



MEETING MINUTES
Commission on Aging
Thursday, November 2, 2017 at ~7:00pm
Levy Center, 300 Dodge Avenue

Members Present: Alan Factor, Jessie Macdonald, Rick Gergerian, Marcia Achenbach, Sue Canter, Louise Love, Mike Iverson, Dave Sutor, Bonnie Lockhart, William Green, Jane Wickenkamp, Catherine O'Brien

Members Absent: Donna Feldman and Dorothy Strong

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

Guests: Tom Giller – North Shore Senior Center

Presiding Member: Mary Signatur, Chair

DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Chair Signatur called the meeting to order at 7:01pm.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES of October 5, 2017

There were minor corrections to the minutes from October. The motion to approve minutes as corrected was seconded.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Long-Term Care Committee (LTCC)

The Long-Term Care Committee did not meet in October and there are therefore no updates from the group. The next LTCC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 8th.

RELEVANT COMMITTEE REPORTS (AGE FRIENDLY EVANSTON)

1. Ms. Canter apprised attendees of a recent meeting for Age Friendly, including Ms. Canter, Mrs. Thompson, Ms. Strong, and Ms. Martha Logan, who is the Community Engagement Manager for the City of Evanston, to discuss how to increase age friendliness in businesses throughout the City.
 - a. The committee plans to submit a press release regarding the Age Friendly initiative and why it is important.
 - b. Businesses will be assessed for age friendliness using an evaluative tool to be developed by the committee. This checklist would take into account

- physical accessibility, senior-friendly customer service, places to rest, accessible restrooms, affordability, safety, amenities, etc.
- c. Participating businesses will get a sticker for their window notifying visitors of their status as an Age Friendly enterprise, and will be placed on a list of other Age Friendly organizations in tiers depending on how well they performed on the checklist.
 - i. Volunteers will be needed to serve as “secret shoppers” to visit various businesses and assess their age friendliness. Volunteers will receive training on how to use the checklist and perform the assessments.
 - d. The Committee hopes to have data from these efforts before the Aging Well Conference in 2018 so attendees will have access to information about Age Friendly businesses in Evanston.
2. Ms. Achenbach and Ms. Wickenkamp both attended October’s Dementia Friendly Committee meeting and furnished the Commission with the following update:
- a. The Committee plans to organize a focus group in February 2018 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. The Committee will develop a questionnaire for participants and determine how many focus groups would be needed.
 - i. There have been multiple groups proposed, to be held at the Levy Center, Foster Club, and one for Spanish-speakers through St. Nicholas church.
 - ii. Participants would include individuals with dementia as well as caretakers, but groups would be held separately (i.e., individuals with dementia in one group, caretakers in another).
 - iii. Questions remain about how best to determine if those with dementia can meaningfully participate in the focus groups, and whether they would be able to provide informed consent.
 - iv. The Committee is considering working with the Northwestern Institutional Review Board (IRB) to gain approval for ultimately publishing the results from the focus groups. The Mather LifeWays IRB was also suggested as a potential avenue for research.
 - b. The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, November 17th.

CHAIR REPORT

1. Mrs. Thompson will be receiving the Community Service Award from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) on Saturday, November 18th. The Commission is thrilled that she is being recognized for her tireless work with and on behalf of seniors.
2. Mr. Factor attended the Chicagoland Research Symposium on October 13th. This event was hosted by Mather LifeWays and also attended by Ms. O’Brien; the symposium featured poster presentations related to issues on health and aging and a panel discussion on aging in diverse populations.

STAFF REPORT

LTC Ombudsman, Audrey Thompson, discussed the following:

1. Since the last Commission meeting, two separate long-term care facilities in Evanston have participated in Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) surveys in addition to IDPH surveys.
 - a. One facility hosted the CMS survey team approximately two weeks following their annual IDPH survey, and received two additional tags.
 - b. The other facility hosted the CMS surveyors as part of an “oversight survey” in which the CMS staff monitor the IDPH survey process. Both teams are scheduled to exit the facility by the end of Friday, November 3rd, and the Ombudsman office should receive the results from the visit in approximately two weeks, including any tags or fines.
 - c. The Ombudsman office is typically asked to provide off-site survey reports to survey teams in order to detail ongoing issues or concerns at facilities as well as the results of any past interventions. In one recent visit, the CMS surveyors cited concerns similar to those voiced by the Evanston Ombudsmen.
2. Linda Dotson, longtime Administrator at Westminster Place (Presbyterian Homes) plans to retire this month. Her last day will be November 16th.
3. Rebuilding Together applications are being submitted earlier this year than last. Mrs. Thompson is working with referred clients to determine what projects they need assistance with in their homes; Committee members are encouraged to contact Mrs. Thompson with any potential referrals.
4. The Levy Center will be hosting a free dental clinic on Friday, November 3rd and Saturday, November 4th. There are no coupons available this year, and all services will be provided on a first come, first served basis.
5. Mrs. Thompson performed two in-service presentations at The Mather for their Annual Safety Day.
6. Mrs. Thompson noted that the Boost Your Brain & Memory series at the Levy Center remains well-attended, though the series held at Primm Towers still has some spaces available. Both series will conclude in November.
 - a. Mrs. Thompson indicated that future sessions might involve a small enrollment fee, with the intent of ensuring that those who sign up feel more committed to attending the entire series.
 - b. There is some interest in turning the Boost Your Brain & Memory program into a consistent class at the Levy Center, where individuals with an Evanston Benefit Card would receive a discounted admission price.
7. Mrs. Thompson provided an update on Ms. Peggy Tarr’s concerns, which were voiced during the October Commission meeting. Mrs. Thompson revealed that she recently had a meeting with the manager of Primm Towers and Jacob Blake Manor to discuss the issues raised by Ms. Tarr and other residents of Jacob Blake.
 - a. Despite making some headway with other building issues such as expanding access to the community room and restroom on the first floor, Mrs. Thompson recently received a complaint noting that the

manager at Jacob Blake was no longer allowing Meals At Home personnel to leave meals at a resident's door if they were not in to receive their food, nor are they allowed to leave the meal at the front desk. Mrs. Thompson is working with management staff to implement a new policy to ensure seniors have access to their meals.

8. The taxicab coupon program offered as part of the Evanston Benefit Card benefits is in the process of being revamped. The City of Evanston spends approximately \$25,000 on the program each month, due in part to the fact that many residents appear to be using the cab coupons to handle *all* of their transportation needs rather than merely supplementing other modes of transportation as the program was originally intended.
 - a. Coupon users are now limited to purchasing 10 coupons per week instead of the 25 per week they were previously allowed. Individuals are being encouraged to use alternative means of transportation, such as PACE and RTA.
 - b. In January 2018, the City will be rolling out a new electronic Visa card program designed to help alleviate some of the issues with the coupon program.
 - i. Cab drivers will no longer be able to tell that a rider is using a fare card supplemented by the City, and will therefore be unable to refuse to accept the payment or demand additional payment (such as asking for more than one coupon at a time).
 - ii. The Visa card program will also help cut down on issues of coupon fraud by riders who sell or give away their extra coupons to those who do not qualify for taxicab coupon use.
 - iii. The Visa cards will be more widely accepted: they can be used by taxis, Uber/Lyft rides, Ventra, and Metra, and riders can go to more than just the four towns to which the program is currently limited.
 - iv. Riders will have up to \$150 per month to use on their transportation needs.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Mr. Green attended the recent 8th and 9th Ward meeting during which the City's budget was discussed.
 - a. The City seeks to address a budgetary shortfall by implementing a mandatory furlough day on Friday, November 10th for City staff.
 - b. The proposed combination of the management positions of the Levy and Chandler-Newberger Centers apparently did not go over well with attendees, many of whom voiced support of the current Levy Center recreation manager.
 - c. There will be two additional open meetings for the public to weigh in on the topic, though the dates have not yet been announced.
 - d. Mr. Giller, chairperson of the Levy Advisory Board, noted that the Board immediately suspended all capital grants to the Levy Center as

- part of their opposition to the proposed combination of managerial positions.
- e. The Board feels that the two facilities are very different and a single manager would not be able to effectively support the programming and diverse needs of the clientele at both locations.
 - f. Mrs. Thompson provided additional information about the proposal, reminding the Committee that the Levy Center's recreation manager was previously responsible for both the Levy Center and Ecology Center and only recently was this responsibility scaled back to the Levy Center alone. Additionally, the Levy Center programming is unlikely to falter in the face of a potential change in management because the recreation manager is not the person who plans, schedules, or organizes programs in the Center.
 - g. Attendees were encouraged to reach out to their respective Aldermen with feedback on the proposal.
2. During the October meeting, Commission members were encouraged to contact the Mayor and their respective Aldermen to weigh in on the ongoing issue of lacking affordable housing options. Several members noted that they received prompt and thoughtful responses from the Mayor; Ms. Canter noted that she had received responses from both the Mayor and her Alderman.

NEW BUSINESS

1. It was announced that Ms. Louise Love will be the next Chair of the LTCC starting in January 2018.
2. Members discussed Commission on Aging membership and attendance requirements. Participants were provided with an updated list of contact information for current Commission members.
3. At the initial suggestion of Ms. Achenbach, each Commission member was encouraged to email Chair Signatur a short autobiographical sketch including information on interests, work history (past and/or present), family, etc.
4. Attendees received a list of suggestions for gifts to purchase for the grandparents in the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren group. Commission members were asked to bring their unwrapped gifts to the next meeting in December; items will be stored at the Levy Center until they are wrapped on Friday, December 15th to be given to the grandparents during their holiday party. Items should be limited to \$20, with 20 gifts total from the Commission.
5. Members participated in a conversation regarding affordable housing:
 - a. A special City Council meeting on the issue was held on October 30th, and was well-attended by both residents and Commission members.
 - b. It appeared to attendees that all participants agreed that the lack of affordable housing options constituted a problem, even if not all parties were on the same page regarding how it should be addressed.
 - c. Some suggestions for addressing the issue include quarterly updates on progress toward solutions, developing a subcommittee that would include a realtor and/or developer to recommend revisions to the inclusionary fund,

and bolstering support for landlords who currently manage affordable housing units to serve as incentives for others to follow suit.

- d. The Commission previously discussed the possibility of crafting a letter to the City Council to explain the Commission's views on the subject, but it was determined that the creation of any such letter should be considered after the next Council meeting to address affordable housing, slated to occur in January 2018.
- e. More details on the meeting can be found in an Evanston RoundTable article, including information about the press conference with Connections for the Homeless and Joining Forces for Affordable Housing just prior to the Council meeting:
<http://evanstonroundtable.com/main.asp?SectionID=15&SubSectionID=26&ArticleID=14330>.

COMMUNICATIONS

1. Attendees were encouraged to read a book entitled, "Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City," which explores issues pertaining to the dearth of affordable housing options in Milwaukee, though the topic is clearly more broadly applicable to other locales.
2. The next COA meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 7th, while the next LTCC meeting will be on Wednesday, November 8th.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was moved and seconded to adjourn. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved at 8:42pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Callie Sadler, Ombudsman Assistant