

# DENVER COMMISSION ON AGING

Minutes – September 17, 2009

Present: Sandy Armstrong, Muriel Arvey, Cecil Bethea, Jr., Dre’ Dufford, Joe Halpern, Phyllis Hirschfeld, Vicki Jordan, Mary Madrid, Jamie Malone, Fern Osborne, Morris Price, Zane Robertson, Michelle Williams.

Excused: Erin Kruse, Juanita Rios-Johnston, Christine Wanifuchi.

Guests: Loretta Martinez, Jayla Sanchez-Warren, Anthony Aragon, William Lundgren, Frank McGovern, Colette Lafosse, Terrence Johnson, Jean Johnson, Hal Heffron, Jeanette Hensley.

TOPIC	DISCUSSION SUMMARY	PERSON RESPONSIBLE/PLAN
<b>Minutes</b>	Minutes were approved with no corrections.	
<b>State Budget Cuts and Senior Services – Jeanette Hensley</b>	<p>Jeanette Hensley, Director, Aging and Adult Services, Colorado Department of Human Services, shared the impact of the cuts in programs to be implemented to help the state meet its mandate of operating within a balanced budget for the fiscal year 2009-2010. There will be even more cuts required for the following year. Aging and Adult Services, serving adults at risk (through Adult Protective Services) and disabled adults applying for or on SSI or SS disability (through Aid to the Needy Disabled) were hit extremely hard by the cuts. Of the \$325 million needed to be cut, \$120 million was cut this year, meaning a 10.4% decrease. No funding was taken from seniors this year from federal funds. In fact, seniors actually received an extra \$750,000 with no cuts and \$1.5 million ARRA funds from the Economic Stimulus Fund package. However, at the state level, significant cuts are planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aid for the needy disabled supplementary insurance has been suspended</li> <li>• 6500 people waiting for their disability determination have no income</li> <li>• The Ft. Logan Mental Health Facility will be closed               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 48 employees laid off, \$3.1 million saved</li> <li>○ residents placed in community when possible</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Grand Junction 32 bed geriatric facility closing               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 57 employees laid off, \$2.8 million saved</li> <li>○ again, residents place in community when possible</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Neither of the facilities at Ft. Logan or Grand Junction will be shut down until satisfactory placements for the current residents are found</li> <li>• Old Age Pension and Medicaid               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ \$6.1 million savings from not giving a cost of living allowance</li> <li>○ all three OAP programs impacted by cuts (65 and older, 60 to 64, and the 6 institutionalized patients)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ OAP dental benefit eliminated, saving \$500,000</li> <li>○ transportation benefit decreased to two trips per week</li> <li>○ home care allowance benefit reduced to \$72.00</li> </ul> <p>Jeanette has reiterated the following priorities whenever she has had the chance to give input on these cuts and those anticipated to follow in the future:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Simplify the requirements and process, especially the paperwork, for applying for federal grants and monies</li> <li>● Allow the states to decide at the local level how to spend any federal stimulus dollars</li> <li>● More funding needs to be directed to prevention efforts, especially with the Baby Boomers reaching the age of Social Security and Medicare. Prevention saves money in the long run.</li> <li>● Perceptions need to be challenged about what seniors really want versus what “experts” think they want</li> </ul> <p>Jeanette asked anyone who has ideas about what should be presented to the budget decision-makers to contact her at <a href="mailto:Jeanette.Hensley@state.co.us">Jeanette.Hensley@state.co.us</a>.</p> <p>Jayla noted that the AAA’s have been involved in transitioning patients from Ft. Logan and Grand Junction facilities and that it has been difficult to find community beds and treatment. Commission members and visitors were challenged to act as advocates for seniors and those who work, often at low wages, at many of the facilities providing care for seniors. Joining the Older Americans Coalition, a strong advocacy group, was suggested as a means of supporting the really needy elderly who are not always able to vocalize the impact of these cuts on their lives.</p>	
<p><b>Impact of Parks and Recreation Budget Cuts – Connie Larscheidt</b></p>	<p>Connie Larscheidt, director at College View Rec Center, welcomed the Commission to her facility. She reported that the City is going through the same budget reduction process that the state is. Four of the city recreation centers, Johnson, Globeville, La Alma and College View, are slated to be closed. The city is looking for non-profit groups to take over programming at these facilities. Of the 176 citywide lay-offs, 14 are occurring in the Recreation department alone. Connie noted that her facility had strong senior and youth programs and that they were looking at all options that would allow the center to remain open. She welcomed any support. Suggestions included talking to city council representatives, neighborhood organizations, and local foundations about the impacts of the closures and possible ways the closures could be prevented.</p>	
<p><b>Committee Reports</b></p>	<p><b>Partnership Committee:</b> Phyllis reported that the Age Matters initiative will be doing a video featuring input from Denver seniors on selected topics that affect seniors. The video will be used to educate and remind city agencies to take into consideration the needs of</p>	<p>Phyllis will give names of seniors to Chris.</p>

	<p>Denver’s senior residents in the planning and implementation of their departments’ projects. The video committee wanted the Commission to suggest four to five names of seniors who might be interested in being in the video. The seniors would need to be able to spend two to three hours for the video taping planned for late September. Ideally they would be good speakers who have passion for representing their senior viewpoints. Morris, Fern, Cecil and a former member of the Commission, Carlos Martinez, were recommended as good candidates. If other names come to mind, contact Phyllis or Chris as soon as possible.</p> <p><b>Outreach Committee:</b> Mary reported that her Committee had organized and promoted the Commission’s meeting at College View today. They are proposing that the Commission meet at Cook Park Recreation Center in southeast Denver in October and consider meeting at Highlands Rec Center in northwest Denver for the November or December meeting. After discussion, the Commission voted to meet at Highlands for their November meeting and accept Mary’s offer of lunch afterwards.</p> <p>Mary contacted Channel 8 and sent information to the station to be put on their calendar of events. She had not yet heard back from them.</p> <p>Any new or updated event information should be sent to Jamie for posting on our calendar. All commissioners are encouraged to contribute events so that the calendar is a useful planning tool for the Commission.</p> <p><b>Advocacy Committee:</b> Dre’ asked the Commission about inviting Senator Bennett, Senator Udall or Representative DeGette to speak to the Commission on health care reform and its potential impact on Medicare. Commissioners agreed that the Advocacy Committee should contact their offices and see if a presentation and discussion would be feasible. The Commission also directed the Advocacy Committee to schedule a presentation on the Designated Beneficiary law that became effective in Colorado. This would push back the committee’s presentation and discussion on The Census Bureau’s Global Aging report to February.</p> <p>Dre’ and the Advocacy Committee recognized and thanked Muriel for her work in arranging to have Jeanette Hensley speak today on the impact of the state budget cuts on senior services.</p>	<p>Outreach Committee, if possible, will advertise October and November meetings at rec centers, libraries, senior housing locations, churches, and neighborhood associations.</p> <p>Commissioners – report senior events to Jamie.</p> <p>Advocacy Committee will arrange speaker(s) on health care reform and Medicare and the new state Designated Beneficiary law and let Phyllis know for inclusion on the monthly meeting agendas.</p>
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<p><b>New Denver Zoning Code</b></p>	<p>Phyllis noted that Denver will be adopting a new zoning code that could have implications for the housing available to Denver seniors. She would like each commissioner who lives in Denver to review the proposed changes both as they apply to their own neighborhoods and to seniors living in Denver. The proposed changes can be found on the denvergov.org website. Click on City Planning on the left hand side of the web page, then click on Zoning Code Update under the Zoning Home section and then click on Learn about the New Code. If you think there are any areas of concern that should be discussed by the Commission, please let Phyllis know as soon as possible</p>	<p>Commissioners – read the new zoning code proposals</p>
<p><b>Next Meeting</b></p>	<p>- <b>Thursday, October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009</b>  <b>9:30 – 11:30 a.m.</b></p> <p>-<b>Note different location:</b>  <b>Cook Park Recreation Center</b>  <b>7100 Cherry Creek Drive South</b>  <b>Denver, CO 80219</b>  <b>(303) 692-5659</b></p>	<p>- Loretta will post change on website.  - Outreach Cmte will publicize meeting</p>

