

**Minutes of the Commission On Aging Meeting  
Garvey Center – Leonardtown, Maryland  
Monday, August 27, 2007**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Start Time: 12:00 p.m.  
Location: Garvey Senior Center – Room 1, Leonardtown, MD  
Chaired By: Sheral St. Clair, Chairperson

**PRESENT**

**COA Members:** Sheral St. Clair, Kathie Reich, Sam Brown, Vicki Brown, Florence Lanham, Sandra Wheeler

**Department of Aging Staff:** Lori Jennings-Harris, Director; Jennie Page, Deputy Director; Dana DiGregorio, Senior Administrative Coordinator

**Guests:** None

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Motion to approve the agenda as written was made by Sam Brown, and was seconded by Kathie Reich

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion to approve July 2007 meeting minutes as written was made by Kathie Reich, and was seconded by Sandra Wheeler; the Commission agreed.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Transportation Survey Update**

- Sherrie St. Clair contacted Jacque Fournier from the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) regarding the Transportation Questionnaire that was published in the May-June edition of the New Beginning Newsletter. Sherrie St. Clair posted the Transportation Questionnaires at the Lexington Park Library and wanted to confirm with Jacque if there was a deadline for turning in the questionnaire. Jacque Fournier stated that there is not deadline, but would like to finish up with the results by the end of August.
- Lori Jennings- Harris also contacted Jacque Fournier, via e-mail, regarding the quantity of results received, Jacque Fournier stated that the numbers were higher than last month, but did not give a specific number of questionnaires received.

**Legislative Liaison – Mike LaChance**

- Sherrie St. Clair has a concern regarding keeping the Commission On Aging up to date on Legislative information that relates to the Commission. Mary Ruth Horton, a former Commission on Aging member, stated that Mike LaChance, Legislative Liaison for the Maryland Department of Aging, was her contact person and that he would contact her around budget time, when the legislature is in session, with pertinent information the Commission should be informed about.
- Sandra Wheeler questioned if the Commission on Aging still has a representative from the Southern Maryland area on the State Commission on Aging. Jennie Page stated that the current representatives term has or will be expiring soon, so a new representative will be needed. Sandra Wheeler will contact Mike LaChance to get information on who is currently representing Southern Maryland and where the state meetings will be held.

## **New Projects**

### **Fundraising for Ripple Center**

- At the last meeting the Commission discussed obtaining a list of the needs of the Ripple Center is in need of funding for. Sam Brown visited the Ripple Center and provided the Commission with a needs list. The Ripple Center is in need of funds for arts and Craft supplies, at least \$500 a year; birthday celebration supplies, for their once monthly birthday celebration to include decorations and cake; funds for the outdoor deck Ripple would like to have built around the side and back of the center for the participants to be able to go outside; and funds for a commercial freezer and commercial oven/stove.
- Sandra Wheeler explained a former fundraising at the Ripple Center. There was a discussion about initiating a 'Friends of Ripple Center' group through the families and friends of the participants, and allowing this group to promote fundraising for the center and obtain funds for the needs list of the center with the assistance of the Commission on Aging.
- The board discussed options and ways to raise funds, and who would be the primary organizational force for the fundraisers.
- Lori Jennings-Harris stated that family and friends of the participant are willing to participate in a committee for fundraising and promoting the Ripple Center's needs. Lori Jennings-Harris will follow up with the families that voiced an interest in this and get a committee formed.

### **Senior Rides Grant**

- The Department of Aging applied for a State Grant requesting \$25,000 for the Senior Rides Program. The Department of Aging received a letter stating that we received a grant in the amount of \$17,000, plus a county match. However the Notification of Grant Award, which makes it official, has not been received by the Department of Aging.
- The Senior Rides Program is designed to develop door-to-door transportation services for seniors provided by volunteer drivers. Mileage reimbursement is available for volunteer drivers, but drivers will be required to carry their own liability insurance. Volunteer drivers will need to go through a criminal background check, Motor Vehicle Administration check, and driver training.
- There will be a section in the Department of Aging newsletter for September/October giving a description of the program and asking for volunteers. Jennie Page asked the Commission members if they know of volunteers currently providing such a service for a senior, to have that driver contact Melissa Meatyard, Senior Information and Assistance Caseworker at Northern Center who will be heading up the Senior Rides Program, to sign up for the program.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Health and Human Services Update**

- The Local Management Board presented to the Board of County Commissioners a plan suggesting a central point of contact between agencies, such as Local Management Board, Health Department, St. Mary's County Public Schools, Department of Aging, Department of Social Services, the Housing Authority, Walden Sierra Center and Three Oaks, to be a source of information for the senior population as well as the special needs population.
- Lori Jennings-Harris added that since the presentation to the Board of County Commissioners, there have been 2 meetings of the Health and Human Services Planning Committee. The committee is still in the preliminary stages of planning and conceptualizing what this plan will become. There is another meeting of the Health and Human Services Planning Committee scheduled for September 12, 2007. The goal for this committee is to be able to present a plan to the Board of County Commissioners sometime in November.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### **Area Plan Update**

- The Area Plan for the Department of Aging is complete and will be forwarded to the Board of County Commissioners' Office for signature by the Commission President. The Area Plan addresses the Department of Aging plan for the next four years, staffing, the different programs within the Department currently and what the Department of Aging thinks the programs could look like over the next four years, new initiatives, coordination efforts between departments, as well as addressing the challenges of being a rural county and limited amount of funds for services.

### **2008 Legislative Proposals**

- The Department of Aging has been asked to submit issues that are important to the aging population and the Department of Aging that need to be addressed by Legislature. Lori Jennings-Harris will be presenting this request to the management staff of the Department of Aging for input. The proposal package deadline is September 10, 2007.

### **Transportation Survey**

- Lori Jennings-Harris has been trying to contact Professor Bill Roberts of St. Mary College, to obtain the results for the Transportation Survey that one of his classes participated in, but has not been able to reach him. Lori Jennings-Harris will continue to pursue contact with Professor Roberts.

### **Code Red Notification Article**

- Alternate information for the Code Red Notification System was discussed at the last Commission On Aging meeting. An article has been published in the September/October issue of the New Beginning Newsletter advising seniors that if they would like to have an alternate phone number or contact listed with the Emergency Services for Code Red Notification, they need to contact the Department of Public Safety and have that alternate number listed.

### **Department Status Update**

- The May and June Status report will be released by the end of this month.

### **Personnel Changes:**

- Interviews have been conducted for the Client Account Specialist position and a selection has been made. The candidate has not yet accepted the position.
- Mary Walters, Senior Office Specialist at Loffler Center has notified the Department of her retirement. Her last day will be August 31, 2007. The Senior Office Specialist will be advertised.

### **Additional Remarks**

- Kathie Reich, Vice Chairperson, put together a document showing all the items the Commission On Aging should be working on or keeping an eye on according to the Final Report of the Senior Forums.
- Sandra Wheeler noted an article in the Enterprise last week regarding abuse against seniors. She asked if the Commission was taking a proactive stance on elder abuse to assist in helping this demographic in our community. Sandra Wheeler also noted that the Department of Aging could do more in educating the community, encouraging the senior population to report elder abuse.
- Vicki Brown noted that the Department of Aging and the Senior Centers need to use the radio to advertise. Create an upbeat way to let people know what the Department of Aging is and what activities and services the senior centers have to offer to the senior community. This comment started a discussion regarding how the Department of Aging

advertises for emergency days. It was noted by several commission members that St. Mary's County needs to advertise outside of the local area broadcasting because many people in this area do not listen to the local stations therefore would not have heard the advertisement for the center to be open late or close early.

- Sandra Wheeler noted that on page 3 of the New Beginning Newsletter there is an article titled "St. Mary's County Offers Matching Property Tax Credit". Sandra Wheeler is participating on a committee that is reviewing the Senior Property Tax Credit, and will be making recommendations for corrections, updates and changes for this program to the Board of County Commissioners by the end of October. Sandra Wheeler is hoping to have updated information to present to the Commission On Aging at the September meeting.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be on September 24, 2007, at 12 Noon, at the Garvey Senior Center.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Sandra Wheeler made the motion to adjourn the meeting, and Sam Brown seconded the motion. The Commission agreed. The meeting adjourned at 1:19 p.m.

Prepared by:

Dana DiGregorio

Sr. Administrative Coordinator