

**Minutes of the Commission On Aging Meeting
Garvey Center – Leonardtown, Maryland
Monday, September 26, 2005**

CALL TO ORDER

Start Time: 1:30 p.m.
Location: Garvey Senior Center, Leonardtown, MD
Chaired By: Mary Ruth Horton, Chairperson

PRESENT

COA Members: Mary Ruth Horton, Daniel Hinz, Ardith Young, Kitty Turner, Florence Lanham, Larry Younger, Mary Ann Grusholt, Sherrie St. Clair.

Department of Aging Staff: Jennie Page, Julie Van Orden, Valerie Pilkerton, and Ted Grant

Mary Ruth introduced the two officially new Board members for their first meeting; Sherrie St Clair and Florence Lanham.

Guest: County Attorney, John Norris

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Agenda accepted.

OLD BUSINESS

Senior Tax Credit Status: Public Hearing Report (Moved up to assist the County Attorney time schedule)

John Norris discussed the tax cap for senior citizens and reviewed the ordinance. Mr. Norris stated that the Board of Commissioners are trying to make the senior citizens lives easier by making it affordable for them to live in their homes that they have been in for years. It was unfortunate that the General Assembly adopted legislation that requires us to define limited income and unfortunate that the Treasurer was not able to implement our 2004 ordinance with the adopting legislation that came from the General Assembly in 2005. We think we have clarity on both of those issues now and we are ready to move forward with a \$80,000 tax/income cap. Mr. Norris supplied the Commission with a copy of the changes made after the public hearing almost 2 weeks ago. John Norris discussed some of the changes; if there is a senior citizen that applies for the tax, the spouse did not apply, and that senior citizen that did apply passes away, then the spouse will continue to have the benefit of the credit. The widow or widower that is a senior citizen shall, upon application, be entitled to use as his/her base year that of his/her deceased spouse if that deceased spouse had received the Credit for that same dwelling in the previous year. Sherrie St. Clair asked a question about base year. "It is now 2005 and say you are 80 years old and this is just starting now, your base year would be 2005?" Mr. Norris stated that it would be fiscal year 2004, which is July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005, so it would be the property tax year 2004. That would be the base year for everyone as long as they apply this year.

John Norris stated since the Treasurer mails her bills at the end of July, you will want to have all the applications in so the Treasurer can reflect the credit on the tax bill. Ms. Horton asked if you were born after July 1, would you wait until the following year to be eligible even though you would be 70 half of year, would you have to wait until the following year? Mr. Norris replied "yes".

Mr. Norris stated that the significant changes are from the input of the Commission on Aging, NARFE, and the general public to what was initially proposed as the amendment to the 2004 Senior Tax Credit.

COA Members voted to support what is needed to get the sunset clause removed and authorized Ms. Horton to speak for the COA.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of 8-29-2005, COA meeting were approved; Motion was from Ardith Young, and was seconded by Ms. Grusholt with no changes.

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR RETIREMENT

Acting Director Report: Future Direction of DOA: Mary Ruth Horton advised that Gene Carter had retired and the Board of Commissioners had appointed Jennie Page as Acting Director. Ms. Page stated that the DOA has been working on many projects including the Senior Tax Credit, and looking forward to the Housing at Northern. Mr. Rollins is planning to make a presentation to the BOCC while most likely will not take place until the end of October. Ms. Page discussed the continued programming at our Senior Centers, to be able to add more programs and keep the programs that we already have going at this time. In-home services are going really well, and she wants to keep the funding going for all our programs. Ms. Page advised the COA that the DOA is about fully staffed at this time. She will be putting together a six-month progress report on Oakley shortly. We are looking forward to the COA Senior Survey Forum which will provide additional information from our seniors to help in future planning.

Ms. Page stated that the Health Fair is on October 21 and 22, 2005; it will be held at the Loffler Senior Center from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. both days.

OLD BUSINESS

Senior Tax Credit Status: Public Hearing Report (discussed at beginning of meeting after approval of agenda)

Senior Survey Results Forum, October 7, 2005: Committee Report

Ms. Horton stated that the planning for the Forum has been completed. Each of the facilitators has worked with their own committee and their own community experts. Ms. Horton wants other COA members to serve on each of the three areas that will be discussed. Daniel Hinz will be helping Larry Younger with health. Mary Ann Grusholt will work with Pat Myers on housing. Ardith Young is helping Mary Ruth Horton with crime and personal security, and identity theft. Sherrie St. Clair will be a floater. Florence Lanham has a previous commitment out of town on that day. Larry Younger reported that Julie VanOrden, Debbie Barker, Barbara Hak with the St. Mary's Health Connections and Pat Simone from the Health Department will be on his panel of community experts. Ms. Horton stated that Sheriff David Zylak will be on the crime and personal security panel.

Ms. Horton wants everyone to remind the seniors about the Senior Survey Results Forum and to get their registration in. She also praised the Enterprise for the wonderful job they did on the announcement in the paper for the Forum, and the Department of Aging staff for all their hard work in preparing for the Senior Survey Results Forum.

Meal Program monthly Status Report: July and August 2005

Number of clients served, new clients and waiting list

Since there was not a meeting in August, July and August reports were given.

Julie VanOrden stated that there are currently **236 clients** on the Meals on Wheels Program, **131** are frozen meals, **105** are hot meals, and five new Volunteer drivers.

Jennie Page reported for July we have **225 clients** with **14** new clients and **8** clients removed and for August, there were **231** clients with **13** new clients and 9 clients removed. There is no waiting list.

Budget Status: Local and State

Jennie Page said the Department is working within the budget limits. Ms. Horton stated a big reason for us being in existence is that we can look out for those in need or for those who cannot financially look out for themselves. We will continue to provide programs for all income levels for all seniors to be able to participate.

Senior Center Updates: Garvey, Loffler, Northern

Ms. Page stated that we are looking at our programs and working on expanding them. She also stated that she is very impressed with what staff have done at Loffler to expand programming.

Daniel asked if there was any possibility in bringing the Social Security back; Jennie replied that they are looking at other alternatives for that.

Nutrition Site Updates: Oakley, Ridge

Ms. Horton asked if there has been programming done at Oakley. Ms. Page responded that there is a dietician that goes to Oakley on a monthly basis, the Pace class which was once a week is now twice a week, our I&A staff will start next week going once a month to present programs and to answer questions.

Ms. Page said Ridge meets one day a week, Wednesday, and the seniors meet there mainly for socialization and playing cards, but staff does go to Ridge to provide information. The County does not pay rent for Ridge. Ms. Horton encouraged the Commission On Aging members to visit the different sites. Oakley meets at the All Saints Church Hall. We also have the LIFE classes, and a new partnership with CSM. Classes are being offered through CSM at the three Senior Centers as well as on the campus of CSM.

Proposed New Senior Housing Status: Next Steps

Ms. Horton states the BOCC is supportive of the Senior Housing in St. Mary's County. There will be a form that the seniors will fill out at the Senior Survey Results Forum to see how many need smaller homes, so that we have the results to take to the BOCC to back up the need for Senior Housing.

Ms. Horton stated that the proposed project is adjacent to the Northern Senior Center, which is ideal. It would need to be affordable and the units would need to be small, so it would not have a lot of up-keep. The Recreation and Parks Department is going to be bringing forward to the BOCC a plan to include the community center and swimming pool, which would be a plus. They are talking in terms of not putting soccer fields there. There needs to be things there that the seniors can utilize. There would be one and two bedroom units, and in the center, there would be a one-floor facility that would be for assisted living. There could be a transition from the independent unit to the assisted living unit, as necessary. Ms. Horton also stated that she thinks this group has done a wonderful job in looking towards the future. We not only have to be concerned about the baby boomers who are coming along, to increase the number of seniors that are going to have one type of need, but also need to look at our seniors who are going to be in poor health and who are going to want to downsize to stay in the county. Ms. Horton stated it is up to us to start thinking, and saying to the commissioners that in 10 years this is what we envision for our County and we want the Commissioners to envision this with us. Ms. Myers and Ms. Grusholt are on the Northern Housing Committee. Ms. Grusholt stated that the committee started this effort several months ago. Phil Rollins has met with them and is working on the master plan. Ms. Horton says that the BOCC agrees that since this is moving forward, the Department of Aging needs to have a real voice in what is going on. It had been previously under the Department of Recreation & Parks and since they are tasked with working on the site, the

Department of Aging and the Commission on Aging will be working together to move forward with the plans on senior housing.

NEW BUSINESS

Area Agency Plan Update to State Department of Aging
Tabled until next meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

RSVP

Jennie stated that RSVP now has an advisory council and will no longer request that the Commission on Aging act as an advisory council.

Medical Adult Day Services: Combination of Centers

Ms. VanOrden stated that Brenda Chaillou, the Social Worker at Ripple had her baby. Statistically we have 52 enrolled at Ripple with average daily attendance of 37. They just celebrated Medical Adult Day Service Week. If you go over there at any time, you will see that there are activities that go on in every room. Ms. VanOrden stated that there can be a max of 48 participants to attend a day; 52 are enrolled, but not all come daily.

United Seniors of Maryland

Ms. Horton stated that a lot can be accomplished next year when we start on the Legislative issues.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Grant says that he is doing a Workshop on Aging October 15, 2005 at the Northern Senior Center.

Larry Younger stated that the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home is having an Open House, on October 20, 2005 from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

October 24, 2005 at 1:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Sherry St. Clair motioned that the meeting be adjourned. Daniel Hinz seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 3:05p.m.

Prepared by:

Valerie Pilkerton

Senior Administrative Coordinator, St. Mary's County Department of Aging