



Clark County Commission on Aging
Webex Remote Meeting
Vancouver, Washington

MEETING NOTES

Wednesday, February 17, 2021
4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Members Present: Chuck Green (Chair), Larry Smith (Vice Chair), Nancy Dong, Amy Gross, Franklin Johnson, Meghan McCarthy, Linda O’Leary, Tanya Stewart, and Pamela Wheeler

County Councilors: Chair Quiring O’Brien, Councilor Lentz, Councilor Bowerman, Councilor Medvigy

County Manager: Kathleen Otto

1. Welcome and call to order

Chuck Green opened the meeting.

Introductions

The group did a round of introductions.

Approval of agenda

The agenda was approved.

Approval of meeting minutes

The January 20, 2021 meeting notes were approved.

2. Presentations: Clark County Commission on Aging 2020 Annual Report

The Commission presented their annual report to the County Council. Details on the presentation are available in the CVTV video recording and presentation slides posted on the Commission website. The Commission’s annual report is also available on their webpage:

<https://clark.wa.gov/community-planning/commission-aging-meetings>

Q&A/Discussion with County Council

- Chair Quiring O’Brien discussed several topics including:
 - Technology for seniors, there is a bill under consideration right now that would increase broadband.
 - A good project could be for volunteers to help seniors learn how to use technology. It’s especially needed now with COVID-19.
 - Vaccines: apologized for miscommunication. Communication is hopefully getting better and Dr. Melnick and his staff are working on it.



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- Volunteers: the older volunteers in this community are absolutely wonderful. We need more younger volunteers.
- Disaster response: the county has a plan and more health-related disasters are being added to it.
- Councilor Bowerman made a few comments including:
 - Volunteers: has seen successful programs in other places with volunteers helping seniors use computers. Starts with hosting a session for those who have an iPhone. Let seniors know if you come to this session, we'll help you connect to your loved ones. Then you can move to a more complex program or device after that. Has seen programs with youth teaching elders and elders teaching elders.
- Councilor Medvigy made a few comments including:
 - Vaccines: had some missteps and working on getting flow to the state and then to the county. An incident management team is working with FEMA and county resources. We had a mobile team deliver vaccines at congregate settings that fell outside of the national program. Once the flow is back up, will do better at getting vaccines out.
 - Broadband: has heard a lot about this topic in District 4, the most rural district in the county. Looking for federal grants and has met with Hillary Franz regarding Department of Natural Resources funding because broadband is also important for fire notification systems. The Public Works and Permitting departments are trying to expedite projects that involve broadband. Looking for ways to move forward. There are some local hot spots and schools have done some work. In the meantime, let your providers know they have customers
 - Housing: there is a faith based nonprofit working on shared housing. They have a grant from the county and expect to start implementing the program this year. There is also a house bill that would make homeless recording fees available to shared housing as well. If for instance, you are a window, you could be matched up with someone in need of housing. The program could potentially help seniors.
- Councilor Lentz made a few comments including:
 - Pivot: thanked the group for their work and agility changing focus this year and appreciates the annual report as a resource and documentation.
 - Broadband: the City of Vancouver and C-Tran are laying down broadband as part of the Mill Plain Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project. There could be an opportunity to do the same for the next BRT along Highway 99.
 - Housing: looking forward to hearing from the housing options project group and having options for Council to consider for implementation.
 - Advocacy: appreciates that the commission helps keep older adults in mind and that the commission brings tangible, workable suggestions to the Council.
 - Asked commission on any silver linings from the pandemic that may benefit seniors in the future. Commission member responses included:
 - Telehealth has been helpful and, for some, has made access easier and allowed additional people to join a patient in their appointment which could have long-term quality of care benefits.
 - Nonprofits are seeing how well they can provide their services online and could change future organizational models
 - Learning from agility of volunteer-based organizations and how they changed their service delivery.

- Neighborhood associations: some know what is going on with their neighbors and others don't. Many seniors rely on family and not their immediate neighbors. There is room for neighborhood associations to step-in more.
- Uncovered many opportunities for those who may be living on the fringe of society. We have to keep looking for the opportunities we haven't noticed yet.
- Broadband: when you tear up a street, you can put in a conduit (PVC pipe) for broadband, even if you don't have the service yet. There are examples of this already happening in the county, i.e. Clark Regional Wastewater and the Port of Ridgefield have been working on this. Any opportunity to lay conduit when doing other street work, seems like a good idea. Chattanooga, TN mentioned as an example where they found money to get the entire community internet access. Hospitals are also talking about building their own fiber or 5G systems. There could be learning opportunities from those who have figured it out in their communities or who are working on it in other sectors.

3. Public Comment

- Christina Marneris, with the Area Agency on Aging and Disabilities of SW Washington (AAADSW), thanked the commission and noted that AAADSW is noticing similar things to what the commission discussed. If there are any opportunities to collaborate, please let us know. Right now AAADSW is very involved in telehealth and digital education.

4. Announcements:

- Mar. 17 meeting: Kick-off of 2021 focus on the road to recovery from COVID-19
- The Commission congratulated County Manager Otto for her appointment

5. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 5:48 pm.

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