



MEETING MINUTES

Commission on Aging

Thursday, February 6, 2020 at ~4pm
Levy Senior Center, 300 Dodge Avenue

Members Present: Mary Signatur, Mark Payares, Adrienne Allen, Tom Giller, Bonnie Lockhart, Dave Sutor, and Frank Fennell

Members Absent: Litrea Hunter, Jeanie Ramsey, Rick Gergerian, Catherine O'Brien, and Lonnie Wilson

Staff Present: Audrey Thompson, Community Services Manager/Regional Ombudsman; Callie Sadler, Senior Services Advocate

Guests: Sharon Stolz, North Shore Senior Center

Presiding Member: Alan Factor, Chair

DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Chair Factor called the meeting to order at 4:15pm once quorum was achieved.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES of December 5, 2019

The COA minutes from December 5th, 2019 were approved as written.

NEW MEMBER INTRODUCTION

Newly-appointed member of the Commission, Ms. Adrienne Allen, introduced herself and was warmly welcomed. Ms. Allen will be provided with a copy of the biographical sketches of current Commission members so that she can craft her own.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Long-Term Care Committee (LTCC)

1. LTCC Chair Litrea Hunter was not present for today's meeting; however, Ms. Signatur noted that the LTCC convened in January and has already begun considering topics for the 2020 Fall Presentation.

RELEVANT COMMITTEE REPORTS

Dementia-Friendly Evanston Initiative (DFEI)

1. Ms. Ramsey was not present to discuss most recent Dementia-Friendly meeting on January 14th. Chair Factor noted that at the most recent meeting, a sub-committee was formed to draft an application for membership as well as rules, the latter of which were adapted from the Commission on Aging's own rules. The drafts will be discussed during the next meeting, scheduled for February 11th.
2. Attendees were encouraged to attend an upcoming event at the Evanston Public Library on March 12th from 1 to 3pm. There will be a screening of the documentary entitled, "Too Soon to Forget" with a follow-up discussion on the film and presentation on how to become a Dementia Friend.
3. Chair Factor noted that Northwestern University is actively recruiting individuals with memory loss to participate in a study for their swallowing program.

Affordable Housing (AH)

1. Chair Factor mentioned that AH has successfully made the transition to becoming a sub-committee of Joining Forces for Affordable Housing.
2. More information was disseminated to the Joining Forces Steering Committee about the Sawgrass feasibility study regarding housing needs of older adults.
3. AH intends to investigate whether there are any State waivers for supportive living facilities remaining.
4. Alderman Fleming's next Ward meeting will include discussion of the development of a 12-story building that has already secured approval by the City but was initially slated to be nine stories tall. The changes have already garnered some negative feedback from community members.
5. Chair Factor described having difficulty getting in touch with the organization that manages the waitlist for affordable units in the Evanston area. More information on the centralized waitlist can be found on the City's website:
<https://www.cityofevanston.org/government/departments/community-development/housing-grants-division/inclusionary-housing-ordinance>.

CHAIR REPORT

No Chair Report this month.

VICE CHAIR REPORT

No Vice Chair report this month.

STAFF REPORT

Newly-appointed Community Services Manager and current Regional Ombudsman for the City, Ms. Audrey Thompson, provided the following information:

1. Ms. Thompson mentioned that Three Crowns Park representatives have met with City personnel (herself included) to discuss potential plans for a portion of the building that was closed last year, Pioneer Place.
 - a. Although the prospect of deconstructing the building is considered a “greener” option than demolition, and might appeal to those who argue that the building itself has historical significance due to its age, frequent renovations to Pioneer Place over the years might have emptied the space of items that could be considered “valuable” and worth recovering.
 - b. Ms. Thompson explained that Three Crowns has already experienced some pushback from neighbors on the tentative plans for new construction due to the loss of the historical building and the loss of green space that would be incurred should the new wing be developed. Some current residents might find that their views of the remaining green space become blocked by the new construction.
 - i. Because of these concerns, the City will likely impose additional “for public benefit” provisions to whatever plans are ultimately approved: the facility would have to promise something in return for the City approving certain aspects of the plan.
 - ii. Ms. Thompson reminded Commission members of a similar “public benefit” agreement Alden Estates made years ago when they were conducting renovations on their building. Although they initially agreed to set aside ten beds for Evanston residents who qualified for Medicaid, facility staff later asked for this number to be reduced to five beds, to which the City ultimately agreed.
 - iii. Similarly, The Mather agreed to contribute \$30M over ten years to individuals who required “financial assistance” when they were constructing one of their buildings. However, Ms. Thompson noted that the language in the approved plan did not describe specifically what was deemed “assistance” or how individuals were designated as needing financial assistance. For example, this could mean that residents of The Mather who ran out of money could remain at the building essentially on scholarship, or the money could be spent when The Mather sponsored community events for low-income Evanstonians. More alarmingly, there were no instructions about when, if, or how these expenditures would ever be audited or managed, so there is no way to tell how or even *if* The Mather adhered to the agreement.
2. Ms. Thompson advised attendees that registration for the Aging Well Conference is coming up. This year’s event will feature a keynote address by Ms. Loretta Anne Woodward Veney, author of *Being My Mom’s Mom*. A free lunch and book signing event will also be raffled off at the end of the Conference.

3. Ms. Thompson has secured a grant from AgeOptions to fund presentations in the Evanston community regarding Senior Services and the 2020 Census.
 - a. Presentations are scheduled at the four subsidized senior housing buildings in Evanston as well as Over the Rainbow; these presentations will be paired with “Senior Surf Days,” for which volunteers from Evanston Township High School (ETHS) will be available at the buildings and/or the Levy Center to help people complete the Census.
4. In her new expanded role, Ms. Thompson noted that there will likely be more intergenerational opportunities and activities in the City.
 - a. The Mayor’s Summer Youth Employment Program’s (MSYEP) annual job fair is scheduled for Saturday, March 28th at ETHS. Commission and community members are encouraged to volunteer to help with crowd management, interviewing, serving food and beverages, and other aspects of the fair.
5. Ms. Sadler provided an update on activities by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) in Evanston’s long-term care facilities since the last meeting.
 - a. Aperion Care received a visit by the Department to follow-up on their Life Safety Code survey; no additional deficiencies were identified.
 - b. Alden Estates hosted IDPH for their annual health survey and received three tags; last year’s survey yielded no tags. Deficiencies were related to a resident’s DNR status, feeding assistance, and failing to follow a dietary plan of care which resulted in significant weight loss in two residents.
 - c. The Grove also had an annual health survey, which resulted in four tags relating to resident resuscitatory status, failure to develop a care plan item relating to skin integrity, feeding a resident and monitoring of the process, and infection control issues observed with residents on contact isolation.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Chair Factor provided a thorough overview of topics discussed at the annual Legislative Breakfast, which was held at the end of January.
2. Commission members were encouraged to keep an eye on their email for the link to register for the accessibility tour of Evanston, now referred to as the Access Evanston tour. Mr. Patrick Hughes and Ms. Susan Canter are hosting a guided tour of the City of Evanston to see how accessibility issues are being addressed and what problems still remain within the community.
 - a. The tour will take place on March 20th from 10am until noon. Afterward, participants are encouraged to share their ideas and impressions of the tour over lunch at the Levy Center.
 - b. Two additional Access Evanston tours are scheduled for 2020, including one two-hour event during the Aging Well Conference on May 1st. The March event will only be for members of the Commission and/or Long-Term Care Committee.

NEW BUSINESS

1. A new full-time Regional Ombudsman has been hired and will start on March 2nd. Introductions to the Commission, LTCC, and other pertinent Boards, Committees, and Commissions will follow.
2. With the recent increase in income limits for the Illinois Department on Aging's Benefit Access program from \$27,610 to \$33,562 for a household of one, Ms. Thompson has been working to increase the Evanston Benefit Card income limits to \$36,000 for a household of one, and \$60,000 for a household of two. This proposal was recently approved by the Health & Human Services Department and will be implemented as soon as possible.
 - a. Additional ideas for services under the Benefit Card include an expansion of Handyman services to allow the City to match participant funds for things like lawn care.

COMMUNICATIONS

1. The North Shore Senior Center's Grandparents Raising Grandkids extended a hearty thank you to Commission and LTCC members who so generously donated funds to cover the cost of holiday gift cards presented at their December holiday party.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was moved and seconded to adjourn. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved at 5:02pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Callie Sadler, Ombudsman Assistant