Minutes of Meeting

May 20, 2019

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Advisory Committee on Aging & Adults with Physical Disabilities for Sussex County was held on Monday, May 20, 2019, at the Sussex County Administrative Offices West Complex, 22215 North DuPont Boulevard, Georgetown, Delaware. The following members were present:

Chantel Collie (non-voting member)  Larry Savage  
Antionette Johnson     Francine Shockley  
Jamie Magee      Fran Smith  
Linda Rogers      Helen Smith

Call to Order

Antionette Johnson, Vice Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

Introductions

Advisory Committee members introduced themselves, as did attendees of the meeting.

[NOTE: Due to lack of a quorum at the start of the meeting, the guest speakers gave their presentation first.]

Guest Speakers

Antionette Johnson introduced Brandy Nauman, Sussex County Fair Housing Compliance Officer, to speak about “Affordable Housing Needs in Sussex County.” Ms. Nauman advised that in October 2018 the Sussex County Council approved the hiring of a consultant to assist with drawing up a plan for affordable housing in Sussex County. LSA, a Virginia-based firm, was selected and is currently in the process of holding meetings and interviewing advocates for the aging and those with physical disabilities regarding affordable housing. Ms. Nauman introduced Jennifer Skow, associate with LSA, to discuss further the housing situation in Sussex County.
Ms. Skow stated LSA's mission is to increase the understanding of housing issues in the County and promote housing options. LSA expects to wrap up their study by the end of September 2019 and make recommendations at that time.

- **Market Analysis for Sussex County**
  - Sussex County has been steadily growing over the years, mainly in the 65+ age group. There is also growth in families without children.
  - 25% of the population lives alone.
  - Adults with physical disabilities have only slightly increased.
  - The average worker in Sussex County earns $39,000 a year. Based on LSA calculations, the average resident and their spouse or partner can afford a $276,486 house, if both are working.
  - 44% of the workforce in the County cannot afford to pay the rent for new apartments that are being built, ranging in price from $1,059 in Seaford to $2,265 in Lewes per month.
  - 20% of the rental market is subsidized, especially in the Seaford and Laurel areas.
  - In 2018, it was estimated that 118 people in Sussex County were homeless.

- **Housing Needs Assessment for Sussex County**
  - Sussex County needs rental housing that is affordable – $875 or less per month.
  - There is also a need for houses to purchase at a cost of less than $200,000.

Ms. Skow asked the Advisory Committee members and audience for their input as to housing needs in Sussex County. The following comments were received:

- More subsidized housing is needed, as there is currently a one- to two-year waiting list.

- Adult Protective Services should be available 24/7 like Child Protective Services. Sometimes people are released from the hospital or a nursing home and have nowhere to go, even though this is against federal regulations.

- Sussex County needs emergency services for seniors, and it was noted that disability services for adults do not include people with dementia.
Middle-class residents need affordable housing and services until the end of life. If one spouse passes away, the other may need to downsize or seek assisted living at an affordable price.

Public transportation is very inadequate in Sussex County, which has a direct impact on where someone can live if they do not drive. DART is a poor choice for seniors because it can cost as much as $8.00 a trip, and people are often not picked up for three or four hours to return home. Someone with dementia cannot sit and wait for a bus that long.

Tiny houses may be a solution – they could work for the homeless and/or seniors wanting their own place but not a large house to maintain.

Assisted living facilities are needed that are affordable. Most of the assisted living facilities in Sussex County are way too expensive for the average person or couple.

The question was raised if there are any vacant public buildings that could be converted to assisted living quarters, similar to what Bayhealth is pursuing.

Approval of Agenda

A Motion was made by Helen Smith, seconded by Fran Smith, to approve the Agenda as posted. Motion Adopted by Voice Vote.

Approval of Minutes

A Motion was made by Fran Smith, seconded by Larry Savage, to approve the minutes of March 18, 2019, as distributed. Motion Adopted by Voice Vote.

New Business

Antionette Johnson announced that the terms of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson held by Jamie Magee and herself, respectively, expire in May, as well as the two-year term of Secretary currently held by Helen Smith. Therefore, election of officers needs to take place in July to fill these three positions.

A Motion was made by Fran Smith, seconded by Linda Rogers, to nominate Jamie Magee as Chairperson, Antionette Johnson as Vice Chairperson, and Helen Smith as Secretary for a term of two years. Motion Adopted by Voice Vote.

There were no other nominations.

The officer positions will be voted on at the July meeting. Any other nominations from the floor will be accepted at that time as well.
Old Business

The 2019 Sussex C.A.R.E.S. Conference was very well received by the public. The Conference Planning Subcommittee is scheduled to meet immediately following the Advisory Committee meeting on this date to discuss the conference and possible improvements for next year.

Scott Phillips will report on the results of the conference evaluation forms at the regularly scheduled Advisory Committee meeting in July.

Additional Business

Helen Smith stated she was approached at the conference by a lady who wanted to know how she could become a member of the Advisory Committee. Ms. Smith explained that Advisory Committee members are appointed by the Sussex County Council, and there is currently one vacancy in the 1st Councilmanic District of Michael Vincent. The lady said she lives in Seaford and that she would contact Councilman Vincent regarding possible appointment. Ms. Smith was later speaking with Councilman Vincent, and he advised that he spoke with Helen Pase and will be nominating her to fill the vacancy on the Committee.

Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Advisory Committee will be held on Monday, July 15, 2019, at the Sussex County Administrative Offices West Complex, 22215 North DuPont Boulevard, in Georgetown.

Adjourn

A Motion was made by Helen Smith, seconded by Fran Smith, to adjourn at 11:27 a.m. Motion Adopted by Voice Vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Smith, Secretary
Advisory Committee on Aging & Adults with Physical Disabilities for Sussex County