

MEETING MINUTES	COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING		
Date	January 11, 2022	Meeting Time	10:00 AM
Chairpersons	Olivia Farrow & Jim Campbell	Meeting Location	Zoom meeting

Attendees:

COMMISSIONERS	Status	STAFF	
Claudia Balog	√	Kathe Hammond	√
Dr. Yvonne Bronner	√	Alice Huang	√
Jim Campbell	√	James Macgill	√
Barbara “Reba” Cornman	√	Molly Martin	√
Dr. Thomas Cudjoe	√	Rochelle Purnell	√
Jenny Pena Dias-Hayes	√	Keidra Rowe	√
Dr. Odessa Dorkins	√	Heang Tan	√
Monte Ephraim	-		
Olivia Farrow	√	EX-OFFICIOS	
Susan Francis, Esquire	-	Dr. Letitia Dzirasa	
Dr. W. Daniel Hale	√	Michael S. Harrison	
Elizabeth F. Johnson	√	Alice Kennedy	
Sonja Merchant-Jones	-	Reginald Moore	
Pastor Brian Murray	-	Christopher Ryer	
Hon. Sharon Middleton, Councilwoman	√	Brandi Stocksdale	
Sarah Szanton	√		
		REPRESENTATIVES	
INVITED GUESTS		Anita Buckson, Housing	√
Mayor’s Office of Neighborhoods	√	Ondoria Harmon, MON	√
Office of Neighborhood Safety & Engagement		Leslie Yancey, Rec & Parks	√
Office of Equity and Civil Rights		Sean Bloodsworth, DSS	√

- I. Roll Call
- II. Opening Remarks – Jim Campbell & Olivia Campbell
The Co-chairs thanked the Mayor, Council members and leadership in the Division of Aging for the impressive selection of new Commission members and their continued support. They expressed a special appreciation to Commissioner Cornman as previous chair.
- III. Introductions – Commission Members

Commissioners introduced themselves with short background statements.

Commissioner Jim Campbell provided highlights of his professional career: He is a former member of House of Delegates for 24 years, is on staff at the Johns Hopkins School of Education, has served on the Baltimore City School Board and currently serves as the President of AARP MD.

Commissioner Olivia Farrow further recognized Commissioner Cornman for steering the Commission members and community partners through the challenges of the pandemic. She noted that Commissioner Cornman submitted the first Commission report to the Mayor and Council in years, and wrote two letters to the *Baltimore Sun* highlighting the advocacy role of the Commission. Commissioner Farrow currently serves as the first Community Engagement and Government Relations liaison with Ascension Saint Agnes, and has a long career in health care, including leadership roles with the Baltimore City Health Department.

Commissioner Reba Cornman has been a member of the Commission for over three years and serves on advisory committees and boards of non-profit organizations supporting older adults. She is the retired Director of the Geriatrics and Gerontology Education and Research Program at the University of Maryland Baltimore, an educational program for professionals in the field of aging.

Commissioner Claudia Balog leads a research team with 1199 SEIU representing 10,000 workers in the Maryland/DC area. Ms. Balog sits on the MD Oversight Committee providing the quality of nursing homes and assisted living facilities. She is excited to find forums that elevate workers who care for our older adults.

Commissioner Yvonne Bronner is currently employed at Morgan State University, School of Community Health & Policy in the Public Health Department, Behavior Health Sciences. She believes aging begins at conception and is focused on aging positively at every stage of the life course.

Commissioner Thomas Cudjoe is a geriatrician at Johns Hopkins Home-Based Medicine serving older adults in the Northwest area who cannot get out to see a physician. He serves on the faculty at the School of Medicine and has interests in the social connections that impact older adults.

Commissioner Odessa Dorkins is a retired from managing an assisted living facility. She is a geriatrician, a volunteer for the Alzheimer's Association and has worked with the Attorney

General's Office, assisting with calls received about assisted living facilities. She is the founder and Chair of the Maryland Centenarians Committee.

Commissioner Dan Hale is a clinical psychologist and is the Special Advisor to the President of Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center. He has appointments in Gerontology in the Division of Geriatrics and the Department of Psychology. His interests are in mood disorders across the life span.

Commissioner Elizabeth Johnson is associated with the Myrtle Tyler Faithful Fund and was a project coordinator along with the late Merlene Adair for the conception, development and building of the Zeta Center for Healthy and Acting Aging in the Park Height Community. She will be 94 years old this year. She is a retired social worker and college professor.

Councilwoman Sharon Green Middleton has served on the City Council since 2007 and has been the Commission representative the entire time. She is currently serving her second term as Vice President of the Council. Councilwoman Middleton is focused on pushing the importance of better health and housing and respect for older adults. She is the Chair of the City Council's Economic and Community Development Committee and hopes to present legislation and policy to respond to the needs of the aging adults in the City.

Commissioner Sarah Szanton has lived in Baltimore for 30 years. She is a nurse and nurse practitioner and currently serves as the Dean of the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing. Commissioner Szanton has made house calls for a decade to older adults through Bon Secours in West Baltimore and Johns Hopkins in East Baltimore. She developed the CAPABLE program that is currently in 23 states and serves 700 people in Baltimore. CAPABLE helps older adults age at home with dignity and independence.

IV. Area Agency on Aging - Heang Tan

Deputy Commissioner Tan explained that Baltimore City Health Department Division of Aging and CARE Services is designated by the federal and State governments as an Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and is charged to provide services for older adults through the federal Older Americans Act. The staff will provide more information on the AAA and its work at the February Commission meeting. The AAA's funding is mostly from State and federal grants.

V. Roles and Responsibilities - Jim Macgill

Mr. Macgill reviewed the Commission on Aging's enabling legislation. The Commission was established in 1966, responding to the growth of the number of older adults in Baltimore. Local governments across Maryland and across the country established similar bodies at the time, in recognition of the increase in the population of older adults. The Commission's legislation is part of the City Code. The Commission's role is to assist the City government to develop a program of services and opportunities for older adults and to create opportunities for older adults to contribute to society. Four main purposes for the Commission include

- To coordinate existing programs & recommend new programs
- To evaluate current programs
- To propose legislation
- To identify new resources

Commission members represent the City, Mayor and City Council. Any position a Commission member takes must be in alignment with that of the Mayor. The Commission is charged with submitting an annual report; the legislation does not specify a due date. Councilwoman Middleton suggested the submission date align with budget discussions, which start in March, to maximize impact of requests. Since it will be challenging to meet that deadline this year, it was suggested that a briefing document can be submitted instead, to assure that the Commission presents requests to the Mayor.

VI. Discussion: Committees

Suggested committees include:

- Advocacy Committee - This committee would replace the previous Legislative Committee. It will follow legislation from all levels of government that has an impact on older adults in Baltimore City.
- Governance Committee - This committee would review the Commission's legislation, recommending updated language but avoiding changes that would require a charter amendment.
- Public Outreach Committee - This committee would connect with the community to identify issues of importance to older adults. It could organize an annual public hearing.

The Advocacy Committee should have a sub-committee to determine the process on what and when the Commission should testify on legislative issues. The 2022 Maryland General Assembly session starts Wednesday, January 12 (the day after this Commission meeting) and moves quickly. The sub-committee would streamline and monitor requests. Commissioner Susan Francis will continue to serve on the committee, Commissioner Cudjoe and Commissioner Campbell will join the committee. Jim Macgill will continue to staff the committee. Councilwoman Middleton reminded the Commission to utilize her resources and be creative in ways to disseminate information about older adults to the community.

VII. Next Steps

The next meeting of the Commission will be February 8 at 10:00 AM.