



SENIOR AFFAIRS
COMMISSION



Senior Affairs Commission

Monday, April 18, 2016 – 12:00 p.m.

Dallas City Hall, 5ES Conference Room

MEETING MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Trini Garza, Chair
Carmen Arana (Dist. 1)
Lydia Simpson (Dist. 2)
John Johnson (Dist. 3)
Minister Chiyoko Douglas (Dist. 8)
Mary Ann Sparks (Dist. 9)
Armand Christopher (Dist. 10)
Irwin "Bill" Gart (Dist. 11)
Marlene Cohen (Dist. 12)
Syl Benenson (Dist. 13)
Sara Wick (Dist. 14)

MEMBERS ABSENT

Barbara Record (Dist. 4)
Johnny Rodriguez (Dist. 5)
Cannon Flowers (Dist. 7)

SENIOR SERVICES STAFF

Cobbie Ransom, Manager
Ana Camacho, Caseworker
Myckycle Hart, Caseworker
Lynn Jenkinson, Caseworker

GUESTS

DMPT Erik Wilson
Lynda Ender
Minerva Rodriguez
Janice Thomas
Susan Williams
Jessica Corn

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Trini Garza, Chair, called the Senior Affairs Commission (SAC) meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Garza made a motion to approve the previous minutes. The minutes were approved with two corrections.

CORTNEY NICOLATO, President and CEO, The Senior Source

Ms. Nicolato was unable to attend the meeting today. She plans to attend the SAC meeting in August 2016.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Lynda Ender, AGE Director, The Senior Source, distributed two handouts on Interim Charges Affecting Older Adults. She and Marlene Cohen attended a meeting where Ms. Ender talked about the state legislature's interim charges. The Texas State Legislature meets every two years. In the interim, the State Legislature reviews interim charges, various ideas and issues brought forth to be studied. Ms. Ender informed the SAC members that they could submit issues as a group or as individuals to the Speaker of the House, the Lieutenant Governor, one of the state representatives or state senators. The Legislature selects interim charges and assigns them to committees.

Ms. Ender remarked that the exciting thing about this period is that we have more interim charges dealing with senior issues than ever before so we have an opportunity to give some input and help drive the issues. Often, it is from interim charges that legislation is drafted. The window of opportunity for filing bills is December 15th through March. They are filed in numerical order. The earlier your bill is filed, the greater the opportunity it has to be considered. Ms. Ender noted that the affordable housing committee is looking at the interim charges for housing opportunities under the House Committee on Urban Affairs.

At the public hearing on financial abuse, the Elder Financial Safety Center (EFSC) was invited to testify and presented the EFSC model to them. Gretchen Feinhals from the Senior Source, Senior Companion Program testified on volunteerism and how important volunteering is for healthy aging. Karen Magruder, an Ombudsman at the Senior Source spoke on nursing home issues. Sarah Whitby with the Money Management and Guardianship Program at the Senior Source spoke about the need to reinstate the grants they used to receive to fund money management and guardianship programs. Ms. Ender also presented the EFSC Model at the House Committee on Investments and Finance hearing on Financial Exploitation.

The SAC is represented in a coalition that is working on an event on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15, 2016. The Office of Senior Affairs, AARP, Mr. Christopher and Mr. Johnson are working on this coalition.

The Public Utility Commission is looking at their website, Power to Choose (your electric company). Ms. Ender is working with a statewide coalition to keep the site to help consumers shop around for an electric company in order to save money. She wants to keep the site and wants them to improve it, to make it less complex. Sometimes your advocacy is not done through legislation. It's done through agencies. In this case, the decision of whether to have the site or not, to improve it will be made by the three public utility commissioners.

AARP LIVABILITY SURVEY FINDINGS

Susan Williams, Associate State Director for AARP, presented the highlights of the AARP Age-Friendly Community Survey findings revealed in her handout (Livability for All in Dallas). She informed the Commission that every library has a listening post, a board with sticky notes for seniors to answer the following question: How would you make Dallas a better place to live for people of all ages? The top issues collected from community conversations and listening posts are listed on another handout (Top Issues - Community Conversations and Listening Posts) and being used to gather a baseline of feedback. Ms. Williams handed out copies of a table representing the demographic profile of the Dallas 50+ population used to compare to AARP's survey sample of members. She introduced Minerva Rodriguez with MRR & Associates, an AARP Consultant who will be supporting Ms. Williams over the next few months and helping with Hispanic outreach. AARP's next step is to develop a three to five year plan starting with transportation, My Ride, to get recommendations for the plan.

OFFICE OF SENIOR AFFAIRS

Cobbie Ransom deferred to Commissioner Chiyoko Douglas to provide an update on MayFair. Minister Douglas announced that they only have ten to twenty tables left as of April 19, 2016. The cost of a table is \$400. There will be 30 volunteers and 60 vendors; 15 are nonprofit. A sponsor is paying for the decorations. The MayFair committee is scheduled to meet again on April 19th at 11:00 a.m.

Councilman Adam Medrano is planning to purchase a table for the Commissioners. Minister Douglas invited all of the Commissioners to MayFair and asked them to let her know if they want to attend.

Myckycle Hart gave an update on Housing 101. As of this past Friday, 138 people have registered for Housing 101. The maximum number of attendees is 140. Mr. Hart invited everyone to attend. Minister Douglas, Bill Gart, Trini Garza, and Mary Ann Sparks are all planning to attend.

AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

Sara Wick stated that her report was given by Susan Williams with AARP.

AGE WELL LIVE WELL

Lydia Simpson announced that the Age Well, Live Well committee is scheduled to meet on April 20th at 9:30 a.m. at the Senior Source.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Janice Thomas discovered a senior waiver program through the Dallas Community College district where seniors can take two classes free of charge. She talked about the Silver Sneakers program. Seniors can join a health club free of charge. A lot of seniors do not know what is available to them. Ms. Thomas believes that volunteering is important in keeping our seniors active and their health from failing. She inquired about an abandoned building on Gaston Street where a lot of homeless people congregate. She would like to know more about this building. It looks structurally sound so why not utilize that building for the homeless?

Mr. Christopher advised Ms. Thomas to call code enforcement to get details on the building.

Mr. Ransom stated that the City of Dallas is looking at permanent supportive housing for the folks in Tent City. The City of Dallas is actively looking at all shelters and homeless centers across the city to place everyone in Tent City.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Erik Wilson representing District 8 dropped by to say hello and thank the SAC for all they are doing. He believes that the City of Dallas needs a Senior Recreation Center and asked the Commissioners to provide the information so that he can figure out how to incorporate it into the budget.

Mr. Ransom made two quick announcements:

- Mr. Garza has arranged a reception event at JC Zaragoza Recreation Center on April 20th at 10:00 a.m. for Commissioner Lozada who resigned last month. A plaque will be presented to him. Mr. Garza invited everyone to attend.
- Mr. Ransom announced that the next SAC meeting will be held on May 16, 2016 at 12:00 p.m. The Dallas City Secretary will be speaking to the Commissioners on duties and responsibilities of Boards and Commissions.

Ms. Marlene Cohen requested that someone from the Parks and Recreation Department be invited to a future SAC meeting.

Mr. Bill Gart announced a very important housing committee meeting at 1:00 p.m. on April 19th in 6DN. Ms. Bernadette Mitchell will be speaking. Dennis Luellen from Rebuilding Together will also be there.

Ms. Syl Benenson announced that the Budget Committee meeting will follow this meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Garza made a motion to adjourn at 11:26 p.m. Mr. Johnson accepted. Ms. Simpson seconded the motion.