



## **MEETING MINUTES**

Commission on Aging

Thursday, February 1, 2018 at ~7pm

Levy Center, 300 Dodge Avenue

**Members Present:** Alan Factor, Jessie Macdonald, Marcia Achenbach, Sue Canter, William Green, Jane Wickenkamp, Tom Giller, Rick Gergerian, Bonnie Lockhart

**Members Absent:** Louise Love, Mike Iverson, Dave Sutor, Donna Feldman, Dorothy Strong, Catherine O'Brien

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

**Guest:** Doreen Price, community member

**Guest Speaker:** Terry Edlin, New Community Vision

**Presiding Member:** Mary Signatur, Chair

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### **DECLARATION OF QUORUM**

Chair Signatur called the meeting to order at 7:02pm.

### **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES of December 7, 2017**

The COA minutes from December 7, 2017 were approved as written.

### **GUEST PRESENTATION**

As part of the Commission's ongoing discussion of affordable housing options in Evanston, Ms. Terry Edlin provided information on her program, New Community Vision, which aims to provide shared housing options to individuals in the community.

1. Commission members were provided with handouts describing the program, including how participants are matched.
2. Ms. Edlin explained that similar home-sharing programs in cities such as New York and San Francisco are marketed toward millennials, while she hopes to expand the scope to include older adults, single mothers, students, and other individuals who would benefit from communal, intergenerational living arrangements as well as more affordable housing options.
3. Although her program is in a conceptual stage, Ms. Edlin is working to partner with community groups and congregations to determine the best next steps.
4. More information on New Community Vision can be found online:  
<http://newcommunityvision.coop/>.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### *Long-Term Care Committee (LTCC)*

Ms. Louise Love, Chair of the Long-Term Care Committee, was not present during today's Commission meeting. Chair Signatur from COA presented in her stead. The Long-Term Care Committee met on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018, and discussed the following:

1. Mrs. Thompson informed attendees of her Human Services presentation on December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017, with regard to proposed changes to the subsidized taxicab program.
  - a. With the proposed program, there will no longer be a \$4 coupon subsidized by the City. Instead, the City will match the rider's purchase of up to \$75 for a total value of \$150 on a transportation debit/credit card. Riders will pay the full fare of whatever option they use to any location in Illinois.
    - i. The new proposed program aims to diversify riders' transportation options rather than limiting rides to taxicabs in four designated regions. In the new program, riders will be able to travel anywhere in Illinois provided they have the funds available on their card.
  - b. For individuals who do not want to use a debit/credit card, consumers will have the option of selecting the paper coupon option. For \$5 per coupon (an increase of \$1 from the current program), riders will be able to use taxis in the City of Evanston only. The coupons will be redeemable by the cab drivers for \$10 paid by the City.
    - i. Riders will only be able to purchase up to 15 coupons per month (a value of \$150 to the drivers), as the City wishes to remain consistent with the amount they are paying for each rider's transportation needs.
  - c. Although the physical paper coupons will be scaled back, the overall services will expand to encompass more transportation options within the entire state of Illinois rather than focusing only on taxis in the four designated geographic locations.
  - d. Note: Additional changes made to the program since the LTCC meeting in January will be discussed in the Staff Report section.
2. IDPH and CMS continue to visit nursing facilities in Evanston, with Westminster's recent site visit concluding with 10 tags (one of the original 11 was deleted after the facility's Plan of Correction was processed).
  - a. Some of these tags related to food preparation and availability, meal/snack times, pressure sores, and provision of care.
  - b. E-tags have been introduced in an attempt to address care concerns arising during times of natural disasters, as nursing homes in hurricane- and fire-afflicted regions of the country were ill-prepared for these occurrences. Staff will be questioned about the emergency protocols in place for certain events, so staff must be trained on all aspects of facility responses even in emergency situations.
3. Mrs. Thompson has received two applications for volunteer Ombudsmen, and hopes to bring them on-board in the next few months.

4. The Boost Your Brain and Memory series will resume in the community at Walchirk Apartments; overall feedback from those who have completed the program has been positive.
5. The LTC Committee plans to visit four long-term care communities in 2018, starting with The Grove in February, and Shore Homes, Greenwood Care, and Aperion Care later in the year.
6. Committee members began brainstorming ideas for 2018's fall presentation. Suggested topics included financing of long-term care, home care options, roles and support for caregivers, and end-of-life issues.

## **RELEVANT COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### *Age-Friendly Evanston*

1. The Committee hosted a meeting with Mr. Patrick Hughes, founder and CEO of Inclusion Solutions, as well as several business leaders on January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The Committee presented information on the Age-Friendly initiative overall and the Business checklist designed to help business owners determine whether their businesses are age-friendly.
  - a. Some meeting attendees initially expressed doubts regarding Evanston businesses' willingness to participate in the process if financial benefits were not expressly involved.
  - b. Participants provided helpful feedback on how to increase buy-in from local businesses and avoid giving the impression that the checklist was a City-imposed requirement with which businesses would be forced to comply.
  - c. The updated checklist will instead allow business owners to see what they already do to make their business age-friendly, and see what else, if anything, could improve accessibility by older adults.
  - d. The Committee will meet again in February to discuss next steps and hone the business guide, invitation to businesses, and the aforementioned checklist, so as not to lose momentum.
2. Age-Friendly representatives met with Mayor Hagerty on January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018 to discuss extending the project, as Age-Friendly is in the final year of the initial five-year plan.
  - a. Since its inception, Age-Friendly has merged some committees and saw the departure of three members; the group looks to appoint two more members.

### *Dementia-Friendly Committee*

1. The Committee continues to move forward with plans to host focus groups in February and March 2018; the groups have received approval through Northwestern's Institutional Review Board (IRB).
  - a. The focus groups will include questions for both caregivers and individuals with different dementias.
  - b. Committee members will be trained on how to facilitate the groups during their February meeting.

## **CHAIR REPORT**

1. Chair Signatur informed attendees that both Ms. Sue Canter and Ms. Jane Wickenkamp will be departing from the Commission; the March Commission meeting will be their last.
2. Since December's meeting, participants submitted their biographical sketches to Chair Signatur; these were merged into a single document that can now be updated as needed and distributed when new members join the Commission.

### **VICE CHAIR REPORT**

1. Vice Chair Factor apprised Commission members of CJE's Linkages program (<https://www.cje.net/linkages>) which serves older adults who care for adult children with various disabilities.
  - a. Linkages help participants explore resource options and helps with service coordination, advocacy, future planning, and navigating government benefits. Participants can be provided with referrals to aging and disability services for the older adult as well as the person with the disability.
2. Members were encouraged to attend a half-day conference on February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018 in Wilmette. The topic is entitled, "Policy Advocacy and You: Why Personal Stories Matter" and seeks to highlight the importance of finding and sharing personal stories to promote change in disability and aging policy. More information is available online and through the following flyer ([http://www.icfs.org/sites/default/files/Policy\\_Advocacy\\_and\\_You.pdf](http://www.icfs.org/sites/default/files/Policy_Advocacy_and_You.pdf)); interested parties should register by February 19<sup>th</sup>.

### **STAFF REPORT**

LTC Ombudsman, Mrs. Audrey Thompson, discussed the following:

1. After completing eight focus groups in the Community, the proposed changes to the taxicab program have been solidified; the final proposal to Human Services will occur on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018 with an anticipated roll-out of the new program in mid-April.
  - a. With the new program, there will be two options for riders:
    - i. Debit/Credit card: riders will no longer use a \$4 paper coupon subsidized by the City. Instead, they will receive a transportation debit/credit card onto which funds can be loaded. The City will match the rider's purchase (up to \$150 total value) and riders will pay the full fare of whatever option they use, to any location in Illinois.
      1. For example, if a rider puts the full \$75 on their fare card, the City will contribute \$75 as well. The rider can then use Uber, Lyft, taxis, or even Amtrak/Metra using the fare card; however, they will be responsible for paying the full fare each time. Once that \$150 is spent, they must wait until the next month to put more money on the card.
      2. Unused funds will roll over to the following month, but cannot be over \$150.
      3. The majority of focus group attendees were interested in the debit/credit card option.
    - ii. Coupons (until 12/31/2018): in an attempt to accommodate those who are not accustomed to using a card for purchases, the City will

allow riders to purchase coupons at \$5 each (an increase of \$1 from the current program); these coupons can only be redeemed for taxicab rides within Evanston.

1. The price increase and new geographic limitation will necessitate a change to the current ordinance, which specifies the current cost of the coupon as well as its use in Evanston, Skokie, Wilmette, and Lincolnwood.
  2. Riders on the Coupon program would be able to purchase up to 15 coupons per month (which has the same payout value as the \$150 limit for the credit/debit card option).
- b. Sliding scale update: Over the course of the community focus groups, it became clear that some program users' transportation costs exceed the proposed limits noted above.
- i. Currently, individuals in a one-person household must make less than \$30,000/year to qualify for the Evanston Benefit Card.
  - ii. With the new taxicab program, individuals who make \$15,000/year *or less* would qualify for the following considerations:
    1. Debit card program: Individuals would be able to put up to \$125 of their own money on their card per month, and the City would match that amount for a total of up to \$250 per month.
    2. Coupon program: Riders would be able to purchase up to 25 coupons per month.
  - iii. Anyone making between \$15,001 and \$30,000 would be limited to the aforementioned \$150 limit for the card, or 15 coupons per month.
- c. Both programs will be re-evaluated in December 2018, but at this time, the plan is to transition *all* riders to the debit/credit card program by the end of the calendar year.
- d. The new programs involve the same eligibility requirements (age, income, residency, disability) as the current program.
- i. However, as of January 1, 2019, individuals over the age of 80 will only be able to participate in the subsidized taxicab program if they meet the income requirements for the Evanston Benefit Card. Currently, anyone over the age of 80 is granted the Benefit Card (and therefore access to the taxicab coupon program) without having to meet income eligibility criteria.
- e. The City hopes to permit temporary increases in allowable coupon purchases or card loading in special circumstances, such as an injury or medical issue requiring more frequent doctor visits for a short period of time.
- i. For example, if a consumer is only allowed 15 coupons per month but is required to attend a physical therapy appointment three times per week for two months in addition to their normal coupon use, the City hopes to be able to grant a temporary increase in coupon purchases so the rider can attend the appointments for that period of time without having to give up their regular transportation options.

- ii. Staff are working to determine how this can be accomplished with the current computer program, and the Ombudsman office will develop an application to approve these temporary increases.
  - f. Tipping is not necessarily required for Uber/Lyft, but could be deducted from the fare card directly. With the current coupon program, tips are recommended but must be given in cash.
  - g. A local bank will be providing assistance educating the community on using debit cards (for those who are unfamiliar) and budgeting their fare card funds to ensure they are used effectively.
  - h. The proposed program aims to diversify riders' transportation options rather than limiting rides to taxicabs in four designated regions. In the new program, riders using the debit/credit card option will be able to travel anywhere in Illinois provided they have the funds available on their card.
    - i. A potential down-side of the new card program is that riders need to check their balance by calling 311; partial payments are not allowed. For example, if a user has \$5 left on their fare card and the ride comes to \$7, they will not be able to pay \$5 on the card and the rest in cash.
  - i. Additionally, groups that currently purchase coupons in bulk would be unable to do so. It has been proposed that one group be issued multiple cards with the same group name on each one.
  - j. The fare cards cannot be used for anything other than transportation.
  - k. Drivers will not be able to tell that the rider is using a subsidized program, and would therefore be unable to discriminate against program users. This has been an issue with some drivers under the current coupon program.
  - l. Complaints can be handled through other avenues, rather than by contacting the City (depending on what form of transportation was used). For example, Uber/Lyft can be contacted directly with issues regarding a ride, and drivers can be rated directly by the rider which typically yields better customer service.
    - i. Lost/stolen cards can be deactivated right away, and replacement cards are sent out within three to five days.
    - j. The City is working toward developing a user guide and FAQ for the new program, once finalized.
- 2. Mrs. Thompson updated Commission attendees on the search for a Levy Center Manager, as interviews are well under way.
- 3. Rebuilding Together's kickoff took place last Thursday; 21 applications have been submitted on behalf of older adults in the community.
- 4. With regard to the Ombudsman program, Mrs. Thompson noted that IDPH continues to focus on discharges from long-term care facilities without due process, particularly with facilities claiming they can no longer meet the needs of the resident. Ombudsmen continue to educate residents on their right to stay at the facility, and provide options for contesting or appealing discharge decisions.
  - a. The Ombudsman program continues to work with facilities to ensure they are reporting facility-initiated discharges and transfers each month.
- 5. Mrs. Thompson shared her experience viewing "Monster in the Mind" at North Shore Senior Center, with Mr. Dan Kuhn serving as moderator for the

subsequent discussion on the documentary about a journalist who has been diagnosed with the gene considered to be contributory to developing Alzheimer's.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

1. Ms. Wickenkamp and Mr. Factor attended the Grandparents Raising Grandkids holiday party in December, describing it as a "big success."
2. The Boost Your Brain and Memory program at Walchirk Apartments has been going well thus far. Once all community series are completed, a determination will be made on the next steps for the program.
3. Attendees were encouraged to submit their nominations for the Aging Well Award on the City of Evanston's website before March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018.
4. Commission members who attended the Legislative Breakfast on January 26<sup>th</sup> discussed impressions of the event.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

1. Chair Signatur noted a recent 8<sup>th</sup> Ward meeting, including discussion on a planned development at Chicago and Howard that would include five affordable units out of the proposed 24.
2. Commission members discussed a recent City Council meeting on the topic of Affordable Housing.
  - a. Members mentioned a proposal to utilize some of the affordable housing fund for private landlord rental assistance. This would allow access to funds for landlords who currently offer affordable units to make improvements on their property to maintain affordable housing. Additionally, the proposal would allow for landlords who *want* to offer affordable housing the opportunity to make improvements on their property for the purpose of offering affordable units.
    - i. Discussion will continue to determine whether funds would be given as grants or available as a loan, and how long the landlords utilizing such a program would need to commit to providing affordable units.
    - ii. Many landlords are apparently unaware of the community development block grants. More information on this program can be found on the City's website (<https://www.cityofevanston.org/government/departments/community-development/planning-zoning/community-dev-block-grant>).
    - iii. City staff have been assigned to revise the landlord rental assistance program.
3. Mrs. Thompson apprised Commission members of a recent posting on the Facebook group "Dear Evanston," highlighting ongoing issues of reverse mortgages leading to the eviction of an older adult in the community.
4. Commission members discussed possible sites for community meetings in 2018. In the past, the Commission has held meetings at Aperion Care and Over the Rainbow (2017); Perlman Apartments and Primm Towers (2016); and Three Crowns Park and Walchirk Apartments (2015).
  - a. This year, Commission members suggested hosting a viewing of the documentary "Monster in the Mind" at the Evanston Public Library in June.
  - b. Members also expressed an interest in the CJE Adult Day Program and a presentation from Erie Health.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

1. Prior to the meeting, Commission members were alerted to an article in Evanston RoundTable (<http://evanstonroundtable.com/main.asp?Search=1&ArticleID=14615&SectionID=6&SubSectionID=6&S=1>) written by Ms. Peggy Tarr, who previously attended a COA meeting to discuss issues with a particular staff member at one of the subsidized buildings and concerns regarding the treatment of residents on-site.
  - a. Although the situation improved for a short period following the meeting with the COA and subsequent interventions, the situation has apparently deteriorated once again.
  - b. Mrs. Thompson explained the limitations of the Ombudsman in these types of situations because the site in question is a HUD building, where the long-term care Ombudsman program does not have jurisdiction.
    - i. Even if the building (and/or similar living arrangements) were to have a site-specific Ombudsman, individuals in an Ombudsman role cannot proceed with a complaint without resident permission. In this situation, most residents who voiced concerns did not provide permission to proceed on their behalf due to concerns of retaliation from staff.
2. The next COA meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018, and the next LTCC meeting will be on Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was moved and seconded to adjourn. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved at 8:49pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Callie Sadler, Ombudsman Assistant