



MEETING MINUTES

Commission on Aging

Thursday, September 7, 2017 at ~7:00pm

Levy Center, 300 Dodge Avenue

Members Present: Jessie Macdonald, Rick Gergerian, Alan Factor, Marcia Achenbach, Sue Canter, Louise Love, Mike Iverson, Dave Sutor, Dorothy Strong, Bonnie Lockhart

Members Absent: Beverly Shearer, Donna Feldman, William Green, Barbara Roberts, Jane Wickenkamp, Catherine O'Brien

Staff Present: Audrey Thompson, Regional Ombudsman/Program Manager; Callie Sadler, Ombudsman Assistant

Guests: Terry Factor

Presiding Member: Mary Signatur, Chair

DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Chair Signatur called the meeting to order at 7:05pm.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES of July 6, 2017

There were no corrections to the minutes from July. The motion to approve minutes was seconded.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Long-Term Care Committee (LTCC)

Ms. Macdonald reviewed the July 27th site visit at Symphony of Evanston (820 Foster) on Thursday, July 27th.

1. During the conversation, questions arose about how one could find more information on nursing homes, including number of beds, payment options, and survey results from IDPH. The website is as follows:
<https://ltc.dph.illinois.gov/webapp/LTCApp/ltc.jsp>.
 - a. Symphony had approximately 104 occupied beds at the time of the site visit, with a memory care unit and staff certified in caring for individuals with dementia. The rooms are large and appear to offer ample privacy for occupants.
2. LTCC continues to plan the Fall presentation, scheduled for October 5, 2017 from 1 to 3pm at the Levy Center. Cate O'Brien will be presenting on the

development of the Boost Your Brain & Memory program, with Helen Gagel describing the experiences of presenting the program in the community.

- a. In addition to the October 5th presentation at the Levy Center, Mrs. Audrey Thompson and Ms. Gagel will be presenting the entire series at various subsidized housing locations throughout the City. One series has already begun with the Foster Club; the off-site presentations will be held through February 2018.
- b. LTCC attendees have signed up to volunteer for a variety of tasks on the presentation day, and a new evaluation form was developed to obtain feedback on both the October 5th presentation and the follow-up sessions.
- c. Beth Emet has been removed as a sponsor of the October 5th presentation due to interference with a Jewish holiday. Remaining sponsors have been provided with updated flyers reflecting the change.

RELEVANT COMMITTEE REPORTS (AGE FRIENDLY EVANSTON)

1. Ms. Canter shared a recent article from the Chicago Tribune's Primetime section, in which Evanston was featured as a senior-friendly community. Attendees were given a copy of the article, which can also be found online: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/advertising/primetime/ct-ss-pt-one-city-goes-the-extra-mile-to-welcome-seniors-20170824dto-story.html>.
2. Ms. Canter also reiterated efforts by the Building and Outdoor Spaces, subcommittee of Age Friendly Evanston, in completing site visits and reviews of businesses in Evanston to determine barriers to accessibility.
 - a. Mr. Patrick Hughes, owner of Inclusion Solutions and recent presenter at July's Commission meeting, expressed an interest in working with the taskforce to assist targeted businesses with accommodations for individuals with disabilities.
 - b. An article in the Evanston RoundTable is expected next month, and will describe the efforts of the Age Friendly and Building and Outdoor Spaces committees.
3. Mr. Factor provided an update on Dementia Awareness, which has held two meetings since this Commission's July meeting. It has been determined that Dementia Awareness falls under the general umbrella for Community and Health Services for Age Friendly.
 - a. Target audiences have been identified for additional education, including 311 staff, police officers, first responders, businesses, and legislators.
 - b. The sub-committee is scheduled to meet on Friday, September 8th to develop focus group questionnaires to determine what supports family members and caretakers for individuals with dementia and memory loss are currently using, or feel would be beneficial in the future.
4. Mr. Factor also discussed Housing Taskforce updates, in that a legal firm proposed a \$10,000 rate for a feasibility study; however, the taskforce has been considering other avenues for collecting the same data. In fact, the City of Evanston likely has much of the information already (such as household incomes, number of seniors in the community, etc.).

5. Chair Signatur recently attended a meeting at St. Nicholas as part of Reclaim Evanston,” and during which the ongoing issue of affordable housing was discussed. Each Evanston Alderman will be approached in an attempt to gain support for subsidized housing.
 - a. General discussion focused on the challenges with integrating subsidized housing into different communities, as well as differences between “affordable” and “low-income” housing. Affordable housing is based on 80% of the area median income, whereas low-income housing is based on 30% of the individual’s income.
 - i. Communities have historically been reluctant to support subsidized housing options out of concern that these buildings could drive down homeowners’ property values, but the YIMBY (“Yes In My Backyard”) movement attempts to allay these concerns.
 - b. Additionally, housing developers are encouraged, but not required, to set aside a certain number of affordable units when building rental properties. However, companies are able to opt out of this by paying into the inclusionary housing fund. To address the issue of the dearth of affordable housing in Evanston, suggestions have been made either to remove the possibility of opting out, or increasing the amount developers must pay into the fund.

CHAIR REPORT

No chair report this month.

STAFF REPORT

LTC Ombudsman, Audrey Thompson, discussed the following highlights:

1. Ms. Thompson and her team have been working diligently to find housing for an older adult and her great-grandson, who lost their home after a reverse mortgage went awry. With the assistance and generosity of several COA and LTCC members, Catholic Charities, as well as the hard work of individuals at the City level, this resident has secured housing for herself and her great-grandson with Catholic Charities subsidizing her rent for the next year. Mrs. Thompson’s staff will continue to work with the resident to ensure her applications to subsidized buildings remain up-to-date, and secure placement for her great-grandson after he completes high school.
 - a. This scenario highlighted, in part, the need for intergenerational housing opportunities in Evanston as well as the often-exclusionary requirements for enrollment in particular programs designed to help individuals in these types of situations. There are a plethora of loopholes and barriers to services that arose during the weeks Mrs. Thompson dedicated to helping this individual, and which deserve greater attention and resolution.
 - b. During the lease signing, it was discovered that the resident’s new landlord is a brain doctor; he has generously offered to volunteer his time to attend at least one Boost Your Brain & Memory session to answer questions attendees might have regarding brain health.

2. Mrs. Thompson provided an overview of the Ombudsman program's progress this year, noting that all benchmarks set by the state for 2017 have already been met.
3. New Medicare cards will be issued starting in April 2018, and will not feature the recipient's Social Security number. Attendees were given a handout with more information about the issuing process.
4. Dates for applying to LIHEAP programs through CEDA have been released; attendees were provided with a handout with more information.
5. Volunteers are needed for the Evanston Farmer's Market taking place on Saturday, September 9th. Participants will be providing literature and answering questions on senior services for market-goers.
 - a. Mr. Tom Gillen with North Shore Senior Services still has coupons available for interested parties who qualify.
6. Rebuilding Together recently held a meeting with representatives from the City and Northwestern University to discuss the next day of service, which is already slated for May 12, 2018. Four projects are planned, though applications have not yet begun.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Multiple members have attended community events and opted to share their experiences:
 - a. Ms. Signature reiterated that she attended the Reclaim Evanston meeting, at which the issue of affordable housing was discussed.
 - b. Ms. Lockhart noted that the 5th Ward hosted a series of seminars focusing on work skills, mental health, money management, etc. She described the presenters as "amazing" and informative.
 - c. At meetings for the 9th Ward on August 24th and 26th, Mrs. Thompson spoke about the Commission on Aging and senior services.
 - d. Ms. Love reminded attendees that Aperion Care held an Open House on August 24th to celebrate the reopening of their recently renovated gym.
 - e. Chair Signatur mentioned new businesses growing in Evanston, and Ms. Canter noted that the new businesses on the Evanston side of Howard street are accessible.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Members were encouraged to enjoy the updated calendar provided to attendees, and to note the new quote included therein.
2. Mrs. Thompson informed participants that a workshop entitled, "Who's Got Your Back" will be held on September 20th, and those who attend will be offered free legal assistance in completing living wills, Powers of Attorney, and other legal documents. There are 20 spaces available, and a waitlist will be created as well in case some individuals who register are unable to attend.
3. The next COA meeting, scheduled for Thursday, October 5th, was rescheduled for 3:30pm. The LTCC-helmed Fall presentation is slated to occur on the same day from 1 to 3pm, and the earlier meeting time was proposed so that COA

members who wished to attend the presentation would not need to return to the Levy Center later that same evening.

4. The next Dementia-Friendly meeting is scheduled for September 15th at 11am at the Mather.
5. The next LTCC meeting, scheduled for September 13th at 9:30am, will be the last meeting before the Fall presentation.
6. Vice Chair Macdonald informed attendees that she will not be joining the Commission for a second term, and will be resigning from her position as Chair for the LTCC. Mr. Alan Factor will be taking over her position as Vice Chair for COA.

COMMUNICATIONS

No additional communications this month.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was moved and seconded to adjourn. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved at 8:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Callie Sadler, Ombudsman Assistant