

**FAIRFAX AREA COMMISSION ON AGING (COA)
FINAL MINUTES OF VIRTUAL – VIDEO/AUDIO MEETING**

Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89074560529>

Password: COA-m1234!

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

Wednesday, April 20, 2022, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

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

Commissioners Absent: Kathy Hoyt (Mason), Cathy Muha (Vice Chair/Sully)

County Staff Present: Tara Turner, Jacquie Woodruff, Beth Ann Margetta, Kristin Helfer Koester, Hilda Naranjo, Area Agency on Aging; Regina Coyle, Senior Planner, Special Projects, Department of Housing and Community Development; Sharon Williams, Senior Planner, Zoning Evaluation Division, Department of Planning and Development; Candice Bennett, At-Large Commissioner, Fairfax County Planning Commission

Call to Order: Chair Cathy Cole called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Roll Call and Motions to Proceed with Electronic Meeting: Chair Cole called the roll and read the motions. Secretary Carolyn Sutterfield conducted the votes.

- Chair 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. Diane seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- Cathy 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. Martha seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- Cathy 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. Kay seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Review of the agenda: Sharron motioned and Phyllis seconded that the agenda be approved. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of the minutes: Kay made the motion to approve the minutes from March 16, 2022; Joe seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Public comment: Sonny Caputo, resident of Springfield, spoke about property tax relief for seniors, which he believes has not been addressed adequately. He was invited to send an email to Jacquie Woodruff, who will forward it to the appropriate authorities.

Emily Braley of NV Rides and Bonnie O’Leary and Eileen McCartin of the Northern Virginia Resource Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NRVC) were introduced by Mike Perel. Both groups received 2022 awards from Virginia’s Commonwealth Council on Aging.

Supervisor John Foust, with assistant Jenny Phipps, welcomed the COA virtually to the Dranesville District. Like other members of the Board of Supervisors, he has been working to advance affordable housing projects in his district. Dranesville has 274 affordable units planned near the Innovation metro station, along with 150 independent living units and 26 memory units.

AAA Director’s Report: Tara Turner, Director, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging

- As of April 25, Lauren Elcesser is the new Assistant Program Manager of Area Agency on Aging Programs. A Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), Lauren previously worked within several program areas and funding streams under the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging’s Area Plan contract. Most recently she was Interim Director of Geriatrics at Inova Health System.
- The AAA thanks Chair Cathy Cole and the COA for their FY 2023 budget testimony.
- The Ombudsman Volunteer Program was selected as a winner of Fairfax County’s Volunteer Program of the year.
- Recent referrals to the Caregiver and Support Service’s Repair & Renovation program include helping with stairlifts, bathroom floor repairs, grab bars, handrails, and toilet replacement. There were also nine new referrals for Occupational Therapy consults to provide home safety evaluations for recommended safety measures. The Chore program has had its first three referrals for decluttering and other services.

OLD BUSINESS

• COA Interim Workplan: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Analysis to Support SHAPE the Future of Aging Plan Development

Chair Cole explained a new schematic for the COA to use in SWOT analysis of existing conditions and future recommendations.

• Panel Discussion: State of Affordable Housing in Fairfax County

In response to questions submitted by commissioners in advance of the meeting, three representatives of Fairfax County’s affordable housing efforts addressed the COA.

o **Regina Coyle of the Department of Housing and Community Development** used the 2022 Housing Blueprint: At a Glance chart to outline current and planned projects in the county (see this slide and others in HCD’s [March 15 presentation](#) to the BOS Housing Committee). The Blueprint identifies four housing priority categories: homelessness, special needs populations (including seniors and people with disabilities), low-income working families, and workforce

(households earning up to 60% AMI). The chart is adjusted annually; HCD often exceeds its goals for the year. The Housing Community-wide Strategic Plan is also updated annually.

The 2022 Blueprint shows, by district, current and planned projects on BOS-owned or Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCRHA) land that include senior housing: Oakwood (150 senior units/Lee), West Ox (34 supportive units for vulnerable singles/Sully), Autumn Willow (150 senior units/Springfield), North Hill, (63 senior units/Mt. Vernon), New Lake Anne Village (240 senior units/Hunter Mill), Little River Glen (120 renovated and 60 new senior units/Braddock), and One University (120 senior units/Braddock).

There are also a significant number of private projects in the pipeline that include housing for seniors. All of the county's multifamily projects set aside a minimum 10% of new units to be ADA compliant for persons with disabilities.

o **Sharon Williams** of the Department of Planning and Development addressed a COA question about obstacles to reaching targets for affordable housing. She cited two—community opposition to development, and inflexibility of the zoning ordinance. In the first case, people may be supportive of housing initiatives in general, but have a different opinion when it comes to their own neighborhood. Both planners and developers encounter opposition. As a planner, Williams also gets calls from homeowners or potential buyers looking to subdivide a lot to get some income from a large property. That becomes difficult in an area with lot minimums; it is possible to go through an entitlement process, but that is lengthy and expensive.

o **Candice Bennett**, an At-Large member of the Fairfax County Planning Commission, also cited objections from community members to things like vehicle trips generated, impact on schools, or environmental impact. Developers and community members don't always understand what older residents need in terms of new buildings that address specific design issues—both in the units, with walk-in showers and wider doorways, and in the environment, with wider sidewalks and curb cuts and other accommodations for mobility. Parking policies need updating as well; seniors may not drive but their service providers do use cars.

Another point of advocacy for the commission could be rents that take into account the income levels of seniors. The county talks about AMI for households, but many older residents or people with disabilities are on fixed incomes, often just Social Security. How can rents be graduated to allow them to stay in their communities, near friends and family members?

Q & A:

1. *Is there one AMI criterion for all affordable units?* It varies by household size. The federal Housing Urban Development Office publishes a breakdown of income tiers each year. The 60% AMI figure for a Fairfax County family of four is currently \$77,400. New figures for different metropolitan areas come out each April.

2. *Who maintains these properties?* The county employs two main firms for management, and there is an on-site manager for each one, but ultimate responsibility for oversight rests with Amy Ginger, HCD deputy director of Operations, and Margaret Johnson, HCD Director of Rental Housing. Each property is inspected more than once a year.

3. *Do developers have to specify how they will address special needs?* Williams said the building code has been updated to the point where developers now wrap universal design (UD) into the process. Coyle added that a 10% ADA compliance proffer, which goes beyond UD, helps developers qualify for the 9% tax credit award. Cathy C. pointed out that builders have an “aging in place” certification. Is there a similar certification for developers? Williams said she would look into it.

4. *Is it true that someone with a lot of money in the bank can qualify equally for affordable housing with someone who has a similar income but no assets?* Coyle did not know the answer, but said that HCD has a finance and branch management division that oversees qualification criteria for entry into affordable units.

5. *Is there a system by which a certain percentage of new housing is made available to people in the neighborhood who qualify?* Sharron Dreyer mentioned that this was done when Gum Springs was developed but was harder to implement down the road. Coyle agreed that it is easier to implement with a new project than later, when keeping units occupied takes precedence.

6. *What if the solution is not more low-cost homes, but higher salaries for workers?* Bennett agreed that salary issues are key. In Fairfax County, the AMI for a family of four is over \$120,000. In Richmond, where the AMI is much lower, housing is easier to find. Coyle added that the county is focused on reducing the cost of land by using undeveloped county-owned parcels. But the problem still comes back to low supply and the high per-unit cost of building.

7. *How can we help older residents to stay in their homes?* Those who have been in their homes for 30-50 years may find it hard to meet increased costs—not just property taxes but also repairs, yard maintenance, and more. Sometimes selling is the only way out. The county does not have a policy to discourage teardowns, but it does have zoning rules like setbacks to limit what can replace an older home.

8. *What can we do to encourage more housing for older adults?* Bennett suggesting staying in touch with supervisors and commissioners so the COA can be proactive in supporting senior developments. Write a letter of support for a particular development. Address ageism and misconceptions about older adults. Offer data about other senior developments and how they have handled problems like traffic. This could help change minds.

● **Future Presentation Update: Mental Health, Nutrition, Personal Well-Being** – Cathy Muha and Phyllis Palombi Miller. [Cathy M. was absent and did not participate.]

Cathy C. noted that although the COA has used the term “mental health” for this SHAPE category, the guest panel in May will focus on all aspects of “Personal Well-being,” including mental and public health, isolation, community engagement, and nutrition. Carolyn reported that the Human Services Council has been asked by the Board of Supervisors to take on questions of mental health and housing. Since the COA now has an HSC liaison, Martin Machowsky, we may want to share our findings with him before the HSC holds its own related sessions.

Cathy C. said that panelists proposed by Cathy M. and Phyllis for the COA’s May meeting include representatives from the CSB, the ADCR intake line, the Northern Virginia Ombudsman program, and the Senior Centers. Public health has already been addressed with the COVID update and today’s report on the Adult Day Health Care realignment. She called for commissioner comments.

- Phyllis called the proposed version of the panel too broad. She said she and Cathy M. were focusing on the mental health aspects of isolation, in terms of depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and physical deterioration. They planned to ask medical professionals to discuss the strengths and weaknesses they were seeing in their own practices.
- Kay asked to have someone from the caregiver community participate.
- Cathy C. pointed out that there will be more community input in later phases of SHAPE planning. The COA is seeking a sense of what is happening now within county agencies that fall under our purview. Subject matter experts can be brought in later.
- Carolyn suggested asking existing county advisory groups that deal with health care to talk to us about the consequences of isolation. Bringing outside experts in to talk about areas not specifically assigned to the COA might be seen as a criticism of their work.
- Further discussion about including caregivers ended with planning to have them participate in focus groups later.

The conclusion was that May's panel would come from the four agencies as previously outlined.

- **Long Term Care Realignment.** Shauna Severo, Division Director, Health Department (HD), explained the recent decision to transition Adult Day Health Care (ADHC) from the HD to the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS). The Long Term Care Coordinating Council was tasked to look at what other jurisdictions are doing; they found no peer county in which ADHC was part of the health department. Having the Senior Centers, ServiceSource, and ADHC operating as a continuum of services in NCS makes the best use of resources, staffing, and budgeting. Three of four ADHC centers are already co-located with senior centers. Nurses will continue to operate under orders of individual physicians. HD and NCS will maintain a good working relationship.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Commissioner Updates**

- Northern Virginia Aging Network (NVAN) meeting in April brainstormed ideas for legislative programs. Mike suggested establishing a state-level commission on falls prevention. Diane offered a suggestion on staffing levels in nursing homes.
- Film Club: Phyllis reported that the COA/NCS project has been put on hold for administrative reasons.

- **Announcements:** NV Rides will hold a celebration of its Commonwealth Council on Aging award on May 10; all are invited.

- **Adjournment:** Mike motioned that the meeting be adjourned. Martha seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 3:04 pm.

Minutes prepared by Carolyn Sutterfield, COA Secretary.

Approved: May 18, 2022

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Carolyn Sutterfield
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Carolyn Sutterfield, COA Secretary

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Date

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Cathy Cole
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Cathy Cole, COA Chair

06/29/2022 | 10:46:38 EDT

Date