

BREVARD COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING MINUTES



**Building C, Space Coast Room
Thursday, August 10, 2023
3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

CHAIR: Dr. John Potomski, **Vice Chair:** Phil Koechlein

MEMBERS PRESENT: Laura Anderson, Ina Fritsch, Sandy Stauffer, Terry Stone, Will Scheiner, Kia Quintana, Allison Adler, and Tom Kammerdener

GUESTS PRESENT: Ian Golden, Brittany Dunbar, Lynn Brockwell-Carey

SUMMARY:

BREVARD COUNTY STAFF: Cindy Short

Call to Order/Introductions: **Dr. Potomski** called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm. Roll call occurred by everyone present.

Guest speakers: Ian Golden, Director of Housing and Human Services, addressed the committee regarding their desire to have a Candidate's Forum as a group representing the Commissioners. Mr. Golden told them they can't do this as the BCOA, but added they could visit political participants on their own, representing their company or employer. He added that their Resolution states the group can inform the Commissioners about issues impacting the aging but there is a process for that. Mr. Golden reminded the group there is a Legislative Delegation that occurs every year, and the group can submit items to him they wish to carry forward and bring to the Board of County Commissioners. He added that in the past, he received some items from Senior Resource Alliance as an example. Mr. Golden said he will submit those group approved items to the County Commissioners. Discussion continued among the members regarding the upcoming legislative meeting dates. Mr. Golden suggested the sooner the better for them to provide him with any information since the State Legislative calendar has been moved up. **Dr. Potomski** thanked him for coming and informing them of the process.

Dr. Potomski introduced the next speaker, Lynn Brockwell-Carey from Neighbor Up Brevard, located in Melbourne. She began by sharing with everyone that Neighbor Up is a faith based non-profit agency, and shared their mission which includes assisting those

in low income communities in ways to help them. They began with small projects and expanded into bigger partnerships, such as the Evans Center and in 2004, the Dock (Dorcus Outreach Center for Kids) added another building for the older children. **Dr. Potomski** asked about how their center came about and she responded funding was received from the community to build it. She also shared how they partnered with the seniors in the community to assist with mentoring and helping with the children as they need them to. She said they did receive a grant recently to help the children with mental health issue. They eventually purchased lots in the neighborhood as they were foreclosed and rebuilt them as the Greater Heights Community in Melbourne. The affordable housing is for working families and seniors, in an area that was once a block notorious for criminal activity. She continued to share information about the positive affect this housing has had on the local community. Ms. Brockwell-Carey shared they have a senior program for food, bingo, education from the local college, fitness classes, and many more collaborations for their senior residents. She shared statistics about the DOCK program regarding the youth they have assisted. There are scholarships they help the youth apply for, and she shared stories about current graduates and how they are return mentors to their programs. She shared they don't receive a lot of grants; they depend on funds from their collaborative efforts in the community as well as fundraising. She spoke about recent funding from the City of Melbourne for upcoming affordable housing to be built. **Dr. Potomski** asked about the area before Greater Heights was built; has crime been reduced since the new housing. Ms. Brockwell-Carey said absolutely, the Melbourne Police Department has provided the statistics for her to show the positive change. **Dr. Potomski** spoke highly of the community and the great work her organization is doing. **Will Scheiner** added that he agreed the crime has gone down because he has seen it, and he would love the opportunity to come and speak to the teens. He commended the agency for their work in the community. **Dr. Potomski** agreed, and thanked her for coming in and sharing their story.

Approval of Meeting Minutes for July 13, 2023: Minutes were reviewed by all members once quorum was attained. Motion to approve minutes as presented made by **Phil Koechlein**; seconded by **Ina Fritsch**; approved by consensus.

Legislative update: **Dr. Potomski** asked **Phil Koechlein** if he had anything new; Phil said not currently. **Dr. Potomski** gave a brief update about what **Ian Golden** had spoken about earlier, and staff agreed to reach out to **Karla Radka** at Senior Resource Alliance to see if they have anything they want to move forward with legislatively. **Dr. Potomski** suggested that whatever we want to move forward with needs to include Affordable Housing. **Laura Anderson** asked if this could be something that Senior Life would consider- possibly hosting a forum; **Phil Koechlein** said AARP is partnering with them for their fall Expo, and he thinks it may be possible. Phil also added that he would like for each member to bring a recommendation to the next meeting for discussion and to see if we can have these suggestions to move forward.

Advocacy: **Kerry Fink** couldn't be here today, and asked staff to let everyone know that the Helping Seniors of Brevard and Palm Bay's Renter's Workshop that was held on July 15th was a great success! He also wants everyone know there will be another one in August on Saturday, August 19th from 9 am until noon at the Brevard Hispanic Center located on Palm Bay Road. It is a free event for seniors in Palm Bay. Also,

Attorney Frank Scaglione will make a presentation regarding the Florida Bar's Eviction Prevention program during the event. Anyone interested should call Nancy at Helping Seniors of Brevard. Also, the next speaker will be Alan Woolrich from the Housing and Human Services Department, about Affordable Housing and all the projects currently happening in Brevard County. Staff encouraged members to attend the Brevard Homeless Coalition's meeting to learn more about how they directly work with homeless seniors and the homeless in our county. Staff added that sometimes advocacy is educating the community about the resources available and how to receive them. **Phil Koechlein** added that most seniors don't reach out until it's too late. He suggested they call 211 as well.

BCOA Newsletter: Staff reviewed the newsletter suggestion with the members; **Laura Anderson** had written the article back in 2020 and reviewed the information again before today's meeting to give it her blessing. **Dr. Potomski** agreed that the information is always timely and needs to be shared in the community. **Phil Koechlein** made the motion to accept, **Terry Stone** seconded, approved by all for submission to the next Senior Life newsletter.

Staff Update: Staff informed the group that **Ina Fritsch's** last meeting is today, and she thanked the members for having her. She said she will continue to come as an attendee. Also, **Deidra Shubert** has also left, and she has taken a new job and will attend as an audience member too. Staff also shared that **Dr. Potomski's** new alternate will be **Dr. Patel** and **Dr. Potomski** shared some information about him with the members. **Kara Pappalardo** has a new alternate member, **Marisol Martinez**. Finally, my coworker, Alan Woolwich, has asked if anyone knows anybody in the banking and construction industries; he is looking for new members for the Affordable Housing Committee, and would love the referral if they are interested. Staff gave them the next meeting date for the council and the phone number to the department as well.

Member Updates: **Sandy Stauffer** shared with everyone that the Health First Memory Disorder clinic and their Dementia Live Experience which is a sensory experience to share with someone how it feels to have Dementia. This will be happening at Joe's Place, on August 15th and she will have a flyer for staff to send out. After the event there will be discussion. **Phil Koechlein** asked if someone could come in and share with the group; Sandy said yes, and would get with staff on a date. **Dr. Potomski** said it is a good experience for people to go through. **Terry Stone** stated the next Caregiver Café is Tuesday, August 22nd at Joe's Club at 6 pm. Dr. Ryan Chapman from St. Frances Reflections will be speaking to the group regarding hospice care for those with Dementia. **Dr. Potomski** shared on Wednesday, November 15th will be the 33rd Long Term Care Symposium at the Hilton Rialto. Dinner will be provided along with 3 speakers and there will be a table for the Commission on Aging members. There will be an exhibit hall beginning at 4 pm for vendors, and dinner will follow. **Allison Adler** thanked everyone for considering her as a planning member of the group.

Public Comments: **Brittany Dunbar** from the Housing Authority of Brevard County said the Brevard Homeless Coalition is the agency to go to for housing, and they are the only ones who issue the Section 8 vouchers.

Upcoming Events: Helping Seniors of Brevard Car Raffle Saturday, October 7, 2023.

Next Meeting: September 14, 2023, 3:00 pm. Government Center 2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way, Building C-Space Coast Room, 2nd floor, Viera, FL 32940.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 4:35 pm.