



Clark County Commission on Aging  
Webex Remote Meeting  
Vancouver, Washington

## Work Session Notes

Wednesday, March 17, 2021

3:30 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

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

Staff: Jacqui Kamp, Jenna Kay

### 1. Feb. 17 COA meetings

- No suggested edits to the February meeting notes

### 2. 2021 focus update

- Staff provided a status update on confirming guests and Chuck discussed the plan for the new meeting format
- Tanya gave a brief summary presentation on Blue Zones
  - Dan Beutner introduced idea
  - Focused on populations all over the world with high percentage of centenarians
  - 9 similarities across all communities
  - Overarching goal: build out a framework that other communities that are not Blue Zones can use
  - Summary document includes goals of why a community might want to become a Blue Zone
  - Every community defines their own specific parameters, and are community-led initiatives. There are staff funded through a grouped funding approach to build out blueprint and get community engagement
  - Outcomes can be a variety of things. Examples provided in the meeting materials
  - Funding: all about sponsorship. Funding can be public, private, foundations, other entities
  - Discussion:
    - Chuck: Noticed in materials that in Oregon, there is a Blue Zone community, grocery chain, and a senior living facility. Curious if know how those entities went through to make a decision to pursue and fund. Tanya: sent out some emails to find out more. Knows a company can seek a blue zone certification by themselves. In OR, thinks it's a partnership, i.e. grocery is part of community. OR had one of the least clear approaches on who lead what. Meghan: OR Business Council formed the OR Healthy Estate and negotiated with Blue Zone for any city that wanted to have a Blue Zone project. There is a separate certified Blue Zone employer with a different pricing formula. In OR, different communities received funding. Demonstration projects were pursued with hope that other cities would



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pursue and find own funding. OR is sunsetting their Blue Zone initiatives. Every Blue Zone project is different. This is good because it allows for hybrid projects, addressing different community needs and projects. There has been some push back from local government because they can't or won't contract with a for-profit company. Blue Zones was recently purchased by Adventist Health who will be adding in an equity lens, which the current methodology doesn't look at it. Changes are coming to the organization, i.e. possibly lower cost and an equity lens. Adventist is a non-profit health organization.

- Franklin: is the term and concept proprietary? Meghan: the concept is not, but project/branding/licensing is. Franklin: could you do it on your own? Meghan: the 9 things aren't rocket science; we probably could have guessed them on our own. The concepts are straightforward and reasonable. It seems like the Blue Zones is a sticky idea and seems to get momentum; it's a matter of branding. Any community could customize their campaign.
- Amy: optimistic about Adventist because Loma Linda, CA was one of the original Blue Zones near Adventist and the organization has a good track record of being fair and moral. Meghan: has a similar opinion as Amy. One of most powerful messages of Blue Zones is that your environment is really important. In the US, our environment tends to push us in an unhealthy direction. Blue Zones methodology is about revamping our sphere and radius. Health is not as much about willpower as much as it is about helping us make easy choices that are healthy habits.
- Tanya: the housing instability email had an emotional hit on me and made me think that a conversation about Blue Zones may be premature if we have really foundational issues in our community to address about housing stability. Are we ready/should we even be talking about this when there are vulnerable communities that need really foundational support?
- Franklin: we know there are wide disparities in health care. Blue Zones seem to be in relatively upscale communities. Could we address that in future discussions?
- Amy: in her review of the constituent's email, the mother was in an upscale community where the private company raised their rates. Also, when moved from LA to Vancouver thinks improved quality of life because of the change in the environment.
- **ACTION ITEM: Group confirmed they will continue the discussion at future meeting(s)**

### 3. Subcommittees

The group confirmed the following people on upcoming subcommittees:

- New member application review and interview committee: Amy, Franklin, Pam
- Aging Readiness Plan committee: Chuck, Nancy, Larry.
- By-laws committee: Linda, Tanya.

#### **ACTION ITEMS:**

- **Staff to schedule Aging Readiness Plan committee meeting before April COA meeting**
- **Staff to schedule application review and interview meetings with committee**
- **Staff to send out current copy of by-laws to by-law committee, who can review and edit by email**

**4. City updates**

- Confirmed approach to provide updates to the cities this year by joining City Councils virtually with 2 commissioners + 1 staff
- **ACTION ITEM: Staff to follow-up on scheduling**

**5. Member highlight: Meghan McCarthy**

Meghan provided an introduction to herself

- What activities are your passion? Traveling and seeing the world.
- What is something others don't know about you? Tries to see a new country every year, so that when she's 100 will have been to 100 countries.
- If you were a super-hero, what powers would you have and why? Speak multiple languages.
- What's your favorite family tradition? Family goes overboard on holidays.
- What's something you want to do in the next year that you've never done before? Go to Belize and dive the Blue Hole

**6. Announcements/Updates**

- None

**7. Next Meeting:** April 21, 2021 – 3:30pm.

**8. Adjournment:** The work session adjourned at 4:17 pm.

***The Clark County Commission on Aging provides leadership in community engagement and advocacy of Clark County's Aging Readiness Plan, especially for those 65 and over who plan to age in place.***