

FAIRFAX AREA COMMISSION ON AGING (COA)

DRAFT MINUTES VIRTUAL – VIDEO/AUDIO MEETING

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89691439914>

Password: COA-m1234!

Or

Telephone: 888-270-9936 (US Toll Free) or 602-333-0032 Conference code: 231525

Wednesday, September 15, 2021, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

COA Commissioners Present: Cathy Cole (Chair/At Large), Cathy Muha (Vice Chair/Sully), Carolyn Sutterfield (Secretary, City of Fairfax), Mike Perel (Braddock), Martha Cooper (City of Falls Church), Kay Larmer (Dranesville), Phyllis Miller Palombi (Hunter Mill), Sharron Dreyer (Lee), Kathy Hoyt (Mason), Diane Watson (Mount Vernon), Joe Heastie (Providence), Tom Bash (Springfield)

Staff Present: Tara Turner, Jacquie Woodruff, Hilda Naranjo, Kristin Helfer Koester, Alex Kramer

Call to Order: Chair Cathy Cole called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

Roll Call and Motions to Proceed with Electronic Meeting: The Chair called the roll and passed the virtual gavel to Vice Chair Cathy Muha so the following motions could be made to establish VFOIA compliance:

- Cathy Cole motioned that the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging had a quorum present via remote connection and that each member's voice could be adequately heard by all participating members. The motion was seconded by Diane and unanimously approved.
- Cathy Cole motioned that the state of emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic made it unsafe for the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging and the public to physically assemble and that the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging was conducting the meeting electronically through the dedicated telephone line listed above. The motion was seconded by Sharron and unanimously approved.
- Cathy Cole motioned that all agenda matters would address the Emergency itself, were necessary for continuity in Fairfax County government, and/or were statutorily required or necessary to continue operations and the discharge of the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging's lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities. The motion was seconded by Martha and unanimously approved.

Approval of the Minutes: Sharron motioned that the minutes from the July 2021 COA meeting be approved. The motion was seconded by Larmer and unanimously approved.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Presentation: Aimee Brobst, Coordinator, and Lori Epp, Communications Manager, Countywide Strategic Plan, Fairfax County Department of Management and Budget, presented on the current status of the proposed Countywide Strategic Plan for Fairfax County. First drafted in 2019, the Strategic Plan has been on hold because of the pandemic. This allowed development of an interactive approach to gathering community feedback. A series of public events have been held, with a final vote by the Board of Supervisors scheduled for October 5.

The SHAPE the Future of Aging Plan was one of three draft plans (along with the Chairman’s Taskforce on Equity and Opportunity and the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Framework) that were “crosswalked” with the nine priorities of the Strategic Plan. Five SHAPE elements align closely: Economic Stability and Planning, Services for Older Adults and Family Caregivers, Personal Well-Being, Housing and Neighborhood Supports, and Access to Mobility Options.

Brobst conducted a feedback session for commissioners. For each Strategic Plan priority, COA members were shown a slide listing several “focus areas” and asked to pick the two they considered most important. Top choices were as follows:

- *Cultural and Recreational Opportunities:* Access to Local Arts, Sports and Cultural Opportunities; Representation of Diverse Cultures
- *Economic Opportunity:* Economic Stability and Upward Mobility for All People; Promoting Economic Vibrancy in All Parts of Fairfax County
- *Effective and Efficient Government:* Inclusive Community Engagement; Financial Sustainability and Trustworthiness
- *Empowerment and Support for Residents Facing Vulnerability:* Services Are Easy to Access and Use; All People Can Meet Their Basic Needs
- *Health and Environment:* Access to Health Services; Improving Physical and Behavioral Health Conditions
- *Housing and Neighborhood Livability:* Affordability and Quality of Housing; Preventing Homelessness
- *Lifelong Education and Learning:* Access to Early Childhood Education; Supporting Career-Based Training
- *Mobility and Transportation:* Efficient and Varied Transportation Options; Accessibility, Affordability and Equity
- *Safety and Security:* Timeliness and Quality of Emergency Response; Effective and Equitable Administration of Justice

Approval of the Agenda: Cathy Cole offered a motion to move New Business ahead of Old Business and the Director’s Report. The motion was seconded by Kay and unanimously approved.

New Business

COA Role in SHAPE the Future of Aging Plan, Phase 1

Cathy Cole opened with a reminder that the COA has an assigned role in getting ready for the new survey phase of SHAPE. What do we need to communicate about the process? What is the survey? Why a second one? What is the COA?

Cathy Muha suggested ways to get back in touch with constituents: Do a presentation or use provided materials for the survey. Be more visible. Let people know you represent them and invite their participation. Visit senior centers, Shepherd's Centers, Optimist Clubs, the Elks, faith-based groups, homeowners' associations. Introduce yourself and become a point of contact.

COA members contributed the following suggestions:

- Publicize what the COA has accomplished in your Supervisor's (or city's) newsletter.
- Let officials know you are willing to do more, provide information, and attend meetings.
- Create possible articles that we can customize with local details.
- Go places where seniors gather and engage them face to face.
- Create a COA newsletter and possibly a helpline.
- Publish commissioners' phone numbers and email addresses on the COA webpage.

Staff member Jacquie Woodruff reminded the group that there are restrictions on COA actions. Citing a former Commissioner's Corner section in the Golden Gazette that became hard to sustain and was sometimes used inappropriately, Jacquie explained that the COA is part of county government. Members cannot promote their own expertise using a COA tagline. Any newsletter or other COA subcommittee would also be required to follow FOIA rules.

Recommendations: The COA will ask the county for a one-pager about the survey, along with a timeline, to be used in ways that feel comfortable to commissioners. Members will compile a list of interested groups for the October meeting or even invite representatives to "attend" virtually.

Old Business

Commissioner Updates

Sharron, Diane, and Jacquie attended a Zoom meeting with Regina Coyle of Housing and Community Development (HCD) about the proposed Gum Springs Glen II housing development. The project would add 60–90 units of affordable senior housing on the property next to existing Gum Springs Glen. HCD met with some push-back on the plan from community groups. One community concern is traffic along the Rt. 1 corridor.

Cathy Muha attended two events in September:

- A meeting of the Long Term Care Coordinating Council's new Equity in Aging and Disability Committee Meeting, which seeks to promote best practices in community-based aging and adult disability services aligned with the One Fairfax Policy. One objective is to develop a data-driven repository of equity lens resources, evaluations, and surveys.
- A Virtual Death Cafe hosted by Jane Euler, an end-of-life doula, hospice volunteer, and founder of Transition with Tranquility. Conversation in these programs, which are intended to be a safe space to discuss death and dying, is guided by attendees.

Mike Perel reported on the FCPA pickleball report sent to commissioners, which acknowledged the COA's support for new courts. There was a September 14 public meeting on ways to support more courts. On the movie club project, Mike, Phyllis, and Jacquie met with Neighborhood and

Community Services regional manager Evan Braff this summer to talk about the project. Braff suggested talking to libraries, which was done. Mike will help support the movie club idea but believes it needs someone in the county to take it on. Perhaps it can be a SHAPE initiative.

Director's Report: Tara Turner, Director of the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, said the AAA had looked into adding questions to the upcoming communitywide survey for SHAPE. This was determined not to be feasible because of national benchmarking requirements for which the questions are precise. The AAA will assist in developing a one-page promo to help people understand what SHAPE is.

There are several changes to Meals on Wheels (MOW). Prior to the pandemic, 491 MOW clients received meals three times a week from volunteers working different route boundaries. During the pandemic, 676 clients received frozen meals once a week, delivered by a contracted vendor. The once-a-week system, which was more efficient and more equitable across districts, has now become permanent, with additional costs covered by grant funding.

A January 2021 survey of MOW recipients and volunteers found that a majority of clients felt once-a-week worked for them, allowing them to make appointments on other days. Social isolation was a concern for some who wanted more interaction than just a drop-off. With the vendor handling the “well check” aspect of the delivery service, the focus for volunteers will now be on social isolation. About 530 volunteers indicated in the survey that they want to stay on in another capacity. The AAA is working to develop a “mealtime visitor” program, benchmarked against “lunch buddies” programs in other jurisdictions. Other volunteer opportunities—social visiting, holiday meals delivery, grocery shopping, etc.—are planned as well.

New AAA programs coming October 1 include a service called “Chore” aimed at household maintenance for at-risk populations, and an animatronic pets program to address social isolation. The agency expects to receive additional American Rescue Plan funding of \$2 million, some of which could be used for caregiving or other supportive services. Allocation of funding for new COA grip cards is in the works.

Announcements: There were no announcements.

Adjournment: Joe motioned that the meeting be adjourned. Diane seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 pm.