

QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING
Meeting Minutes for Thursday, January 16, 2025
Kramer Building – Centreville, MD

ATTENDEES

Members

Toni Breeding
Ida Hein
Janet Melson
Janet Salazar
Bonnie Walter

Advisory Members

Commissioner Moran
Annie Sparks
Anne Van Benschoten
Rebecca Jester

Absent Members

Becky Barbee
Alan Ettman
Loretta Morris
Kelly Johnson
Leslie Ray
Mary Jo Volpicelli

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Bonnie Walter at 10:05 AM.

OLD BUSINESS

- A motion to approve the Meeting Minutes were made by Toni Breeding and seconded by Janet Salazar. The minutes were approved.
- The Financial Report was reviewed and motioned to be approved by Janet Salazar and seconded by Janet Melson. The report was approved.
- Bonnie Walter, Chairperson, welcomed Ida Hein as the new member to the Commission.
- Rebecca Kennedy submitted her letter of resignation which now leaves a vacancy on the Commission. People can apply for the vacancy online if interested in becoming a member. They will need to apply by 1/31/25. The term for this vacancy ends on 12/31/26.
- Bonnie talked to Alan Ettman and he has decided to resign from the Commission on Aging to leave an opening for someone who is able to be more active on the board. Bonnie has tried to reach out to another member about whether they are still interested in being a member. At the time of this meeting, she was not able to reach them.
- Bonnie talked to Leslie Ray about the list of regional CoA's. Leslie said that she has put together a list of CoA's and they are slowing getting back since COVID. Annie Sparks said that there was someone at a MDOA meeting and she was able to get the information on the Regional CoA's from her. Bonnie gave a brief history on the Regional CoA meeting. Bonnie said that Leslie said that the regional meeting will happen they just need to work out the formalities.

- **Bonnie asked Annie if she was part of Longevity Ready Maryland Work Group. Annie replied that she was. They have had 4 to 5 meetings but now are finished with them. They are putting together the recommendations that will go out to the public for public comment within the next month or so and then to the Governor's office for his review. We will share the details on the public comment period when that opens. Bonnie asked if there were any senior citizens in the work group, Annie said yes there were. Annie said that she did not know how the seniors were selected since folks from our county were not selected.**
- **Bonnie asked Commissioner Moran what his thoughts on the Town Hall being in the rotation of events in 4 years, he said every 2 or 3 years would be ideal. He said 4 years is a significant jump for issues that you would want to get out. That was what stood out to him. Janet Salazar agreed with the Commissioner. Annie said that her only thought on it would be CoA sponsored Town Hall versus if there was another reason for a Town Hall or if Aging did one. Annie said that they could adjust the rotation schedule. The presentations of AAA resources is something they that saw Montgomery County CoA do. It's like a Town Hall but different in the way that staff would do presentations on resources offered by Area Agency on Aging and said that they thought it would work well as an additional event. When Cathy Willis had did research on the Tour and Town Hall, she looked at the Town Hall in a legislative way to get more folks that were in an elected position to come, have more topics related to them and not necessarily topics that we could discuss on a small scale with Senior Centers and departmental questions. The reason for the Senior Center Tour placement is when the Commissioners are in their new terms. The new Commissioners would be able to do the tour in their first year. Bonnie said that a lot of people don't know who runs the county, but the Commissioners have done a wonderful job attending the Gala and socializing with the seniors and this has been beneficial; but that only reaches a smaller scale of seniors since that event can only accommodate so many folks. Bonnie said it would be good to do something before the election so that the seniors know who they are voting for, and it might encourage them to get out and vote. Bonnie said that there was a lot of positive feedback from the seniors attending Gala. Bonnie asked Commissioner Moran what his opinion was on it, the Commissioner told Annie he understood what they were trying to do with the Commissioners Tour and having it in March 2027, and he believes the Town Hall could be done in the same year as the Commissioners Tour. That way they can tour the facilities and have a better understanding of what their concerns are when they have the Town Hall. Commissioner Moran likes the Town Hall because if someone has a question, they can get them answered right then. Bonnie said that there was a gentleman who lives at Four Seasons but was not representing it. He made a comment about how nice it was to meet who was running the county and what other services there were. She said with all the new senior citizens coming into the county the Town Hall was a great opportunity for them to meet who is running the county and see what services are available. Janet Melson said that she likes the idea of a tour and then a town hall 2027. The Town Hall could follow the Commissioners Tour in the same year. The Commissioner said that a lot of questions get asked on the Commissioners Tour and some those questions could be written down and applied the questions for the Town Hall which will give more time**

for people to come up with more questions. He suggested doing the tour in April and the Town Hall in September which gives folks time between the tour and town hall think of what questions they want answered. The Commissioner said that it's a start with the CoA Regional meeting this year and the Presentation of AAA resources in 2026 and then the Tour and Town Hall in 2027. He said is a lot that can happen in four years and new issues can happen. It was also discussed and agreed to do the Senior Center Tour once every four years (in the same year as the Town Hall). The Town be every other year, so there would be a Town Hall year without the Senior Center Tour. Janet said the Presentation of AAA Events should be held other places, not the Senior Centers. Janet Salazar offered the QAC Libraries as locations for the presentations. Bonnie said it would be a matter of how they were advertised. She also suggested that the CoA sponsor the AAA Resource Presentations at each of the Senior Centers and the libraries. Bonnie asked for a motion on the change to the Coa Rotation of Events. Janet Melson motions it, and Janet Salazar seconded it. Rotation of the events will be revisited and discussed at the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

- Bonnie asked Annie if she could draft a letter of interest to be sent to the other regional CoA's. Annie said that she could and will send a copy of the letter to Bonnie to proof.

SITE COUNCIL REPORTS

- Grasonville

Becky Barbee was not able to attend the meeting. Bonnie said that Queen Anne's at Home comes to the center and volunteers on certain activities which has helped their afternoon participation. Each Monday at 12:30 is Hand & Foot Card Game. This game is a variation of Rummy and Canasta. Movie Time for the month of February. The viewing of a series will be on 2/7, 2/21, & 2/28 at 12:30. The craft for the month will be creating a Trinket Box on 2/7 at 12:30; there won't be a fee for this craft. Folded Book Art is a fun way to repurpose an old book; this event will be on 2/11 at 9:30 with no fee for this event. Queen of Hearts Spaghetti Lunch & Dance on 2/14. This event starts at 12:00, with a cost of \$3 which is due at time of sign-up. Rock Painting on 2/20 at 12:30. All supplies will be provided. \$5 Special Bingo on 2/24 from 11:00– 1:30.

- Kent Island

Ida Hein reported on what's happening this month at Kent Island. She mentions the Special Luncheon and the Book Club. Ida said there are at least ten things going on through the week. Some upcoming events and classes being offered are free Dance Fitness Class with volunteer instructor, K. Leary. This is every Thursday in February at 11:00. The Chit Chat Café will be discussing *The Five Wishes of Mr. Murray McBride* by Joe Siple. The group meets the first Friday of the month in the library at Kent Island Senior Center at 10:15. Meditation is a free class with volunteer instructor Rona Warner. They meet weekly on Wednesdays at 11:00. Free "Love Wreath" will be held on 2/6 at 11:00. Monday, February 10th at 10:00 will be a "Make it for Your Sweetie" Craft Class. This class has a \$2 supply

fee. Valentine's Day Lunch and Card Making will be on 2/14. Card making starts at 11:30 and is followed by lunch at 12:00. Sign up for lunch by 1/31/25. 50¢ Root beer floats will be on 2/18/25.

- **Sudlersville**

Betty Davis was not able to attend the meeting, but here are some of the upcoming events. Bingo happens every Tuesday & Thursday at 10:30. A Special Monthly Bingo will be held on 2/11 at 10:30. Light snacks will be provided.

Valentine Spirit Week from 2/10 -2/14:

- Monday- Wear your favorite cupid colors (Pink & Red)
- Tuesday- Cozy Flannel Day
- Wednesday- Cozy Fuzzy Sock Day
- Thursday- Sweets Day (everyone gets a sweet treat)
- Friday- Hearts Day, show the love with your favorite Valentine attire.

- **Active Aging Center**

Caregiver's Support Group will be held on February 11th at 1:00. Maryland Relay, Phone Communications, will be the special quest. Money Bingo is on Wednesdays at 1:00. Wii Games are on Fridays at 10:00. Canasta will start in February on Fridays at 1:00. Beaded Wind Chime Workshop will be on 2/27 at 10:00; this is a free workshop.

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

- Annie Sparks reported on what's happening legislatively. There are two bills concerning aging. SOARS (Supporting Older Adults with Resources)- this bill will consolidate programming under one umbrella to better support older adults where they live. There are three programs involved are Senior Care, SALS (Senior Assisted Living Subsidy) and Congregate Housing Services. Some counties only offer one or some of these programs. Queen Anne's County has Senior Care and Senior Living Subsidy. Now these individual programs can only use the funding in the program that it is allocated for. But with SOAR (HB 36 / SB 212) they will be combined. It's essentially the same amount of money but used where the money can be utilized more within those three programs. House Bill 158 is a bill renaming Senior Call Check to Social Connections Program. This would change certain provisions of law related to Senior Call Check. This program will be providing certain communication to eligible older adults to promote wellness and social engagement. This bill will give the program more of a variety of ways to communicate such as live, web based, and text communication. Bonnie asked if volunteers would call people like the old program Telephone Reassurance. Annie said we used to have volunteers with Telephone Reassurance and that program gradually decreased when the state introduced Senior Call Check.
- Annie mentioned that the State of Maryland is in a deficit now and what does it mean for the Department of Aging. They are working in creative ways to address any losses in funding such as taking on projects in house rather than higher a consultant company to do so.

- It's a busy time of year with the county budget and state and federal reporting for the Aging staff.
- Annie mentioned and passed around the monthly newsletter that is sent out electronically. It's a way for folks to hear about our services. You can sign up through our AAA or go to the county website. There is a line on the intake packet for your email and folks are signed up for the newsletter that way as well.
- Anne Van Benschoten reported on the numbers for this year's Part-D prescription enrollment. They more than doubled; in 2023 the number was 202 and in 2024 the numbers were 498. It was a busy time, and a lot of people were served.
- Grant program with Legal Access is a free service that provides help with Power of Attorney, Advance Directives, and Wills. They are at the Kramer Center once a month and you must contact them directly to make an appointment. It's advertised on Facebook as well.
- They are working hard on the Dementia grant. There is a Caregivers Support Group that is growing. This group meets at the Active Aging Center at the YMCA once a month and there is usually someone that comes in to speak on different subjects related to caregiving. Since the group has grown, they have asked if one could started at Kent Island. It will be called the Coffee and Hot Chocolate Social. There will be virtual training that will go from March 5 to April 16. This training will be free. Sym-Sym is a cognitive training that puts you in the person shoes that have cognitive and physical issues. There will be a training with 8 to 12 people, and it will be open to the public. The first class will be at Grasonville Senior Center. There isn't a date yet for this training.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

- Commissioner Moran said a new budget cycle is about to start and a lot of changes will be coming from the state with fee increases and rewriting of the tax code.
- There is a search for a new superintendent of schools.
- As far as major projects in the county, they will be moving forward with the new Rec Center and it's something the Commissioner has wanted for the last four years.
- Kent County is on board with the new regional jail and now we are waiting for Caroline County to come on board with them. It will save money to have the three counties' jail in one location. Regardless, with or without Caroline County, Kent and Queen Anne's are moving forward with the jail.
- The Commissioner said on a safety aspect please be careful with space heaters.
- Bonnie asked the Commissioner where the new rec center would be located. He said it will be in either Grasonville or Chester. Stevensville isn't in consideration because of traffic and where they wanted to put it. Bonnie said that the skate park is being well used.
- Commissioner Moran said they have committed to completing the Southern Route 8 bike and pedestrian trail and are fully funding it up to Target. Janet said it's still in the works to build the Cox Creek Connector.
- They have reached the conclusion that there will be two new bridges built. They will tear one down and build and then tear another down. The bridges will have no less

than four travel lanes. It will cost less money to build two than one large bridge. Construction should start in 2030 on the new bridge. They don't use taxes or state funding, it's all tolls and bonds. They will be adding lanes on east bound Rt.50 and will be realigning the lanes on Rt.50. One lane will drop off at the 50/301 split and the other lane at the 50 and 404 intersections. There will be a Town Hall meeting in April discussing the closure of exits during the busy season on Rt.50. Janet Melson asked if they were expanding the months that they would be closing the exits such as in the fall. The Commissioner said that they could possibly do that, but they won't since the state is in a deficit.

CONCLUSION

- The meeting adjourned around 11:10 AM.
- The next meeting will be on 2/20/25 at 10:00 AM - Kramer building.

Submitted by Wendy Gilbert, recording secretary.