

City of Bloomington Commission on Aging

Meeting minutes: Sept. 12, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 4:35 by Chair Denise Lessow. In attendance were commission members: Gail Londergan, Lauren Cowan, Libby Dawson, Amy O'Brien, Courtney Stewart, Jack Kahn, Julie Hill, Denise Lessow, and Phil Stafford (a sufficient quorum). Also in attendance were Sue Owens (City Liaison) and Ellie Kaverman (guest).

One addition to the agenda was accepted – a discussion of the City Council review of the proposed Accessory Dwelling Unit ordinance.

Jack Kahn moved, and Amy O'Brien seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the August COA meeting. Motion approved by unanimous consent.

Liaison Report

Sue Owens, liaison to the Community and Family Resources Dept. of the City, provided one item of information and request to the COA. She had been requested to add resources to the COA website by an email correspondent. Phil suggested the request was not sincere, being offered by an unknown source with dubious intent. It was agreed that we wouldn't respond to the request.

Old Business

Sub-committee Reports:

Comprehensive Plan Review: Phil, Gail, Jack and Lauren have attended City Council meetings addressing the plan and amendments. Two meetings, to date, have addressed the downtown and land use. As individuals and as members of COA, where formal approval has occurred, testimony was provided in support of COA goals. This process going forward as well as other matters addressed by City Council of interest to the COA (accessory dwelling units) will be incorporated in the discussion of strategic planning for the COA as time allows in this meeting and next. Jack inquired of future opportunities to provide input to the Comp Plan. Phil described the process being taken, the link providing meeting dates and the observation that the City Council will have a summarizing meeting for final public input on November 15. Members are encouraged to attend and speak to specific chapters in upcoming meetings. Gail suggested we revisit the inventory of 192 aging-pertinent programs proffered in the plan along with the goals, indicators and policy recommendations.

Creative Aging:

Julie Hill reported for the committee. She announced that Jon Kay, folklorist at the Mathers Museum, will hopefully be receiving funding from the National Endowment for the Arts for a multi-county creative aging initiative, providing multiple opportunities for COA collaboration in city-related projects. The three-pronged project will involve continued documentation and public recognition of the work of older artists and artisans through Traditional Arts Indiana, the creation of arts and aging guidebooks, and a traveling exhibit on the place of arts in the lives of older adults and their communities. Julie made a motion, seconded by Lauren, and announced by Denise:

“It is moved and seconded that the Commission on Aging further explore a formal partnership with the Mathers Museum and Traditional Arts Indiana.” The motion was passed in a unanimous vote.

In light of the vote, Julie, Jon and Sue will meet to report back to the COA as appropriate.

Julie suggested we invite the City’s Assistant Director for the Arts and Economic Development (Sean Starowitz) to a future COA meeting to share information and explore a stronger relationship. Denise noted she will add Sean’s name to the list of future guests.

Phil reported on the Word of Wisdom project and its relationship (through Julie) to the upcoming Krista Detor Holiday Concert fundraiser for Meals on Wheels. The concert will be held at the Unitarian Universalist Church on December 15. The COA discussed ways in which support for the concert could be extended as part of the Creative Aging initiative. Julie and Phil will also discuss issues around sponsorship with Bell Trace, which is underwriting costs for WOW booklets and writing workshops.

Data Task Force:

Gail provided an update on the work of the Task Force, focusing attention on the < 50% dissatisfaction issues by age. The Task Force will defer work on other sources of city data (AARP, Milliken, etc.) until we further mine the Community Survey Data. To that end, she offered the following motion, seconded by Phil and read by Denise:

“It is moved and seconded that the Commission on Aging identify and meet with whichever city departments are analyzing Community Survey (CS) Data to learn how CS data is being used; determine how our work might fit in, and ask about the possibility of getting some raw data analysis done for us.” The motion was passed with a unanimous vote. It was noted that this motion includes the assumption that the analysis can be conducted by an outside partner with city approval.

New Business:

COA Power Point presentation:

Courtney noted she is schedule to do a presentation for Envisage on Oct. 17 and would like to have ready a set of slides describing the role and work of the COA. She has developed a tentative version and asked for a formal endorsement of the program slides. While the COA is very supportive of her following through with the program, it appeared that the formal approval process (which would include other city decision-makers) might take longer than the time she has. Courtney graciously offered to move ahead with her presentation and Denise and Gail offered their support in any way that might be helpful, including the development of the next iteration of the program. COA members were encouraged to provide input directly to Courtney in the meantime.

Guest Speakers to the COA:

Denise is creating a list of potential speaking guests and will begin reaching out for tentative dates from the following individuals: Sean Starowitz, Kerry Conway and Chris Myers (Area 10 Agency on Aging), the dementia-friendly community group, a representative from the Active Aging Coalition, and Nick Kappas (Environmental and Plan Commissions chair and member – on “public policy 101”). Denise is open to more suggestions.

As an extension of the discussion on future planning for the COA, Denise asked Phil to report on the City Council ADU discussion and his planned testimony this evening regarding the Land Use chapter. Phil described the ADU amendments and the final version approved. Bloomington now has an ADU ordinance! Secondly, he presented a handout that describes a framework for the development of neighborhood based Lifetime Community districts. Phil will testify on his behalf regarding public policy tools and funding resources. Lauren Cowan moved and Denise, seconded a motion to:

“Provide a Commission endorsement of the definition of Key Elements of a Lifetime Community for inclusion in the Bloomington Comprehensive Plan.

Julie suggested that this does not imply the formal adoption of the phrase Lifetime Community as an official phrase of the commission. Phil noted that he intends to also work with specific Council members to include the use of the template as a design framework for the Old Hospital District, in addition to the Switchyard neighborhood already mentioned in the draft plan.

Future Strategic Planning:

Denise voiced her intent to continue her leadership for strategic planning by the COA, despite the lack of time this evening to devote to the topic. Gail suggested this include

attention to the 192 programs related to aging in the Comp. Plan and Denise suggested that the discussion should also include attention to COA messaging, information dissemination and public relations.

Guest Presentation:

Ellie Kaverman, a journalism student at Indiana University, sought information about COA work and positions on Accessory Dwelling Units and the host of transportation issues affecting older adults. She inquired about the advocacy role and tactics of the COA.

Lauren Cowan moved and Jack Kahn seconded, that the meeting be adjourned.
Passed with a voice vote.
The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted by

Phil Stafford, Commission Member