darryl Jackson, Jr.; Camile Williams; Garret King; Eden Teklebrhane; Deborah Royster

Guests Present: Barbara Klein, resident of Ward 3; Joe Harris, Ward 5 Mini-Commission; Sue Barnes, Ward 5 Mini-Commission; Jackie Jordan, AARP; David Johnson

Call to Order

Chairperson Thomas called to order the regular meeting of the D.C. Commission on Aging ("the Commission") at 10:08 a.m., September 24 2014 at 500 K St. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.

Inspiration

Chairperson Thomas provided an inspirational message that each day is a gift that cannot be taken for granted; each one of us must do all that we can to be successful and to understand our purpose.

Chairperson Thomas informed the members of the Commission on Aging that she recently attended a celebration of life for the late Sue Whitney, a former member of the Commission on Aging, and she asked everyone to keep Ms. Whitney and her family in their thoughts and prayers.

Approval of Minutes of June 25, 2014 Meeting of the Commission on Aging

The minutes of the June 25, 2014 meeting of the Commission on Aging were approved by the members of the Commission on Aging with one minor correction. Mr. Swanda abstained from the vote because he was not present at the June 25, 2014 meeting of the commission on Aging.

DCOA Update

Dr. Thompson provided an update on key activities of the Office on Aging. He reported that DCOA recently held its first "Generations Community Festival" that was designed to reach a diverse audience, including older adults, younger adults, and children, for the purpose of encouraging everyone to engage in long term planning. Dr. Thompson also reported that DCOA has issued a proposed code of conduct to govern conduct at DCOA facilities, and that DCOA will revamp its information technology system to enable the agency to collect data more effectively for purposes of developing appropriate public policies. He also reported on recent staff developments, including the recent hiring of Dr. Peter Bacharach as a program evaluator; and the planned off-site two-day DCOA staff retreat on September 25-26, 2014. Finally, Dr. Thompson reported that DCOA has developed a collaborative effort with Sibley Hospital, Club Memory, which provides assistance to persons with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of memory loss.

AARP Update

Ms. Jackie Jordan reported on housing issues for older adults in the District of Columbia. She provided copies of a summary of a report on housing issues that was prepared by Harvard University and AARP. Ms. Jordan also stated that AARP looks forward to collaborating with DCOA to focus on long term care issues. Ms. Jordan also announced that a food drive will be held on October 3 and 4, 2014, and encouraged everyone to participate to assist D.C. residents who are at risk of hunger. Finally, Ms. Jordan announced that Jo Ann Jenkins was appointed as the new CEO of AARP, effective September 1, 2014, and Reverend Joseph Williams has been named the new President of AARP DC.

D.C. Age Friendly City Update

Ms. Gail Kohn reported on the progress of the D.C. Age Friendly City Initiative. She reported that a draft of the strategic plan will be completed by October 14, 2014. She reported that initiatives going forward include: (1) emergency preparedness and resilience; (2) business initiative to identify best practices for an age-friendly city; and (3) agency performance plans to implement D.C. Age Friendly City Initiative and ensure that all D.C. government activities are coordinated effectively with D.C. Age Friendly City Initiative.

Discussion on Commission on Aging Retreat and Recommendations

Chairperson Thomas thanked Dr. Thompson and the DCOA staff for their support of the June 25, 2014 retreat of the Commission on Aging. She asked the members of the Commission to consider the recommendations made at the retreat and additional actions that can be taken.

Committee Reports

Housing

Commissioner Williams referenced the AARP Executive Summary on housing issues and emphasized the need for vigilant action by the Commission on Aging to advocate more affordable housing for older persons in the District of Columbia.

Health and Wellness

Commissioner Swanda reported that the Committee on Health and Wellness is working on HIV prevention issues.

Transportation

Commissioner Hicks emphasized that transportation is a very important issue to older persons and lower income persons, and that it also affects everyone. He noted that the issue of transportation also includes walkability issues, and he encouraged a holistic approach that takes into account the transportation needs of the entire community.

Education and Employment

Commissioner Willoughby invited members of the Commission to participate on the Education and Employment Committee. She reported that she is working with the Age Friendly City D.C. Initiative to identify employment and educational opportunities for older adults, and that the committee will propose strategies to DCOA.

Governance

Commissioner McCoy reported that Councilmember Bonds updated the members of the Commission on Aging on the real property tax exemption legislation that was passed by the Council earlier in 2014, and stated that she was disappointed that the Council did not fund this legislation. Commissioner McCoy stated that he is not sure whether Councilmember Bonds will re-introduce this legislation.

Commissioner McCoy reported that the terms of some of the members of the Commission on Aging have expired or will expire in the near future. He also reported that, according to the Commission's Rules of Procedure, the election of officers of the Commission on Aging will need to be scheduled in the near future.

Elder Abuse and Financial Exploitation

Commissioner Hicks moved to establish a new committee of the Commission on Aging focused on the prevention of elder abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation and, after a brief discussion,

the Commission voted unanimously to establish this committee. Chairperson Thomas appointed Commissioner Nicholas to serve as chair of this committee, with Commissioners Wilson, Woody, and Colodny also serving as members. Chairperson Thomas asked the Committee on Elder Abuse and Financial Exploitation to draft a proposed mission and charter, and to also propose goals and objectives for the committee.

Ward Reports

- **Ward 6:**

  Commissioner Swanda expressed concerns that he is not informed about scheduled events at the Ward 6 senior wellness center unless he is formally registered at the center. He asked DCOA to look into this policy.

- **Ward 7:**

  Commissioner Woody reported that a groundbreaking for the Benning Ridge Recreation Center will be held on September 29, 2014 at 10 a.m., and that Mayor Gray will be present.

- **Ward 5:**

  Chairperson Thomas reported on recent activities of the Ward 5 Mini-Commission, and she gratefully acknowledged the presence of Mrs. Sue Barnes and Mr. Joe Harris. She also reported community concerns that Comcast recently removed its dedicated representatives to assist seniors and persons with disabilities. She asked DCOA's staff to follow up and report these concerns to the Office of Cable Television.

Other Matters

The members of the Commission on Aging voted unanimously to waive the Commission's Rules of Procedure and to hold elections for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Commission on Aging at the October 22, 2014 meeting of the Commission on Aging.

The Commission also voted unanimously, due to the holiday schedule, to adjust its meeting schedule for the November and December meetings of the Commission on Aging due to the following dates: November 19, 2014, and December 17, 2014.

Adjournment

Upon motion and unanimous approval by the members of the Commission on Aging, September 24, 2014 meeting of the Commission on Aging was adjourned at 12:42 p.m.

These minutes were recorded by Deborah M. Royster, General Counsel, D.C. Office on Aging, and were formally approved by the Commission on Aging on October 22, 2014.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deborah M. Royster
General Counsel
District of Columbia Office on Aging