



Clark County Commission on Aging
Webex Remote Meeting
Vancouver, Washington

MEETING NOTES

Wednesday, November 18, 2020
4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Chuck Green (Chair), Larry Smith (Vice Chair), Nancy Dong, Amy Gross, Franklin Johnson, Tanya Stewart, and Pamela Wheeler

Absent: Linda O’Leary, Meghan McCarthy

1. Welcome and call to order

Chuck Green opened the meeting

Roll call and excusals

The group excused two members, Meghan McCarthy and Linda O’Leary.

Approval of agenda

The agenda was approved.

Approval of meeting minutes

The October 21 meeting minutes were approved.

2. Silver Citizen Award

COA presented the first annual Silver Citizen Award. Seven individuals/couples received honorable mentions for their service to the community. Evelyn Hallett received the award. A tribute video was also shown and is available on the Commission’s website.

3. Presentations: Housing challenges for vulnerable older adults during COVID-19

Details on each presentation are available in the audio recording and presentation slides posted on the Commission website.

Presentation #1

Presenter: Hilaree Prepula, Vancouver Housing Authority

Presentation highlights:

- Prepula described VHA’s experience with COVID through two periods: The impact of COVID early on and the impact of COVID now
- Early COVID:
 - RESIDENT/BUILDING IMPACT:
 - Reduced lease-up for vacancies
 - All common areas were closed for visiting/activities canceled



For other formats, contact the Clark County ADA Office
Voice 360.397.2322 Relay 711 or 800.833.6388
Fax 360.397.6165
Email ADA@clark.wa.gov



- Survey revealed anxieties about health and safety, transportation, and food
- On-site resources were diminished by 80%
- VHA/COMMUNITY RESPONSE:
- Partnered with Meals on Wheels, Food Bank, faith-based organizations
- Service Coordinators provided isolation intervention via telephone
- Face masks and hand sanitizer made available onsite
- Social media campaign for letters, cards, and warm messages from the community
- Now COVID
 - RESIDENT/BUILDING TRENDS
 - Less than 20 COVID cases amongst 600+ residents
 - Increase in requests for caregivers
 - Resident non-compliance with social distancing and mask wearing
 - Lease-ups continue for vacancies
 - Open waitlists fill up quickly
 - VHA/COMMUNITY RESPONSE:
 - Virtual social gatherings (with gifts!)
 - Service Coordinators adapting roles and responsibilities
 - Food box delivery to resident doors
 - Paperwork assistance via zoom
 - Coordinating unique transportation
 - Ongoing communication to residents about COVID-safety
 - Used CARES funds to purchase devices for residents to stay connected
 - Partnering with AAADSW to connect residents with Telehealth services
- What's next:
 - Focus on balancing safety protocols with isolation intervention
 - Changes in how Service Coordinators on-site build community long term
 - Long term impacts to low-income senior's ability to remain independently housed and avoid a long-term care facility

Q&A and Comments from Commission on Aging:

- What are you doing to decrease isolation for residents?
 - Moving residents to do things virtual, i.e. bingo games with information services implemented virtually
 - Bringing in University of Portland students on site that do blood pressure/medical checks and engage with residents
- How do you distribute the donation of food?
 - Surveys are used to understand the need
- Resident service coordinators seem to be very critical. How many resident service coordinators are there and what background do they bring to the position?
 - There are three full time workers amongst 300 residents. They would have a bachelor's degree in social services or sometimes a Master's degree and usually have background with elder care
- How are you dealing with food needs when things run out or run low?
 - Local faith-based organizations have "adopted" buildings and are available to help when the need arises

Presentation #2

Presenters: Clara Johnson, REACH, Isabella Court I

Presentation highlights:

- Eligibility requirements for Isabella I are:
 - At least one person in the household must be a US citizen or legal resident
 - Must be 62 or over
 - Household Income is below 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI)

Number of Persons in Family	30% Income Limit	50% Income Limit
1	\$17,100	\$28,500
2	\$19,550	\$32,600

- Resident Services two main roles:
 - Focuses on assisting residents to be successful in REACH housing
 - Programs and services focus on addressing social determinates of health
 - Provide information and referrals to community resources (e.g. crisis intervention, health and safety, financial resources, etc.)
 - Educational programming around financial education, civic engagement, health & wellness
 - Social engagement activities
- COVID-19 has had numerous impacts on senior residents at Isabella Court I. These include:
 - Increased food insecurity
 - Social isolation
 - Lack of digital access
 - Increased transportation burden such as getting to medical appointments
 - Limited resources
- How are we addressing the needs of our senior residents?
 - Onsite food pantry is open twice a month. Residents are able to get meats, fresh fruits and vegetables, etc. The pantry is also available for emergency needs.
 - Engaging residents while maintaining Covid-19 safe practices.
 - Addressing social isolation through regular phone call check ins, keeping regular office hours for appointments, new activities like in home bingo, wellness challenges, activity packets, resident appreciation days, and PPE fairs.
 - Wi-Fi has been made available to residents, to stay connected to family and telemedicine.
 - Many residents still lack a device
 - Connecting residents to transportation services but options are limited

Q&A and Comments from Commission on Aging:

- How does the donation program for devices work and what type of devices preferred?
 - Information on program will be sent to commission – Chromebooks are preferred
- If you had a magic wand, what would you like to fix/solve?
 - Transportation options/system - so residents can get to grocery stores. Many are uncomfortable taking public transit
- NextDoor might have volunteers that could assist with transportation needs

Presentation #3

Presenter: Kate Budd, Council for the Homeless

Presentation highlights:

- Number of seniors (62+) that are literally homeless has increased over the last four years (chart)
- Chart showing the 881 seniors (55+) who made contact and their trajectory through process to either shelter (223) or housing program (69)
- Top identified reasons for homelessness
 - Lack of income
 - Household crisis
 - No affordable housing
- Average income of seniors experiencing homelessness YTD 2020
 - Age 55+ \$903.35 (434 persons)
 - Age 70+ \$1,349.09 (28 persons)
 - Fair Market Rent of a Clark County Apartment
 - Studio: \$1,245
 - One Bedroom: \$1,331
- Housing stability
 - Approximately 26% of seniors are rent burdened
 - 326 senior households seeking rent assistance due to COVID
 - Growing number of seniors are severely rent burdened: over 50% of income goes to rent
 - Many seniors are on fixed incomes and are getting pushed out of their community
- Action Opportunities (Local)
 - Additional affordable housing across the county – for seniors and all ages for those making 30% Area Median Income (AMI) or less
 - Funding for supportive services paired with affordable housing dollars
 - Short-term and ongoing rent assistance or subsidy for seniors who are likely to fall into homelessness
 - Focus on equity
 - Greater housing diversity
 - Proactively sustaining/increasing RV and mobile park options
 - Shared housing
 - Increased transportation resources
 - Greater diversity of assisted living facilities
- Community Call to Action
 - Increase equity
 - Attend our next webinar focusing on Equity and Homelessness -Thurs. Nov 19 @ 5:30pm
 - Advocate! Sign up on our website
 - Bust stigma - share data
 - Give
 - Volunteer
 - Be Kind
- Social security isn't keeping up with increase of housing/rent prices
- Waitlist of 900 households seeking rent assistance – 1/3 are seniors

Q&A and Comments from Commission on Aging:

- Why do some choose the shelter over long-term housing program?
 - Individuals can choose both routes, i.e. choose shelter while waiting for long-term housing. Length of shelter stay may depend on progress towards stable housing.
- Do the local shelters have criteria in order to stay at them?
 - Some local shelters are housing-first shelters that will house anyone and some shelters have criteria; it depends on the program.
- How do you make matches with a shared housing program? Is there a formal program?
 - Usually there is a mediator involved where you set expectations at the beginning and revisit them over time
 - There is a shared housing program currently being created in the community

Q&A and Comments from Public:

- None

4. Debrief: What have we heard? Potential recommendations? Request(s) for more information?

- Overwhelming – so many living on such low incomes
- Trends are alarming but inspired by the coordination between organizations; what more can we do as a community to do even more coordination; public/private partnerships
- Not sure what recommendations would be for County Council
- Very pertinent information; how to make more inclusive to participate
- Need to eliminate duplications and coordinate as well as possible – where are the opportunities?
- Is there uneven distribution of the load – what city is handling most of the load? Can it be spread out?
- A potential resource is the organization Samaritan City, working on social/financial capital
- Health Plans – Medicare/Medicaid organizations are now investing in housing

5. Public Comment:

- County Auditor Greg Kimsey spoke about Evelyn Hallett and her Silver Citizen Award

6. Communications and Announcements

- Letters received: Commission has received comment via email since the last meeting and staff has tried to help connect people to information or opportunities
- Commissioner communication: None
- Clark County Housing Options Study Advisory Group opportunity: Jacqui briefed the commission on the county's housing project and the opportunity to participate on an advisory group and represent older adults
- Dec 16. CoA Meeting: The impacts of isolation and socialization on older adults during COVID-19

7. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.

The Clark County Commission on Aging provides leadership and creates community engagement in addressing the needs and opportunities of aging.