



**SENIOR AFFAIRS  
COMMISSION**



## **SENIOR AFFAIRS COMMISSION**

Monday, June 26, 2017 – 12:00 p.m.

Dallas City Hall, L1FN Auditorium

### **MEETING MINUTES**

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Trini Garza, Chairman  
Carmen Arana (Dist. 1)  
Lydia Simpson (Dist. 2)  
Julia Suarez-Macias (Dist. 6)  
Cannon Flowers (Dist. 7)  
Bill Gart (Dist. 11)  
Syl Benenson (Dist. 13)  
Sarah Wick (Dist. 14)

#### **GUEST**

Janice Thomas

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Jeri Baker (Dist. 10)  
Marlene Cohen (Dist. 12)  
John Johnson (Dist. 3)  
Mary Ann Sparks (Dist. 9)

#### **CITY OF DALLAS STAFF**

Valencia Hooper Alexander, Manager  
Nadia Chandler Hardy, Chief of Community Services  
Myckycle Hart, Caseworker  
Lynn Jenkinson, Caseworker  
Cheritta Johnson, Interim Director of Human Services  
Kevin McDonald, Interim Executive Assistant  
Cobbie Ransom, Administrator of Office of Senior Affairs (OSA)  
Heather Silver, SAC CAO Liaison

#### **VACANCIES**

District 4  
District 5  
District 8

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

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

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Syl Benenson made a motion to approve the May minutes. Lydia Simpson seconded the motion. Minutes were approved with no corrections.

#### **THE SENIOR AFFAIRS COMMISSION WELCOMES NADIA CHANDLER HARDY**

Cobbie Ransom welcomed the Chief of Community Services, Nadia Chandler Hardy.

- Ms. Hardy stated that her goal in working with staff is to ensure that the City is a leader in providing opportunities that enhance the quality of life across the entire age spectrum - active living, nutrition, and healthy aging.

- Her objective is to establish continuum of care or continuum of services that wrap around to help meet collective and individual needs to accomplish the highest level of quality of life, particularly for those who are seasoned.

Over the next few months, Ms. Hardy is challenging her staff to develop a continuum of care that is productive and sustaining including programs and services that build on a positive trajectory using data and predictive analytics, to be able to anticipate, forecast, and plan efficiently for needs as they arise and help build that continuum of care for senior affairs. As Chief of Community Services, she has four functioning areas within her suite of departments: 3-1-1, Department of Human Services, Animal Services, and the Office of Homeless Services.

Ms. Hardy requested the Commission's cooperation, participation, and input in helping to achieve these goals. She would like to be able to provide data to help the City's partners and Commissioners make informed and sound decisions. She challenged Cheritta Johnson, Mr. Ransom, and the community center managers to review the proposed budget, to identify opportunities to enhance and increase direct services, and to help her seek nontraditional partnerships in the community. She wants to be able to lift up the priorities and concerns that the Commissioners bring to the table and be able to address the quality of life needs in a way that is innovative and creative.

Regarding continuum of care and senior centers, Ms. Hardy emphasized the value when seniors are given the opportunity to have an experience that causes them to remain active and engaged in the community. Her goal is to sit in on the strategic planning sessions so that she can hear first hand their conversations and concerns, to paint that story, and to build the case as to the return on the investment. Lifting up the voice of this Commission from a policy standpoint is her goal and ensuring that the things the Commission puts into place has a built-in legacy.

### **PROPOSED SENIOR AFFAIRS COMMISSION (SAC) FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION**

Mr. Ransom proposed that the Commission provide an annual forum or symposium on an issue or a series of issues affecting the senior community to raise awareness of senior topics of interest within the City of Dallas. The SAC would identify that key focus area or issue and plan the symposium or lecture series. The forum would be used as a tool to help shape public policies or funding decisions. The purpose of this action is to provide an annual forum for the public to become aware of issues affecting Dallas' senior communities.

Mr. Ransom suggested that the first symposium be on Aging in Dallas and held during Older Americans Month in May or June of 2018. Cannon Flowers and Carmen Arana agreed to co-chair the planning committee. Ms. Hardy recommended an informal listening session or sessions to provide input or guidance into what could be included in the symposium to gain support around senior affairs.

Sarah Wick made a motion for the SAC to proceed with planning this annual symposium according to the timeline that Mr. Ransom proposed. Bill Gart seconded. The SAC unanimously voted to proceed with the symposium. Ms. Wick, Mr. Flowers, Bill Gart, Ms. Arana, Ms. Simpson, and Julia Suarez-Macias are interested in serving on the planning committee, a subcommittee of the Communications Committee.

## **SENIOR AFFAIRS COMMISSION COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Ms. Benenson reported that the budget was approved at the last commission meeting. She encouraged the Commissioners to meet with their Councilperson to go over the talking points. She appeared before the full City Council on June 21<sup>st</sup> and provided each Councilperson with a copy of the proposed budget.

John Johnson and Marlene Cohen were not present today to report on the Elderly Health and Safety Awareness Committee.

Mr. Gart reported that C.C. Young invited the Housing Committee to visit their senior living community on June 28<sup>th</sup>. He invited all of the Commissioners to attend.

Mr. Flowers reported that the Transportation Committee met on June 20<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of the meeting was to report the gap in senior access to transportation to DART and to determine the next plan of action. Forty-five thousand seniors have been identified in East Dallas and Pleasant Grove with no direct access to transportation. DART laid census data over existing routes in 75228 and 75217 and identified the number of seniors residing greater than 1.5 miles from any of the bus routes.

Mr. Flowers presented the results of the DART transportation survey to the DART leadership. DART suggested several actions to address these gaps: adding on call routes, doing outreach on Paratransit services, and offering vouchers for hire transportation services. DART is currently in negotiation with the Lyft and Uber.

Ms. Wick reported that she has not received an update on Age-Friendly Communities from Susan Williams with AARP who is compiling the data.

Ms. Simpson reported that the Age Well Live Well Committee met twice since the last SAC meeting. The issues they were having about the website were resolved this morning. The Age Well Live Well health fair has been changed to a workshop at UNT Dallas to educate the university students on the issues that seniors have in the city to cultivate the need to help seniors at a younger age. The target date of the workshop is September 8, 2017.

## **OFFICE OF SENIOR AFFAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Valencia Hooper Alexander provided an update on the MayFair event held on May 26<sup>th</sup>. Approximately 1,300 people attended and over 60 vendors. The Office of Senior Affairs collaborated with new city partners: Dallas Park and Recreation, the Office of Cultural Affairs as well as the Dallas Library. Four seniors were recognized including Commissioner John Johnson. All but two Commissioners attended the event.

Myckyle Hart provided a recap on the first annual Senior Housing and Resource Fair. Thirty-eight vendors participated and 151 attendees. He received rave reviews on the event. It was a great success. Mr. Hart received a number of calls thanking him for having the event. Mr. Ransom noted that this event provides seniors who have a specific interest or question the opportunity to go to the specific resource room to get the information they want. Attendees enjoyed having the flexibility of coming, getting the information they needed, and leaving or staying. The event was advertised on the OSA 5227 hotline, in libraries, recreation centers and at OSA events.

Mr. Flowers suggested adding the following question to the evaluation form next year: How did you find out about the event? Mr. Gart would like expand on the time frame of the event to five to six hours.

Mr. Ransom announced that the City Council is considering increasing the exemption for homeowners who are 65 and older from \$64,000 to up to \$90,000. If this increase takes place, services will be offset in another area by about 14 million dollars. The Commissioners discussed the proposal and provided feedback. Ms. Hardy suggested having a representative from the Office of Financial Services provide a briefing to the Commission with some figures, a financial breakdown of information, and a discussion on the evolution of this topic. Mr. Ransom will work with the Office of Financial Services to see when they are available to come to the SAC meeting.

Mr. Flowers reported on the senior isolation project in District 7. Texas A&M Commerce has a whole class of graduate students who are very interested in partnering on the Life Story Project where seniors living in District 7 could go to a library to get assistance in writing their life story.

### **CITIZEN COMMENTS**

Janice Thomas exclaimed that the MayFair was phenomenal and it gets better every year. She visited Earth Day and learned about an organization called, *In the City for Good*, and talked about the vacant hospitals and buildings that are not being utilized. She expressed her concern about so many homeless seniors and wondered if any of the units in the buildings and new developments could be set aside for seniors. She announced that the recreation centers have a grant from WellCare for seniors to go to the recreation centers free of charge.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

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Trinidad Garza, Senior Affairs Commission Chair