

QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING
Meeting Minutes for Thursday, September 22, 2024
Kramer Building – Centreville, MD

ATTENDEES

Members

Rebecca Barbee
Betty Davis
Rebecca Kennedy
Janet Melson
Loretta Morris
Janet Salazar
Mary Jo Volipicelli
Bonnie Walter

Advisory Members

Commissioner Moran
Cathy Willis
Annie Sparks
Rebecca Jester
Stephen Palmer

Absent Members

Martha Anthony
Toni Breeding
Alan Ettman
Kelly Johnson

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Bonnie Walter at 10:00 AM.

OLD BUSINESS

- A motion to approve the meeting minutes were made by Loretta Morris and seconded by Becky Barbee. The minutes were approved.
- The Financial Report was reviewed and motioned to be approved by Loretta Morris and seconded by Becky Barbee. The report was approved.
- Final plans were discussed concerning the Town Hall in September. Boxes with the questions for the panel were handed in from the different locations. Cathy Willis asked Bonnie Walter what the plans for the questions were from here on out and when the panelists will receive them. Bonnie said that they have not been collecting them. She said that staff collected them last year. Bonnie asked Annie Sparks if anyone asked staff to bring the boxes in. Annie's response was that she wasn't sure aware where they all went from the CoA Town Hall sub-committee meetings. We of course can get them from the Senior Centers and can get them from the other places they were distributed but will need to know where they are. Annie said that she had some at Kramer from various events that they will bring in during today's subcommittee meeting. That way the committee can see what's been collected so far. Bonnie asked how we were doing with the emails. No emails were received. Bonnie mentioned the ad that was placed in the Shore Update was also placed online and some of the seniors have no idea how to use the QR code. She said that we must start thinking like older people because some don't understand how technology works. Loretta Morris said that she had to tell another senior what a QR code was and how it works. Bonnie said that younger folks are savvy with the internet and technology. Some older people have not quite got there yet; some are there but very few older people understand it. Bonnie's concern is, is there a way when we put the next ad in and what we could be done for the seniors that are not tech savvy. Cathy said she thinks that it was a good combination of that and there are a lot of people who do know how to use a QR codes. The boxes and papers were put at the different locations, such as the Senior Centers, and County Ride had the flyers posted on their buses. Boxes with the questions were placed at the Senior Summit and the QAC Fair also. Cathy said that you had to do a combination of how the Town Hall is advertised. She said that she realizes that there are

challenges and people are very savvy, and we need to recognize that they might prefer to use the tech way of responding. Cathy said that the committee did an excellent job of with the combination. Bonnie said that Janet Melson did a great job with making sure everyone was able to respond the way they wanted too. Bonnie wanted to know if anything was left at Bay Bridge Cove. Janet Melson said that posters were left there. Bonnie said a good number of them are recently retired and are tech savvy. Bonnie said her only concern was reaching the people who were not tech savvy. Cathy asked where the responses from the QR code go. They were being emailed to Wendy Gilbert; Wendy responded that she had not received any emails with questions. Bonnie said that was a concern of hers that there were not any QR code responses. Cathy that you have a Town Hall venue where you can't always get the questions ahead of time necessarily and that's part of a Town Hall; you're prepared for everything. Loretta Morris said that she understood what Cathy was saying, people will show up if they have questions without submitting any questions before hand. Cathy said that there are people who might not understand or who can't read or write who would be more comfortable not submitting a question but to ask in person. Cathy said she knows Bonnie is disappointed with the numbers. Bonnie said that three fourths of people who attended last year's Town Hall were there to ask Housing Authority questions. It will be a completely different Town Hall this year with the questions asked. Cathy said the questions need to be compiled in time for them to be sent to the Maryland Secretary of Aging. Bonnie said that she is glad that Secretary Roques has an interest here on the Eastern Shore, but she thinks the folks here would like to hear from the everyday people that they deal with here on the shore. Janet Melson replied that she is happy to see the Secretary take an interest and come to the Town Hall. Janet said that only one of the Senators or Delegates that were invited responded to the invite. Bonnie said that she understood that they have a responsibility to the state. Commissioner Moran said no, they have a responsibility to the citizens. The Commissioner said that they sent an email several weeks ago and still have not gotten a response. Commissioner Moran believes there is no need to worry because there should be enough questions. Fifty percent of the questions at last year's Town Hall were questions of the cuff kind of questions. He said by the time the Town Hall occurs the educational aspect in the county could be heated. He said that there might be questions related to that. Traffic always brings up questions. He said he could entice them to ask him something. Loretta said sometimes when you ask one question it has someone thinking of something else to say. Janet Melson said Bay Bridge Cove as a group have a question for Scott Haas about the safety aspect of traffic for the emergency personnel. Janet said for instance when traffic is inundated route 18. It took her an hour to get from Club One to Bay Bridge Cove. Cathy said that the question can be added, and she would share it with Scott. Janet said that these are the questions that the people at Bay Bridge Cove would like answered and these are things they are telling other seniors interested in moving to the area. They are telling them that moving to Kent Island and the surrounding area might not be such a good idea. Commissioner Moran asked Janet what time was it that she left the gym, she said around 10 AM. Janet stopped to let a vehicle leaving the cemetery out and the driver of the car behind got out his car and started screaming at her because she let the vehicle exit the cemetery. Her thought was that she hoped he didn't have a gun. Commissioner Moran said that it might happen sooner or later. The Commissioner said that there are a lot of things that work with that, and those are some good questions to ask at the Town Hall. He said that he could explain a lot of things with what the state is doing; what the state won't let us do. There are a lot of factors that blame all of that. Saturday was the end of the MACo Conference in Ocean City so there were some high-powered people that needed to get home to the Western Shore which disrupted the contra flow a couple of times. He said that there are some interesting aspects to all of this. Bonnie said there are a lot more people that are coming that are now living here that are from New Jersey and Pennsylvania and not changed their registration yet. The Commissioner said that Saturday is the worst day for traffic, because of the change-over at the beaches. So, if you are going to travel on Saturdays, get it done by 10:30 AM or wait until after 2 PM. They are trying to keep contra flow eastbound open, even though they're backing up on the Eastern Shore going westbound, they're keeping contra flow because the bulk of the traffic

is coming at that time. The Commissioner said that he doesn't understand why everyone leaves Ocean City within the 3-hour window and why they don't spread it out. He said there needs to be better communication. The state needs better communication, telling people if you leave now, it will take four hours to get over the bridge and if you leave later, it will only take about two hours. Saturdays are the issue, because again, when you have three lanes coming eastbound, the two lanes are backing up. All those people who are leaving early thinking that they are going to beat traffic are ones that lose their minds. Janet Melson said that an instructor at the gym will probably not continue to teach the class because of the traffic issues. She said businesses here are ones hurting, not Ocean City. The Commissioner agreed and that's why they are trying to get control of some of the ramps, but the state won't give control of the ramps to the county. So, the next step could be the Governor to declare a State of Emergency. Allow the county to take control or go to Secretary Buttigieg and ask him for control. So, there are a lot of things in motion. It's just government is slow in moving. Janet said that these are the thoughts expressed to other people that are looking to move here. Janet mentions the development going in by Queenstown Outlets, the Commissioner replied that the town of Queenstown has that going in, in its own entity, so the county doesn't have any control of that. Janet says she doesn't believe the roads can support the development about to happen. The Commissioner said he disagreed because they don't have those problems November through April. Bonnie said that's it's very frustrating to live by the bridge, but you learn to live with it. There is a lot more people living in the area now who are not just the bridge people. Bonnie gave the Commissioner kudos on the light now working at the Cross Island Trail. Cathy brought a picture of the light at the trail to share with the members.

- Bonnie would like to put a timer on folks asking question. They were timed last year, but people kept talking regardless.
- Bonnie asked Janet if there is anything else that she needed brought concerning the Town Hall. Janet asked Rebecca Kennedy if everything was ok with the food. She said everything was good to go. They are duplicating what they did last year for the food.
- Bonnie asked if there were any questions about the letter of intent to remain a member of the CoA. Cathy said there was no response to any of the letters. Bonnie asked if they were able to move on since there was no response? Cathy asked what she meant about moving on. Bonnie replied since they have received the letter and have not responded could they not be considered a member. Cathy said that they can't be forced off the board. Bonnie said that is tying up hands with moving forward. She wanted to know how to move forward since they can't be kicked off. Cathy said can call them and ask them if they still would like to serve on the board of the CoA. Commissions don't have a rule about attendance. Bonnie wanted to know how they can change that policy. It is based on each Commissions bylaws. Bonnie said that the members attend do more with the CoA. Cathy said as the Chairperson she is in her rights to contact the members who are not attending and ask what the intentions are.

NEW BUSINESS

- No New Business was discussed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- No Committee Reports

SITE COUNCIL REPORTS

- Grasonville

Becky Barbee said she wanted to thank whoever arranged for the Wellness Center to come to the Senior Center on Wednesdays instead of Thursdays as they have more people attending on Wednesday than any other day of the week. She is also happy that someone will be coming to talk to the State Retirees about Medicare Part D. The group of musicians that get together at the center will be playing at the Potluck Dinner today. Back by popular demand are the Taggie

Blankets for Project Linus, help is needed to assemble them on 9/3 at 1 PM. The Jones Boys will be performing for the Country Hoedown on 9/20 at 1 PM.

- **Kent Island**

There is a lot going on at Kent Island now. Getting everything ready for the Fundraiser Prize Bingo on 9/7; doors open at 11:30 AM. Add your story or photo to the large USA map that will be in the main room to acknowledge Senior Center Month. 50¢ Root Beer Float Day will be held on 9/2; this will follow lunch. Happy Halloween craft is on 10/7. A \$10 fee is attached to this craft. Drum fit is going well, and so is Sit and Fit.

- **Sudlersville**

Everything is going along well at the Sudlersville Senior Center. The Quilting Class is every Tuesday at 9 AM. Site Council will be on 9/9 at 12:45 PM. On September 18th the craft for the month is a Painted Pumpkin, \$6 due at sign-up and the class will start at 10:30 AM. Tuesdays and Thursdays are Bingo days at the center. Medication Tips with Melanie will be on Thursday, 9/25 at 11 AM. The center will be hosting Longaberger Basket Bingo on 9/29, doors open at 1 PM. If you sign-up in advance the fee will be \$30 or \$35 at the door.

- **Active Aging Center**

The Active Aging Center is doing great. Community Wellness happens the second Thursday of each month, 9 AM – 11 AM. Medicare Part D and Maryland State Retirees Presentation will be on 9/17/24 at 11 AM. A Fall Bingo will happen on 9/25 at 12:30 PM. We will be playing for cash and prizes. Up and coming events, 10/1 will be 1st Anniversary Celebrations, 10/25 Holiday Doormat Craft, and on 10/31 there will be a Murder Mystery Luncheon. The box containing the questions for the Town Hall was accidentally thrown out by the maintenance man. It was replaced by another box. The Veterans group was mentioned.

HOUSING

- Bonnie said that it was very pleasant to have a positive attitude with Public Housing now. There were PTAC units not working at some units and Brian Barnshaw worked late getting the units up and running. Bonnie said that they have been happy with Mike Clark and staff. They have not met the Property Manager Lisa Gray yet. Cathy said that Lisa would be making the rounds soon. Lisa's main office is in Foxxtown, while Brian's is at Terrapin. Brian took the PTAC out of his office to so that it could go into a resident's apartment. Bonnie said that she gave a pep talk to some of the residents about them having complaints about housing at last year's Town Hall. She told them they should show up to learn something new. Bonnie noted that Brian has a smile on his face all the time, which is pleasant to see. Loretta told Brian that they have a Friday night dinner every week and invited him to stop by, if he is working, to get a plate.
- Cathy said that a new facility tech will be starting at the end of July. Bonnie said that they are doing a remarkable job. Bonnie said that more things have been done now than in the last 14 years. Cathy said that she is aware of it and doesn't want them to get burnt out. She told him he couldn't keep up with the pace that he has been going. They don't want him to burn out and to lose him.

LEGISLATIVE

- Cathy said that there isn't a lot going on legislatively now, but there are a lot of initiatives going on. One of the initiatives is Longevity Ready Maryland which was mentioned at a previous meeting. Some members might have received something from the National Center to Reframe Aging. Cathy has been in core training for the last month for this program. Reframing Aging which is dedicated to ending ageism is another initiative. They have a lot of them going on now, but not enough state funding. The shortage of funding won't affect what programs are going on

now but will affect any new ones. Cathy doesn't anticipate any new bills this year. If there are they will go out the window because of funding. We will do everything possible to protect current funding. Bonnie said that they were both rejected for the Longevity Ready Maryland. Cathy said will talk to the state and see why. Cathy said that they wanted people who are members of the CoA. She will follow-up on this.

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

- Stephen Palmer said the three new buses will be here at the end of the year. The Sudlersville group of riders has grown, with 5 new riders going on a regular basis. County Ride is bringing people from Kent Island to the YMCA. More people from Symphony Village are riding the bus also. They are steadily growing and riding free.
- Loretta Morris asked Stephen about whether it would be okay to call transit for transportation to the Town Hall, he said that it will okay to call them. He said a list of people could be done and then be given to transit also. He would need the list 2 weeks before the Town Hall.
- Bonnie mentioned that a rider missed the last bus because he didn't fully understand the schedule. Someone from transit came and picked him up. Bonnie told to call the next time and arrange escort service.
- Annie thanked the Town Hall Sub-Committee on the work they did with the Town Hall. We can set-up in the afternoon at Grasonville Senior Center for the Town Hall. Bonnie would like all members to attend the Town Hall.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

- Commissioner Moran said that Cathy was spot on with the fiscal situation in the State of Maryland. It's in a bad place. Money for maintaining the roads was reduced by a massive amount. Next year the Commissioner said that they are going to do everything they can to stay at the level they are in now. One of his major concerns was the funding for the bridge and for that to stay untouched. They are trying to preserve everything they can. The only thing they have coming up are the red x's going across the bridge. The state delegates didn't support it last year so they will go to other delegates to get support.
- They are working with the Board of Education on their funding.
- They have gotten back the study on the new recreational building. They will do a presentation at the October Commissioners meeting. They have 4 different locations that they are looking at. It will be a 20-million-dollar project.
- The Board of Ed should be in their new building by next spring.
- The Queen Anne's, Kent, and Caroline Counties will be going in together for a regional jail. The two counties will be abandoning their jails for the regional one in QAC. This will save the state a lot of money. It will be going where the old pre-release facility was located.
- Cross Island Connector is another project. Starting to get closer with the design. They have asked the federal government for funding. The Commissioner would like for it to go from the end to Terrapin Park.
- Andy Harris has secured 5.25 million dollars with Patrick McLaughlin pushing for an adolescence psychiatric inpatient facility, located on the 3rd floor of University of MD Shore Medical Center in Chestertown. It will fall on the surrounding counties to renovate the area for the facility as they are getting the space free.
- The Queen's Anne Center at Chesapeake College for vocational training- the college wants to tear down the Queen Anne's wing and build a brand-new wing. It is moving forward; the state has made it a number 2 priority for the state. Queen Anne's and Talbot Counties have a sent a letter of support. Caroline and Dorchester said no. They believe Kent will fall in line and support it to.
- Six new teachers have been hired. The BOE is looking for 7 million next year and the following year. If the state didn't kick in all their portion this year and they do it next year that's where the problems begin. Then it falls on the counties and you can't give every cent to the school system

and then cut every department in the county. It's affecting every county. If the Governor is making this a priority, he needs to make funding a priority also.

CONCLUSION

- **The meeting adjourned around 11:10 AM.**
- **The next meeting will be TBD.**

Submitted by Wendy Gilbert, recording secretary.