

Final minutes as approved by the COA on January 21, 2009

**FAIRFAX AREA COMMISSION ON AGING
FINAL MINUTES OF MEETING
Wednesday, December 17, 2008**

Dranesville District Meeting Room – 1437 Balls Hill Road

Commissioners present: Tena Bluhm, Eileen Duggan, Joe Heastie, Sally Hottle, Danielle Wight, Lin Wagener, Jack Fritz, Anita Kapper

Commissioners absent: Elly Doyle, George Myers, Shak Hill

Staff present: Grace Starbird, Brenda McGrail

Others present: Supervisor John Foust, *Dranesville District*, Nanette Bowler, *Director, Department of Family Services*

The meeting of the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging (COA) was called to order by Eileen Duggan, Vice Chair, at 1:07 p.m. in the Braddock District Office Meeting Room.

Adoption of Agenda, Public Comment Period, Review and Adoption of November minutes

A motion to adopt the agenda for the day's meeting and accept the draft minutes of the November 19 meeting without corrections or omissions, was made by Sally Hottle and seconded by Shak Hill.

Presentation: One Stop Shop for Fairfax County Transportation Services

Buffy Ellis, Senior Transport Planner of KFG Group, Inc. made a presentation to Commission on Aging (COA) to recommend an operational structure for a One-Stop-Shop that provides Fairfax County residents with one place to call, email, or go online to learn transportation options, eligibility information, fare information, routing and scheduling information and receive trip-making assistance.

Some of the range of the work done by the KFG Group includes:

- Recommending an operational structure for a centralized information service
- Developing a budget and assessing non-county funding sources

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The report included three options for action, including integration with work being done by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

Ms. Ellis urged the COA to review the draft final report before it is presented to the Board of Supervisors. Any comments or suggestions to the KFG Group would be welcome.

A discussion by COA members included that these are tight budget times but also that for older adults there will be a need to have information available by phone rather than just via computer.

Update: Fairfax Connector Fair Increase and Elimination of Paper Transfers

Denis Paddeu updated the COA on Fairfax County's approval of an increase in bus fares and the elimination of paper transfers for the Fairfax Connector Bus Service which will become effective on January 4, 2009. This will make Fairfax Connector's bus fare policy equal to WMATA's Metrobus fare policy.

With the elimination of the paper transfers, the SmarTrip card will be used for transfers and will make it easier to ride the bus by faster boarding and fewer delays that result from cash and paper transfer issues. These SmarTrip cards work like debit cards. Passengers who instead pay cash will be charged the full fare on each vehicle they board of \$1.35.

He stated that the Fairfax County Department of Transportation is giving seniors free SmarTrip cards to those persons who attend sessions that teach them how to use the cards on the buses. You must also be 65 years and above and show proof of identity to receive the version of the card that is for older adults and that gives discounts.

Mr. Paddeu mentioned that his department is conducting as many public outreach events as possible and would welcome input on avenues and venues to market the new rates and use of the SmarTrip card.

Break

During the 10 minute break the vice chair Eileen Duggan, on behalf of the COA, acknowledged Carolyn Carter for her excellent services as a staff member of the COA and presented her with a gift of appreciation. Carolyn Carter is retiring from the County after 31 years of service. Coffee and cake were served.

Presentation: The County's Transit Development Plan (TDP) – Status of the Data Collection and Analysis

Randy White and Laura Byala gave a status update of the data collection and analysis of the County's transit plan. The County commissioned TDP to conduct analysis and develop recommendations.

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TDP's agenda consisted of conducting public meetings, customer surveys, resident surveys and ride checks. The public meetings were to get citizen opinions on what two most important improvements should be made to the Fairfax Connector and Metrobus Service and the one main reason they use the bus. Ms. Byala stated that these surveys were conducted when the price of fuel was at a high and that this may have increased the number of persons noting that public transportation is more cost effective. The overall objectives of the bus rider survey research were to address the following questions:

- What is the demographic profile of Fairfax Connector riders?
- What is the transportation profile of Fairfax Connector riders?
- Where are Fairfax Connector riders coming from and going to and how are they getting to and from the bus?
- What is the rider's trip profile?
- How do riders obtain information about the system and what are the main reasons they use the bus?
- What are the most important priorities for improving Fairfax Connector service?

Ms. Byala summarized what they had learned from conducting the survey. That they need to:

- Focus service on work trip markets
- Focus on connecting shopping and recreation destinations with older and younger populations
- Focus on service provision in transit-dependent parts of the county
- Try to limit the need to transfer in general, but no need to focus on particular demographics
- Focus service on needs of County residents but continue to look at the employment destinations within the County for non-County residents

She concluded by stating that her team will return to the COA in March 2009 with draft recommendations and then to the Board of Supervisors with their findings in June.

Director's Updates

Grace Starbird informed the COA that she had attended the Human Services Council (HSC) meeting on Wednesday, December 10 where there was a discussion of the rankings of budget cuts to be recommended to the County Executive/Board of Supervisors. She mentioned that Tena made an excellent presentation communicating the COA's testimony to the HSC the week before.

The 109 possible human services cuts equaled \$49+ million and were ranked by the HSC as significant impact (#1 - first to go), serious impact (#2 - next to go) and severe impact (#3 - last to go). Of the COA's top priorities:

- The \$506,609 reduction in the home based care budget
Ranking by Human Services Council = # 3

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\$1.2 million cut in “safety net” funds that provide for basic services to older adults with no other alternatives

Ranking by the Human Services Council = # 2

\$401,724 net county budget reduction by eliminating the General Relief Program

Ranking by Human Services Council = # 3

Other aging related recommendations included:

- #3 Reduce number of days lunch is served at Senior Center from 5 to 4 days per week
- #1 Reduce Senior+ sites (from 7 to 4)
- #3 Reduce FASTRAN group trips at Senior Centers and Senior Residences

The COA asked the Human Services Council to consider the interdependence of the FASTRAN (human services transportation) and other transportation cuts on the County's transportation system. The HSC discussed this as well, and though it gave rankings to the FASTRAN cuts it reviewed, it plans to look further into the impact of the cuts to the system and will also ask that this be done at the County Executive/Board of Supervisors level.

Ms. Starbird asked the COA to send her any questions they might have regarding the budget.

Ms Starbird also noted that since the last COA meeting, the very successful Reinventing Your Home event was held that promoted Universal Design. There were about 300 attendees and welcoming remarks by the Chair of the Board of Supervisors, as well as two Supervisors. Several breakout sessions were held. Those who attended the meetings gave it high ratings on the evaluation.

COA Member Activity

Sally Hottle None at this time

Elly Doyle None at this time

Jack Fritz None at this time

Shak Hill mentioned that he attended the Triad meeting, the Attorney General's effort on seniors and senior safety. It was an excellent event.

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Lin Wagener stated that staff should keep the COA in mind for things they could do to assist. For example, speak about the 50 + plan at events, etc. If any of them can fill in for staff, they would love to.

Joe Heastie None at this time.

Eileen Duggan mentioned that she had attended the ProAging/IAC meeting on December 4 where Tena made an excellent presentation on the economy's effect on seniors. Eileen also had breakfast with Delegate Jim Scott who expressed interest in the Livable Homes Tax Credit .

She announced that she will be attending the January 28 Aging in Place seminar from 2-3:30pm. The speaker will be Patrice Winter, Eldercare coordinator at George Mason University.

Old Business

None at this time.

New Business

None at this time.

Meeting Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting was offered at 3:20pm by Shak Hill and seconded by Sally Hottle. There were no objections to the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda McGrail