

Alexandria Commission on Aging Minutes
November 11, 2021
Virtual Meeting

Members Present: Victoria Almquist, Mary Lee Anderson, Ray Biegun, William Campbell, Marjorie Conner, Barbara D’Agostino, Dawn Higgins, Barbara Huelat, Michael Kamin, David Kaplan, Michael Kreps; Jim Lindsay, Ellen Nelson, Del Pepper, Michael Schuster, Lois Steele, Jenn Stowe, Gerri Wallace

Members Excused: Babs Waters, Lynette Foster

Members Unexcused: Asfaha Beyene

Liaisons Present: Anne Coyne, St. Martins Senior Center; Margaret Orlando, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities; Torrance, Police Department; Darrell Wesley, Adult Day Services Center

Staff Members Present: Terri Lynch, Debbie Ludington, Pamela Austin and Kim Taylor, Division of Aging and Adult Services; Evelyn Quiles, Workforce Dev. Center;

Guests Present: Pat Killeen, PHAC; Amy Gower, Caregiving Consultant ; Cathy Cole, Chair, Fairfax County Commission on Aging

1. **Call to Order.** Vice-Chair Barbara D’Agostino called the November 11, 2021 meeting of the Commission on Aging (“COA”) to order at 4:00 PM. Ms. D’Agostino began the meeting by asking if there were any veterans among the commissioners the CoA could thank for their service on this day – Veterans Day. Ray Biegun said he had served in the Air Force. All the commissioners thanked him for his service.
2. **Welcome New Members.** Ms. D’Agostino welcomed guests and introduced the new COA member, Gerri Wallace, and Jenn Stowe who was not present at her inaugural meeting last month.
3. **Approval of Agenda.** The agenda for the meeting was approved unanimously.
4. **Approval of Minutes.** The October 2021 minutes were approved unanimously.
5. **Alexandria Police Department Liaison Report.** Sgt. Ian Torrance asked if any member had any police-related concerns. Mary Lee Anderson interjected that her husband dropped off some medications at the police department as part of their return medication day.
6. **Special Presentation on Caregiving.** A panel of three persons presented: Marjorie Conner, Barbara Huelat, and Amy Goyer. Barbara Huelat presented a PowerPoint on caregiving. It showed that 1 in 5 adults are caregivers; 53 million Americans are

caregivers; 61% are women; 89% are relatives and 54% are over the age of 50. Fifty-three million individuals provide support, producing 37 unpaid billion hours of caregiving. She said caregivers want information about services, empowerment, knowledge about costs of caregiving, training on using medical equipment, resources, and knowledge about services. Marjorie Connor mentioned she reviewed the Alexandria website on caregiving and that it could be improved with up-to-date information, integrating with state information, and links to various resources, like AARP. She expressed concern that some services, such as adult day care is means tested, so many individuals with some resources may not be able to pay for it. She recommends that there be a consolidation of resources, so they are more accessible. Debbie said there is a sliding scale for adult day care.

Amy Goyer said she has lived in Alexandria for almost thirty years and has worked on caregiving for AARP as both an employee and consultant. She has forty years' experience in the field of aging. Much of this time has been devoted to caring for her parents who live in Arizona. She asserted that navigating the system of caregiving is a problem. Funding for caregiving is devoted primarily to services, not outreach, so caregivers may not know about what is available to assist them. She recommended the use of email list-servs on caregiving, pharmacies, doctors' offices, "next door neighbor" app, and employers to get out information about caregiving resources. Amy said that AARP Virginia

(<https://states.aarp.org/virginia/caregiver-resources>) has an updated caregiving guide. Amy said she hosts a Facebook page on caregiving with over 7000 followers: www.facebook.com/groups/aarpfamilycaregivers. She also gave the contact information on employer assistance programs: www.aarp.org/employercaregiving.

Debbie Ludington mentioned the Senior Ambassador program as a way to get out information on caregiving. Mary Lee Anderson said all new commissioners should take the Senior Ambassador training. It is for one and a half days, they receive email updates twice weekly, and weekly zooms calls with local experts. They do them every quarter. SSA will be scheduling one for December. In addition, the Division on Aging and Adult Services has a social worker available by telephone for questions about caregiving issues. Mary Lee said this resource can be reached at: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/Aging> - 703.746.5999 – from 9 to 4:30; the resource worker can also be reached during the week by email at daas@alexandriava.org. Mary Lee said that Senior Services of Alexandria (SSA) will sponsor a caregiver support event in January. Mary Lee said that SSA has plenty copies of "Prepare to Care."

Amy brought up the problem with poor sidewalk maintenance where she lives in Alexandria. The Commission on Aging has advocated for improving the materials used for sidewalks to minimize falls – away from brick sidewalks with crevices that can cause walkers to trip and fall.

7. **Executive Committee Report.** Materials previously distributed.

8. **Discussion and Action Items**

- a. **COVID-19 vaccinations updates – booster shots:** Victoria Almquist.
Victoria said that there are currently 14,509 cases and 151 deaths, with a 2.9 percent positivity rate, placing Alexandria in the CDC substantial category, down from the high category. 79.5 of those eligible for the vaccines are partially vaccinated, 77% are fully vaccinated, and 12.1 percent have received the booster shot.

- b. **November 4th Arlington – Alexandria COA Legislative Forum:** Michael Schuster said the forum was a success. Most of the elected representatives from Arlington and Alexandria attended. Delegate-elect Elizabeth Bennett-Parker said she will travel to Richmond on November 10th to discuss a proposal to the Freedom of Information Advisory (FOIA) Council (<http://foiacouncil.dls.virginia.gov/foiacouncil.htm>) regarding electronic meetings options for public bodies with appointed members. Both Senators Adam Ebbin and Barbara Favola said they would introduce a budget Amendment adding \$600,000 to the Virginia Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Project (VICAP). One delegate said Virginia may receive \$40 million in federal money from the recently passed infrastructure legislation. The representatives cautioned that next year will be different from the past two years with a turnover in the House and the Executive Branch. The Senate remains 21-19 split with the Democrats still in the majority.
- c. **Appointment of COA members to Committees:** Vice Chair D’Agostino reminded all commission member that each one of them must be on at least one standing committee. Victoria Almquist said she is rotating off the commission next month, so there is a need for new members for the Outreach Committee.
- d. **Appointment of Michael Schuster as liaison to Arlington Legislative Committee.** Vice Chair D’Agostino announced that Michael Schuster has replaced Mary Lee Anderson as liaison to the Arlington Legislative Committee.

9. **Liaison Reports.**

- a. Division of Aging and Adult Services – Terri Lynch confirmed that the CoA meeting with Delegate-elect Elizabeth Bennet-Parker will be at 3:00 p.m. on November 19th via Zoom. She said that they have federal funding for transportation for vaccinations for individuals 60 and over.
- b. *Commission for Women.* Jenn Stowe is the new liaison to the Commission but had nothing to add today.
- c. *AHA.*
- d. *AARP.* – Michael Schuster said that Jane King will be contacting Chairs of committees to assist in completing the AARP Age Friendly Plan Evaluation.

- e. *Community Health Assessment.*
- f. *St. Martins Senior Center.* – Anne Coyle reported that her center opened for in-person activities on Monday. The center is sponsoring a tree planning activity today. **Materials previously distributed.**
- g. *Virginia Hospital Center.*
- h. *Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria.*
- i. *Public Health Advisory Commission.*
- j. *Commission on Persons with Disabilities.* – Michael Kamin said they had a short meeting earlier in the week but has nothing to report.
- k. *Senior Center at Charles Houston.* **Materials previously distributed.**
- l. *Senior Services of Alexandria.* – Mary Lee Anderson reported that they had a volunteer appreciation event at the First Baptist Church. Seventy-five people drove through to pick up box lunches. SSA has been doing outreach on the booster vaccine through the Meals on Wheels program. **Materials previously distributed.**
- m. *Alexandria Commission on Employment.* – Mary Lee Anderson reported that ACE had hired a full-time person for the Work Force Program.
- n. *Northern Virginia Falls Prevention Alliance.*
- o. *Arlington Commission on Aging.*
- p. *Successful Aging.*
- q. *Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities.* Margaret Orlando reported that classes are now in session.
- r. *Alexandria Adult Day Services Center.* Darrell Wesley reported they plan on reopening in January and to spread the word to caregivers.
- s. *Housing Affordability Advisory Committee.* Jan Macidull is the new liaison but could not attend the meeting. She replaces Bill Harris.
- t. *INOVA Alexandria Hospital.*

10. **Committee Updates.**

- a. *Housing.* **Materials previously distributed.**

- b. *Advocacy and Legislation.*
 - c. *Outreach.* Materials previously distributed.
 - d. *Transportation.* Materials previously distributed.
 - e. *Economic Development.* Materials previously distributed.
 - f. *Strategic Planning.*
 - g. *Health/Dementia Friendly.*
11. **Other Business.**
12. **Meeting Adjournment.** There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:25 PM.

Minutes will be presented at the December 9, 2021 COA meeting for approval.

Minutes prepared by Michael Schuster, COA Secretary.
