



MEETING MINUTES
Commission on Aging
Thursday, October 5, 2017 at ~3:30pm
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, William Green, Jane Wickenkamp, Catherine O'Brien

Members Absent: Beverly Shearer, Donna Feldman, Barbara Roberts

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

Guests: Tom Giller – North Shore Senior Center, Peggy Tarr, community member, Doreen Price, community member

Presiding Member: Mary Signatur, Chair

DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Chair Signatur called the meeting to order at 3:35pm.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES of September 7, 2017

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Long-Term Care Committee (LTCC)

Ms. Macdonald noted that there were no new updates at this time. The Committee's Fall presentation occurred immediately prior to this COA meeting.

1. Commission participants reviewed the presentation, which most members had attended, roundly praising Ms. O'Brien's program and the production in general.
2. Factors to be considered for next year's program include the technological aspects of the presentation (e.g., switching between video and PowerPoint), as well as whether questions should be taken during or after the presentation.
3. Evaluations were collected at the end of the event and data from the feedback will be ready for discussion at the next LTCC meeting, slated for November 8th. There will be no October meeting for the Long-Term Care Committee.

RELEVANT COMMITTEE REPORTS (AGE FRIENDLY EVANSTON)

1. Ms. Canter reminded attendees of efforts by the Building and Outdoor Spaces subcommittee of Age Friendly Evanston to visit and review businesses in Evanston to determine barriers to accessibility and potential solutions.
 - a. While the subcommittee would still like to work with Mr. Patrick Hughes, owner of Inclusion Solutions, the planned article for the Evanston RoundTable has been tabled temporarily due to concerns of a possible conflict of interest between a for-profit company and the City's Age Friendly initiative.
 - b. Although the article has been postponed, the RoundTable will consider publishing it in the future depending on how the project evolves.
 - c. Efforts are underway to expand the process of assessing additional Evanston businesses for accessibility.
2. The Dementia Friendly committee held another meeting since this Commission's September meeting. Past sessions have included attempts to organize a focus group 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.
 - a. The focus group idea has been tabled for the time being. Ms. Wickenkamp and Ms. Lockhart both expressed their impressions that there needs to be more education on what dementia is (and isn't) both in the community and the committee itself in order to proceed.
 - b. The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, October 20th.

CHAIR REPORT

1. Chair Signatur expressed the Commission's deepest condolences for the loss of a member's wife who recently passed away.
2. Chair Signatur reminded members that Vice Chair Macdonald will be departing from the Commission in April 2018. While the Commission will be sorry to see her go, members have been grateful to her many contributions during her time with the COA.

STAFF REPORT

LTC Ombudsman, Audrey Thompson, discussed the following:

1. Mrs. Thompson described the follow-up sessions for the Boost Your Brain & Memory program, which was introduced at the Levy Center as the LTCC's Fall Presentation just prior to the Commission's meeting. Mrs. Thompson and Ms. Helen Gagel will lead the follow-up sessions at the Levy Center and will also host the series at four subsidized housing locales at different dates and times from October 2017 through February 2018.
 - a. In addition to these community-based programs, Mrs. Thompson has been asked to facilitate the series at faith-based communities in the City.
2. The Ombudsman program will be expanding its focus on nursing home discharges as part of a new statewide initiative. While past efforts have focused on maintaining resident rights in the event of involuntary discharges, the

Ombudsman program in Evanston will now receive information on all resident discharges from facilities, even those that were voluntary and initiated by the resident.

3. Mrs. Thompson recently attended the Adult Protection and Advocacy Conference (APAC) in Springfield, IL, as well as the Regional Ombudsman meeting.
 - a. During the conference, IDPH staff apprised attendees of upcoming changes to the annual survey process. Starting in November 2017, instead of the entire IDPH survey team meeting with the Administrator upon entering a facility, only the team lead will meet with the nursing home Administrator while the rest of the team will go to the floors immediately to speak with residents and assess care. Additionally, IDPH plans to convert survey proceedings to a paperless process through the expanded use of tablets.
 - b. Ms. Callie Sadler has compiled a spreadsheet of all IDPH communications received by the Ombudsman office pertaining to IDPH investigations for complaints as well as surveys for long-term care communities. Ombudsman staff will use this information to determine which “tags” or deficiencies could benefit from additional Ombudsman attention.
4. Members participated in a conversation regarding affordable housing:
 - a. Mrs. Thompson was recently asked to present at the most recent City Council meeting to describe the housing challenges that most impact older adults, including taxes and the lack of affordable housing options and home repair assistance. However, the presentation was discontinued before Mrs. Thompson had a chance to delve into the issues faced by seniors. The topic is slated to be revisited during the next City Council meeting on October 30th.
 - b. Mrs. Thompson extended her thanks to Commission members who attended the City Council meeting, thereby proving that others in the community care about the issue and support those who seek to find solutions to the problems.
 - c. Attendees discussed the importance of continuing to show support for more affordable housing options, as well as the benefits of open meetings so issues cannot be overlooked or swept under the proverbial rug.
 - d. Members suggested that the Commission craft a letter to the Mayor and City Council to detail the importance of the subject.
 - e. Mrs. Thompson reiterated ideas regarding the discretionary fund, into which contractors can opt to pay rather than include affordable housing in their buildings. For example, it was proposed that contractors no longer be allowed to opt-out of earmarking a specific number of units in their buildings for affordable housing options, or would be required to pay such a prohibitive amount into the fund that they would decide it would make more sense financially to build affordable units.
 - f. Members were encouraged to review the City Council meeting notes to gain a better understanding of what had been discussed, so that the Commission could plan a course of action. Mrs. Thompson emailed the Commission links to this information shortly after the meeting adjourned.

- g. Chair Signatur suggested that Commission members write emails to the Mayor and Aldermen in their wards to express concerns on the subject, and to send a copy of these letters in hard copy as well.
- h. Mr. William Green noted that the new proposed federal tax code, if it were to pass into legislation, could have an impact on what qualifies as “affordable” housing, as well as property taxes and interest rates.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- 1. Multiple Commission members have recently attended community events:
 - a. The not-for-profit day at the Farmers’ Market was well-attended; Commission volunteers helped field questions from interested community members regarding senior services in Evanston.
 - b. With Ms. Macdonald’s decision to step down as Vice Chair, Commission members voted for a new Vice Chair at this time. Mr. Alan Factor previously volunteered; during this meeting, other interested parties were encouraged to step forward. Mr. Factor was voted in as the next Vice Chair of the Commission on Aging, to serve at least until the next election in Fall 2018.
 - c. Mr. Mike Iverson continues to work with Rebuilding Together to learn more about their organization and upcoming projects.
 - d. Mr. Tom Giller noted that there are still 11 coupon books available for the Farmer’s Market. Individuals interested in applying for the coupons were encouraged to contact him through the end of October at (847) 866-5938.
 - i. Additionally, Mr. Giller reminded attendees that Medicare open enrollment is occurring later this month. North Shore Senior Center has SHIP counselors available for assistance.
 - ii. North Shore will be collaborating with the Levy Center and Walgreen’s for open enrollment events scheduled for October 24 and November 30. At the November event, a pharmacist will be available to answer questions about medications and prescriptions.
 - iii. Commission members were reminded that energy assistance programs are now open through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Interested parties were directed to contact North Shore’s Niles office to make appointments.
 - e. Ms. Marcia Achenbach mentioned that members of the Evanston Police Department recently visited residents of The Mather to discuss police training with regard to individuals with dementia. Ms. Achenbach noted that the police appeared very receptive to feedback from residents.
 - i. Mrs. Thompson also mentioned that she works closely with the police department to meet with older adults in the community who are at risk of incurring fines and citations from the property standards division of the City of Evanston.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1. Members were encouraged to peruse the updated calendar provided to attendees, and to note the new quote included therein.

2. Mrs. Thompson will be leading a meeting at The Mather on October 18 to teach staff about how to identify, intervene in, and prevent bullying behaviors between residents.
3. The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren group will host their holiday party in December again this year; however, it was proposed that the grandparents receive gifts in addition to those given to the grandchildren. Commission members will be presented with a list of gift suggestions at the next COA meeting on November 2nd, and participants will be asked to bring the gift itself to the December 7th COA meeting.
4. Guest Ms. Peggy Tarr addressed the Commission regarding issues with a staff member at one of the subsidized senior buildings to garner feedback from Commission members on what could be done to rectify the problems.
 - a. Attendees discussed the need for more specific information (which was largely withheld due to residents' concerns of retaliation) to receive the highest level of assistance from appropriate parties such as the staff member's supervisor, Aldermen, HUD, and overarching management company.
 - b. Mrs. Thompson was familiar with the situation as well as past issues at the same site with the same staff member. The Alderman has also been apprised of the matter, and attempts were made to host an open tenant meeting to discuss the issues. However, residents who attended the meeting were reluctant to report specific issues due to the previously-cited fear of retaliation. Mrs. Thompson has, however, been able to intervene in the past on behalf of residents who reported their concerns directly to her, largely by speaking directly to the staff member's supervisors.
 - c. Mr. Giller suggested residents contact Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky's office for assistance or additional guidance/referrals.
 - d. Members noted that the issues do not technically constitute elder abuse because the staff member in question is not in a caretaker position.
 - e. Ms. Tarr indicated that she would be willing and able to write letters to the housing board and any other necessary parties as well as discuss the problems at the next City Council meeting if needed.

COMMUNICATIONS

1. Ms. Dorothy Strong informed attendees that the Fleetwood-Jourdain Fashion Show is scheduled for October 29th, 2017 from 1-5pm. Tickets are \$10 each.
2. The next COA meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 2nd, while the next LTCC meeting will be on Wednesday, November 8th. October's LTCC meeting was rescheduled due to the recent Fall Presentation.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was moved and seconded to adjourn. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved at 4:51pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Callie Sadler, Ombudsman Assistant