



**SENIOR AFFAIRS COMMISSION (SAC) MONTHLY MEETING
REGULAR HYBRID MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, APRIL 15, 2024**

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Peter Kline, Chair, Senior Affairs Commission (SAC) PRESIDING

PRESENT: [15]

*/**Carmen Arana, District 1/Commissioner	*Lisa Kelly, District 9/Commissioner
*Portia Cantrell, District 2/Commissioner	*David Tyson, District 10/Commissioner
*/** Verna Mitchell, District 3/Commissioner	**Renee L. Karp, District 11/Commissioner
**Phyllis Lee, District 4/Commissioner	Robert Friedman, District 12/Commissioner
Feliz Jarvis, District 5/Commissioner	J. Peter Kline, District 13/Commissioner
Marilyn Daniels, 6/Commissioner	Karen Roberts, District 14/Commissioner
Marian A. Williams, District 7/Commissioner	Mike Nurre, District 15/Commissioner
*/**Debbie Austin, district 8/Commissioner	

ABSENT: [0]

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**Note: Members of the Senior Affairs Commission participated in this meeting by video conference.*
***Note: Indicates arrival time after meeting called to order/reconvened.*

The meeting was called to order at 12:03 p.m. with a quorum of ten of the Senior Affairs Commission members present. The meeting agenda, posted in accordance with Chapter 551, "OPEN MEETINGS", of the Texas Government Code, was presented.

PUBLIC SPEAKERS

There were no public speakers.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (March 2024 Regular Meeting)

SAC Chair, J. Peter Kline (13) requested commissioners to make a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes. Commissioner Karen Roberts (14) made a motion to approve the March 18, 2024 minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mike Nurre (15) and was unanimously approved.

Chairs Report

Chair Kline provided a brief update on the district listening sessions as included in the annual report for goals for the year. At this time, there are two districts who will have their listening sessions with the first one being held by Commissioner Jarvis (5) on April 27th at the Pleasant Grove Library and it will begin at 9:30 a.m. Commissioner Jarvis stated that the city councilman for district 5 Jaime Resendez will lead the meeting and then she will provide her presentation followed by the Office of Community Care – Senior Services dept. making their presentation. A Q/A will then follow for the seniors in attendance to address the needs within their community. Chair Kline mentioned that a prototype PowerPoint presentation is in the works that all commissioners will be able to use by tweaking it to meet their demographic needs within their respective districts. Chair Kline (13) mentioned that his district will have their listening session on May 2, 2024 but will be based on securing a venue to have their listening session. Chair Kline also mentioned that these aforementioned districts will be the test case to see how they go and to see what works and what doesn't work and to be able to modify based on these first two listening sessions. Chair Kline also stated that Mirka Norman, Supervisor for Senior Services will be contacting all commissioners to determine their preferences on dates for their listening sessions based on their respective districts. Chair Kline stated that roughly two listening sessions per month starting in May of 2024 is the goal so that each district can have their listening session. The PowerPoint created for the listening sessions will be shared with all commissioners once the PowerPoint is finalized. Per Chair Kline, commissioners are invited to attend one or more of the first two listening sessions to see how they go. Commissioner Jarvis (5) mentioned that Mirka Norman has done a great job of putting together an outline on the presenters presenting during the listening sessions which will make it easier in leading the conversations regarding senior issues. Chair Kline mentioned that they are incorporating the demographics for the listening sessions based on city-wide numbers as well as demographics for each respective district to use during their listening sessions.

New Business

AARP Dallas 2024 Briefing

Chair Kline introduced Susan Williams, Associate State Director of Outreach and Advocacy, AARP Texas State Office – Dallas. Ms. Williams began by stating that she would be providing an overview of AARP's history, vision, how it was organized and what AARP does. She also stated that she would be sharing AARP's current priorities in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area and finally end with a Q/A session. Ms. Williams began by providing an overview of the history and founding of AARP by Dr. Ether Percy Andrus in 1958 with its first chapter in 1961. Ms. Williams provided an overview of AARP's Purpose-Vision-Values which includes empowering people to choose how they live as they age, and to live with dignity and purpose.

Ms. Williams talked about how AARP is organized as three entities: 1). AARP is nation's largest 501c4 nonprofit, nonpartisan organization is dedicated to empowering people to choose how they live by providing outreach and advocacy through what is called "Big" AARP. Per Ms. Williams, AARP is allowed to do lobbying on issues. 2). AARP Foundation is a 501c3 is the charitable branch of AARP

which works on housing, hunger and other issues and 3). AARP Services, INC., which a for profit subsidiary part of AARP in which the money comes from to fund AARP's mission.

Ms. Williams also stressed that AARP is nonpartisan meaning that it does not support any particular political party, does not support or oppose any particular candidate, and AARP does not have a PAC. Ms. Williams stated that AARP's three main pillars are to increase social impact: by providing: 1) Health security, i.e. Caregiving, protecting Medicare & Medicaid, and healthy lifestyles. 2) Financial resilience working to ensure Social Security solvency, Workforce 50+ and fraud protections, and 3) Social connections through volunteerism and digital literacy

What AARP does locally: 1). Advocacy - for social change at the local, state and national levels on issues that matter to 50+. individuals 2). Community service - members and volunteers work toward the betterment of society, and 3). Information – Providing publications/magazine, website with online resources to provide valuable information.

AARP Dallas priorities – Outreach; with lots of volunteers focusing on caregiving, fraud prevention, brain health, healthy behaviors with variety of exercise classes as well as driver safety and tax aid. AARP also prioritizes age friendly communities and voter engagement through tele-town halls and emails. Ms. Williams mentioned that AARP Texas has five offices in Texas which include: Austin, Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, and El Paso. Ms. Williams stated that she coordinates most of the age-friendly work in the Dallas area and her colleague Zulema Ortiz coordinates the Ft. Worth area. Ms. Williams transitioned into answering questions posed by commissioners.

Q/A on AARP Program

Commissioner Nurre (15) asked: what is the voter engagement piece of her strategy? Ms. Williams stated that their effort in voter engagement is to inform the community on how to vote through tele-town halls and local voter authorities by explaining how to obtain mail-in ballots and how to use voter ballot machines to reduce fear from engaging in this process.

Chair Kline (13) posed several pre-written questions for Ms. Williams beginning with: What does AARP believe are the five most critical problems facing the senior community? Ms. Williams stated that physical and mental health are very important as is wellness and access to health care, community support programs, and social engagement. She also stated that the social engagement piece has changed especially since the pandemic as everyone was locked in their homes for so long. A lot of programming was done with exercise classes and health awareness as well as meditation. Through webinars, the topic of housing according to Ms. Williams has been a critical area with issues such as not having access to their documents like clean titles and other documents available so that they can access the services they need. Ms. Williams mentioned that another critical area is transportation for seniors, i.e. having access to a variety of affordable and accessible transportation options to choose from. Furthermore, having programs and social services for seniors will not be successful unless there are ways to transport seniors to get access to those social services. Other areas of concerns for seniors according to Ms. Williams include financial security, having jobs, career training, digital literacy training, and protection from fraud and scams. Lastly, having affordable and appropriate housing for both those being cared for as well as for the caregiver because if a community gets too expensive to live in, it's really hard to find care-giving support.

The following question asked was: How has AARP refined its programming and focus the last couple of years? What are your current priorities? And, where are you having the greatest impact? Ms.

Williams stated that during the pandemic, moving to digital had a great impact during and after the pandemic such as attendance with 40% in person and 60% virtual. And doing outreach/programming much more on the topic of social engagement such as partnering with city on topic of brain health, and music concert celebrating Black history/music appreciation month in June with speakers talking about brain health and music. That is one example of one of AARP's priorities. Another question posed was: If you had more resources, what area(s) would you place more focus on? Ms. Williams stated that having more in person programming would be ideal if more resources were made available. Also, having more affordable housing as well specialized transportation for senior centers. The next question posed was: What is your view on how to best facilitate senior employment opportunities? Ms. Williams stated that training and the digital gaps are getting harder to get through as technology keeps changing. Therefore, having more training for older adults in technology would be very important for seniors in securing jobs.

Commissioner Karp (11) asked: How do people find out about the classes offered from AARP? Ms. Williams stated that they send emails to their members, paper flyers, through Park & Rec. and city libraries are other ways of communicating as well as notifying all community partners in the senior network. Ms. Williams stated that having a universal calendar would be very beneficial for posting all events that are going on.

Commissioner Tyson (10) asked if the AARP flyers are being sent to senior centers in the community. Ms. Williams stated that they have a distribution list that they use to send flyers/communications to the centers. As well as having a group of volunteers from AARP to drop off flyers to various centers within their area.

Commissioner Roberts (14) asked: Does AARP have volunteers to assist at a neighborhood community meeting with filing homestead/senior exemptions? Ms. Williams stated that they don't do any direct services. Commissioner Roberts also asked about what AARP is specifically doing to ask congress about Social Security? Ms. Williams stated that AARP does not have a formal policy, however they do ask Congress to act early and act now before the program is in jeopardy.

Chair Kline (13) asked if AARP is really a resource to providers of services to seniors as opposed to resources to seniors? Ms. Williams stated that it is both, i.e. from care-giver resource on how to find adult day-care by zip code with a lot of information for the end user. AARP also works with other community partners. Chair Kline also asked if Ms. Williams had a list of all the community partners that AARP works with that can be shared with the SAC? Ms. Williams stated that she probably has an informal list that she could share. Lastly, Chair Kline asked how contributions to AARP are used and if money donated stays local, i.e. in Dallas? Ms. Williams stated that the AARP foundation works on senior property as a whole and work on issues such as hunger, housing as a whole.

Commissioner Friedman (12) stated that he was not aware that AARP existed on a local level and that he receives a ton communication from the national organization and never noticed in those communications that there was a local level AARP available and that the National level AARP should share/inform that seniors can reach out to their local level AARP offices for support. Ms. Williams stated that anyone can go into their AARP.org profile and request what they want to be kept in touch with, i.e. if they are interested in Social Security advocacy or if they are interested in movies and entertainment in order to limit some of that. Ms. Williams also stated that once each quarter, their local AARP will put in a blurb on the bulletin about what is happening locally within the national magazine. Ms. Williams also stated that they advertise on Next-door locally.

The Dallas Area Agency on Aging Briefing

Chair Kline introduced Doris Soler, Senior Director and Jessica Walker, Director of Community Wellness Programs from the Community Council of Greater Dallas (CCGD) and Dallas Area Agency on Aging (DAAA). Ms. Soler began by stating the Community Council is a non-profit entity that provides services to the community and has been around for 80+ years and recently celebrated their 80th anniversary. CCGD serves individuals from ages 18 through older adults. The mission of CCGD is assisting individual and families from surviving to thriving by connecting individuals and families to the resources that they need. Under the umbrella of CCGD there are 5 major programs: 1) 2-1-1 Information & Referral Services, 2) Dallas Area Agency on Aging, 3) Economic Mobility, 4) Application Assisters for CHIP/Medicaid for Pregnant Women, and 5) Community Wellness. These programs are described as follows:

The 2-1-1 is a resource calling center where incoming calls are connected to various resources being sought. The call center operates 24 hours a day and 7 days a week.

The DAAA is an agency which provides resources for seniors residing in Dallas County helping to ensure that seniors are living safe and healthy lives.

The Community Wellness provides diabetes and chronic diseases prevention programs.

The Economic Mobility provides support to seniors seeking a career by providing training opportunities with various skills with the goal of assisting its clients in acquiring and becoming more successful in their careers. This program also provides financial support, i.e. tuition support, books, as well as transportation.

The Application Assisters program is a fairly new program that assists the younger individuals in connecting to coverage such as Medicaid assistance for pregnant individuals in Dallas and Tarrant County. Five application assisters exist within the Dallas area. This program also assists families in completing applications, i.e. food stamps and other benefits applications

The overall mission of DAAA is increase independence and overall health to Dallas County residents age 60+ by providing individuals with information and referral services with over 3,000 clients served the prior year in direct services. DAAA also collaborates with other agencies in order to serve their clients in Dallas County. Ms. Soler mentioned that The Older American Act (OAA) of 1965 is a federal initiative aimed at providing services to older adults. The OAA was reauthorized in 1973 thus creating the DAAA. The DAAA of Dallas is one of the biggest DAAA agencies within the state of Texas receiving various funding sources. The DAAA's eligibility requirement criteria for applying for support is that the client lives within Dallas County and is at least 60 years of age and older. Access & Assistance is one of the biggest programs offered by DAAA and includes direct services such as care coordination (seniors living alone), care-giver support, benefits counseling (Medicaid/Medicare counseling), and community wellness.

According to Ms. Soler, the Care Coordination & Support Services provided by DAAA include: residential repairs, health maintenance supplies (diapers), income support, legal assistance (wills), transportation (medical/dialysis), chore services (yard, tree trimming), personal assistance, respite care (care-giver support) and home delivered meals (VNA meals for approximately 800 home bound seniors). If additional dollars are received, then more than 1 meal can be provided to the client.

Commissioner Nurre (15) asked if the DAAA or the CCGD provides this or are these two entities are different? Ms. Soler stated that these programs are under the umbrella of CCGD with DAAA being under it.

Commissioner Karp (11) asked if DAAA partners with VNA? Ms. Soler stated that they pass their dollars through VNA for them to provide the meals so the money comes to DAAA and then it funds the VNA nutritional program. Commissioner Karp also asked if there is a waiting list? Ms. Soler stated that yes there is a waiting list however prioritizing for new enrollees from the VNA list is the priority.

Commissioner Tyson (10) Asked for clarification on the requirements for the residential home repairs and chore services i.e. is there an income requirement or disability requirement? Ms. Soler stated that the only requirement is that the person must be 60 years or older. have a need for the services, and live in Dallas County.

Chair Kline (13) asked what kind of a waiting list is there for the (VNA) services. Ms. Soler stated that the funding is coming form federal to state and can be slow and not on time. Therefore, there might be a waiting list and is sometimes affected by funding sources time lines. If funding sources are not available, that will impact the waiting list. Chair Kline also asked how many home repairs are made per year? Ms. Soler stated that DAAA has a performance measure to meet and that last year, more than 500 clients were helped with just home repairs.

Jessica Walker, Director for the Community Wellness Programs for Community Council of Greater Dallas provided an overview on this program. She described the program as a researched-based program offering a wide variety of highly researched, self-management programs thereby tested and proven to work which produce positive results and are impactful. Classes are designed for individuals as well as for caregivers. Classes are offered face to face as well as virtually in English and Spanish. Ms. Walker stated that the classes have been designed for seniors with chronic health conditions. She also stated that 6 in 10 adults in the U.S. have a chronic health condition and that 4 in 10 adults have 2 or more chronic health conditions. She also stated that the chronic health diseases are the leading cause of death and disability with very high costs. For this reason, these programs were authorized the Older Americans Act to deliver these evidence-based programs. Ms. Williams also stated that classes are delivered virtually are beneficial to seniors living in isolation. The classes are also offered at community recreation centers. Some of the workshops provided include: chronic pain and diabetes disease self-management based on the Standford University model (offered for 6 sessions once per week for 2 ½ hours), a diabetes prevention program, a Matter of Balance/Falls prevention (8 week program), a diabetes prevention program (a one year program) and the Pearls Program to help seniors lead active and rewarding lives (a depression management program) which is provided as a one-to-one individual program with up to 10 interventions. Finally, the Stress Busting for Caregivers program (a 10-week program) is offered for persons caring for loved ones with dementia or Alzheimer's.

Chair Kline (13) asked Ms. Williams how many people assist with running these programs? Ms. Williams stated that because there is only a staff of 5, volunteers are utilized to facilitate these programs. Hundreds of volunteers (lay professionals) have been trained and may take up to 4 days to train the volunteers for the programs described. Ms. Williams shared their website information for volunteer sign-up: communitycouncil.org. Ms. Williams shared a flyer as well as the website with the commissioners about volunteering opportunities.

Chair Kline (13) asked if most the CCGD funds come from federal funds funneled through the state and then through CCGD and then to VNA/Ombudsman programs? Ms. Soler stated that funding is provided to them first and that they in turn fund programs such as VNA, and senior congregate meals sites, etc. and that some of the funds require matching funds depending on the particular program.

Commissioner Karp (11) asked how the caregiver program is funded. Ms. Soler stated that the Respite program dollars come directly from the federal title dollars and also from the Department of Aging and Disability.

Commissioner Karp (11) Posed a hypothetical question: if she called DAAA and stated that she was struggling with a mental issue, what would be the next step in assisting her. Ms. Williams stated that they would describe the elements of the Pearls Program along with options for the client and what could be achieved through that program by utilizing some skills to cope with their problem. Ms. Soler provided the 1-888-223-9509 phone number to reach their agency.

Q/A on the Dallas Area Agency on Aging Programs

A list of pre prepared questions by SAC was shared with Ms. Soler prior to the meeting. The first question asked from this list was: What does the CCGD & DAAA believe are the 5 most critical problems facing seniors? Ms. Soler began by stating that more than 1,200 assessments were distributed within the community and to the senior centers and they gathered and analyzed the information and found that the following critical areas were most important: 1). safety, 2). financial stability, 3). food insecurity, 4). support services for chronic health issues, and 5). affordable housing. And these issues were based on the data they collected in 2022 according to Ms. Soler.

The following question asked was: What are the current funding priorities and where is CCGD having the greatest impact? Ms. Soler stated that there are parts of the community that are underserved and that one of their main priorities are to visit those areas by going there and making presentations with staff there and to support the population at the senior centers that they have not visited before. She went on to say that another priority area includes making an impact with the LGBT community as well as other under served areas in the community. Another priority is increasing funding for these programs. Other priority areas include residential repairs and nutritional transportation for people with limited incomes for transportation. Ms. Soler stated that funding at times comes from private donor funding which impact direct services.

The following question from the list asked: If you had more resources, what area would you like to focus on? Ms. Soler stated that nutrition would be a focus, especially for seniors with special dietary need such as for those with living with diabetes.

Any other topics that the Senior Affairs Commission should be prioritizing? Ms. Soler stated that housing security due to the fact within the last year, many seniors have become homeless. Ms. Soler stated that they provide income support for temporary assistance and that the homeless issue will be an issue that will continue to be ongoing and that we can make an impact temporarily but what happens long term? Since this a very important issue, Ms. Soler stated that they are participating in coalition meetings in Dallas to seek resources or areas that they can support for longer term.

Housing and Neighborhood Revitalizations Dept.

Jasmine Bazley, Area Redevelopment Manager for the Housing and Neighborhood provided an update on the Home Repair Programs. The home repairs programs have undergone some changes at the end of March. On March 27th, and that the Housing dept. briefed city council that they be moving to one major home repair program. So, moving forward, they will operate the HIPP program which was the biggest home repair program and it will have 3 branches under it. One for major systems or home repairs of up to \$24,001. Another branch for emergency home repairs for up to \$10,000. And the other branch for the Dallas Tomorrow Fund which is an existing program which receives referrals through the code program to correct code violations. This will be the home repair program moving forward. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) home repair program and the ARPA septic tank will continue through September because the funding allows that funding through September and will go away as projects are completed. As of now, the focus has been on closing out applications and old files for home repairs that were approved prior to the home repair program changing on March 27th. Applicants approved prior to this date will be served in the old program they applied to. HIPP program applicants from the previous years are still being worked on. Also, senior repair program applications from the last round of 10 residents that were selected for the first program are being worked on. Also, the West Dallas Targeted Rehab that were in the Dallas Tomorrow fund are also being worked on if they were approved prior to the March 27th date. Any of the applications that are on file that were not approved are currently being worked on to move them into the new program. These applicants will be contacted in order to explain the new program and the differences to see if they are still interested in order to refresh their applications and make them current. Moving forward, there will be one program requiring one application. The major home repair program will be launching in the next month or so. Further details will be provided maybe for the next update. As of now, no other programs are open other than the ARPA program.

Chair Kline asked: When the ARPA funds go away, what does the impact on the total budget for housing going to be and what is the plan for replacing that? Ms. Bazley stated that 6 million dollars was originally received for ARPA which is a one-time source for targeted neighborhoods, so that would go away. The remaining budget for home repair is about \$3.5 million a year and the others sources that previously received prior to the program change will remain in housing to serve people in the new program. There was about \$2 Million for senior home repair and the Dallas Tomorrow Fund at about \$1 million. These funds will be re-allocated or re-purposed.

Commissioner Jarvis (5) asked if the \$2 million that was earmarked for seniors will that continue to go to seniors? Ms. Blazey stated that that funding will continue to go to seniors.

Commissioner Roberts (14) requested a more thorough discussion in the future of the Tomorrow Fund to understand how it works.

The Senior Services Dept. Updates

Mirka Norman, Senior Services Supervisor provided an update on the monthly report. She stated that the dept. provides information and referrals as well as provides outreach. She mentioned that the DART Rider Program has had increasing numbers so it shows an increase in monthly travelers.

Overall, the numbers have remained steady in the other programs. As for upcoming events, The Older American Month events, the dept. is organizing a dementia friendly event at the White Rock Hills Library. Flyers for this event will be shared with all. Another event will be promoting positive mental health as we age coming up on the 22nd of May at Willie B. Johnson Rec Center and those flyers are available today. A Block Party will be held at West Dallas Multi-Purpose center on the 25th of May. Another event is in the works for the 30th of May is a music event. Ms. Norman stated that Listening sessions will begin with the first district and that a flyer will be shared with everyone and will also be sent via email as well.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARDS, STANDING COMMITTEES

Senior Affairs Commissioners District Updates

Commissioner Roberts (14) stated that she and the Park board representative visited the Singing Hills Recreation Center/Senior Center and that they were very impressed with the center surrounded by cedar trees as well as the architecture. The staff was amazing and they met the Director. Chair Kline introduced the newest Commissioner, Mr. Robert Friedman for District 12. He has lived in Dallas for 34 years and is very active in the community and is looking forward to serving on the Commission.

ADJOURNMENT

After all the business of the Senior Affairs Commission had been considered, Commissioner Phyllis Lee (4) made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Karen Roberts (14) and unanimously accepted. The Senior Affairs Commission meeting was adjourned at 1:47 p.m.

James Ramirez
Drafted by:
James Ramirez M.S.
Caseworker II
Office of Community Care / Senior Services

5/15/2024
Date


Approved by:
J. Peter Kline, Chair
Senior Affairs Commission

May 24, 2024
Date

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