

JUNEAU COMMISSION ON AGING

City & Borough of Juneau

Minutes of Regular Meeting

December 11, 2014

CALL TO ORDER

The Commission met at the Senior Center. Chairperson MaryAnn VandeCastle called the meeting to order at 9:46 am. Members present were: Pat Watt, Mary Lou Spartz, Dixie Hood, and Charles Wilson. Members Elizabeth Terry and Cliff Cole were absent. Also attending were Assembly member Jerry Nankervis, Marsha Partlow of CCS Southeast Senior Services, and seniors Alfreda Dore and Al Judson.

DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

It was declared that a quorum of members was present. The agenda was adopted.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes for the regular meeting on November 13 were approved.

REPORT ON MEETINGS ETC.

- MaryAnn and Pat attended meetings of the Assembly Tax Exemption Review Committee (TERC) and presented the Commission's recommendations to the Committee on December 3rd.

SENIOR SALES TAX EXEMPTION

Mr. Nankervis, a member of the (TERC), explained that the Committee has had extensive discussion of this issue and much appreciated the Commission's work on the topic. The TERC recommended to the Assembly that the senior sales tax exemption be modified to (1) provide an exemption to all seniors for food, oil, and utilities, and (2) provide an exemption for other goods and services to seniors with a household income of less than 2½ times the federal poverty level. It also recommended that this exemption only be available to seniors living in Juneau. The Finance Committee and Assembly as a whole will be considering these and other budget options over the coming weeks. There will be future opportunities for the public to provide input before any final decisions are made.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Ms. Dore asked whether the senior card would still provide free bus service. Mr. Nankervis indicated he did not think that benefit would be changed.
- Mr. Judson said that last week he had cut up his senior card and bought himself a bus pass, and that he valued city services and was willing to pay a little extra to support them.

OLD BUSINESS

MaryAnn VandeCastle reported that the Assisted Living Task Force is meeting this afternoon to review the results of the Demand Study. It suggests that there is a need, right now, for 56

Assisted Living units. The Pioneer Home has 97 people on its active waiting list, but there would likely be some reduction in that number were the services to become immediately available. The Task Force has a Lands SubCommittee searching for a site, with the hope that land may be donated. A number of potential sites have been identified and evaluated. The Task Force is operating under the umbrella of SCSSI, the non-profit that developed Fireweed Place. The Task Force is also actively seeking a developer. Commission member Charles Wilson shared that he is affiliated with PRAMA LLC Home, which offers Assisted Living services in Haines and is examining the prospect for doing something similar in Juneau. MaryAnn will provide this information at the Task Force meeting.

MaryAnn reported that, as an individual, she sent letters to the AKDOT on the Juneau Access Improvement Project, and to the Assembly on the proposed Capital Transit route changes. Comments on the Capital Transit plan closed last week, but she anticipated there would be further opportunity for seniors to provide input before decisions are finalized.

The annual meeting of the Alaska Food Coalition will be in Juneau at the end of January. MaryAnn will get details.

NEW BUSINESS

The Gastineau Apartments property: This building was destroyed by fire two years ago, and since the owner has done nothing with the burned-out shell, the City is in negotiation with the owner about securing it through purchase or eminent domain. The Commission felt that it would be an ideal location for low-cost senior housing and approved forwarding a letter to that effect to the Mayor and Assembly. The letter is attached.

The Commission members reviewed its 2014 Goals and suggested changes for 2015. MaryAnn will revise the document for further review and adoption in January.

Commission member Dixie Hood requested that a copy of the current Commission membership list be mailed to her.

With the financial stability of Catholic Community Services (CCS) recently in the news, the Commission asked Ms. Partlow if there might be any changes to services provided by CCS Southeast Senior Services. Ms. Partlow indicated those services are provided under state grants. She suggested that the Commission might want to invite Marianne Milles, Director of SESS and Mr. Kelly, Director of the Home Care and Hospice programs of CCS, to talk about those programs. Ms. Partlow also noted that CCS operates the Care-A-Van program under contract with the City, and is currently in year 2 of a 5-year contract. The group thought it might be useful to hear from City staff and CCS staff on CBJ Transit services and the Care-A-Van program, preferably together, so as to understand how, if at all, those two transportation modes coordinate.

CONCLUSION

The next meeting will be on Thursday, January 8, at 9:30am at the Senior Center.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 am.