

**Minutes of the Commission On Aging Meeting  
Garvey Center – Leonardtown, Maryland  
Monday, September 25, 2006**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Start Time: 12:00 p.m.  
Location: Garvey Senior Center, Leonardtown, MD  
Chaired By: Sheral St. Clair, Chairperson

**PRESENT**

**COA Members:** Mary Ruth Horton, Mary Ann Grusholt, Sheral St. Clair, Pat Myers, Kathie Reich, Florence Lanham

**Department of Aging Staff:** Lori Jennings-Harris, Jennie Page

**Guests:** Bill Roberts, St.Mary's College

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Motion to approve agenda by Pat Myers and was seconded by Mary Ruth Horton; the board agreed.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion to approve minutes by Pat Myers with changes to minutes, motion seconded by Mary Ann Grusholt; board agreed.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**September Forum Report:**

Sherrie St. Clair, chairperson led a discussion summarizing the third Senior Survey Forum held on September 19, 2006. Sheriff Zylak's office should be commended for the amount of time that they contributed and also the Sheriff's concern to each of the issues. We had excellent speakers and very informative handouts. The possibility of having more forums including other topics of interest was also discussed. We are now at the point where we should begin to brainstorm. What comes next? Once this is pulled together, we need to make a presentation to the Commissioners to close it out. Mary Ruth Horton provided a brief history of why the forums were held: The reason we did this was that we didn't have current hard data that was from the seniors; it was just what the Commission thought should be recommended in the annual report that is made to the commissioners. So, the survey was created and sent out, and we, very scientifically, went about tallying the results and giving them a weight, and based on how the results came out we had these forums to find out 'why did you choose the area that you chose?' We were surprised that some of the areas got the results that they did. We were very surprised to find that seniors did not feel safe, that they were really concerned about safety. Transportation is also a huge issue and turned out to be the major issue at the tri-county strategic planning session that Ms. Horton attended. Transportation is also a priority for the Department of Aging; however, it is something that isn't going to be easy to solve.

Ms. Horton stated some of the issues with transportation include the qualifications that a driver has to have a commercial driver's license, additional training for lift equipped buses, the lack of funds to purchase additional buses. These are issues that we could look at, find out what the situation is, and what kind of funding is needed, We cannot continue to have seniors out there

that cannot get help. "We have done all we can do from this point as volunteers that are appointed by the county commissioners to find information. We are now to a point where we need some professional help. The county has consultants come in for other issues and now our next step might be to request a needs assessment or strategic plan to plan for the senior population explosion that is already happening. Services cannot be accomplished with either static budgets or very, very little increase or even a decrease. The decrease comes if you think in terms of the population increase, and then you divide out how much per senior. We are very concerned with the huge increase that we are expecting in the number of seniors to be served. One of the big challenges for this commission is going to be looking far enough in the future to at least attempt to meet the needs of the senior population

Florence Lanham - I thought that the forums were very good. But I would like to see more in depth in some of those topics, especially Grandparents. If we could have a seminar or a speaker come in and talk about grandparents and working with their grandchildren. We need to look at giving the adults information on caregivers and grandparent caregivers programs. Ms. Lanham stated that she has received information from the University of Maryland and from Frederick County about programs focusing on grandparents raising grandchildren.

It was suggested that an article be placed in the next issue of the newsletter to see what the interest level there might be for either a seminar, an ongoing program and/or a support group.

Mary Ruth Horton – I don't know of any other commission that I have talked with around the state that is doing this kind of thing, if we put something together like this, it could even become a pilot project for the state. We have been complimented quite a bit around the state on this whole survey idea that we have done. Ms. Lanham's expertise in the past was with the extension office, that is why it is so important, that we get people to serve on this commission who have good backgrounds and who show that when there is a need they know where to go and get the results.

Mary Ruth Horton – Two other issues that came up on the survey were estate planning and public safety. Ms. Myers has spoken with Tim Bennett from the Department of Public Safety about the lack of local broadcasting in the case of an emergency, when the power is out, and is suggesting that Mr. Bennett be invited to attend a COA meeting to update the commission on other emergency broadcasting possibilities.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Future COA members update:**

A discussion was held on the need for new COA members; the bylaws state a minimum of ten members. It was requested that new member lists be provided at the next COA meeting. After December of 2006, there will be only seven members. We have to look at what we need: expertise, back ground, what a person can bring, how willing would they be to serve on committees and work between meetings, because that is really what we have to do to be successful.

## **DOA DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Lori Jennings-Harris reported looking into and evaluating the meals program and the possibility of making some changes in the near future. An update will be provided at the next COA meeting. An update was provided on the Health Fair scheduled for October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2006 at the Loffler Center. The Department was also represented at the County Fair with a table that contained information about the Department. Staff changes included the addition of Brandy Langley as our new Senior Program Specialist for the Garvey Center.

## **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be on October 23, 2006 at 12:00. A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting; the board agreed. The meeting adjourned at 2 p.m.

Prepared by:

Dana DiGregorio  
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