

COMMISSION ON AGING BIANNUAL NEWSLETTER

The Commission on Aging is entirely responsible for the contents of this newsletter; the City of Atlanta is absolved of any responsibility for this document. Comments and questions are encouraged. Contact Betty Holmes, 404-622-0488 or email: bh4god@bellsouth.net

Betty Holmes, Chair; Delores Lattimore, Vice-Chair; Carol Edwards, Secretary; Pam Mayo, Corresponding Secretary; Ernestine Mitchell, Parliamentarian; Keyanna Howard, Ass't to Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor; Inez Heard; Mary Hughes; Joyce Jones; Helene Mills; Marilyn Morton; George Pilkington; Tinnie Prather; Sanders Wilborn; Anne Wofford-McKenzie

Summer 2009, No. 1

The Commission on Aging was established by Resolution 01-R-1450 of the City Council of Atlanta, Georgia on September 09, 2001, and signed into law by Mayor Shirley Franklin on September 25, 2001. The full Commission will consist of nineteen voting members appointed by each City Council member; the President of Council; the Mayor; and several other city, county, and regional agencies.

COMMISSION TO PUBLISH RECORD

The Commission on Aging is committed to reporting its actions to the community it serves. Beginning with this issue, the Information and Education Committee will summarize the minutes of the previous half-year and distribute reports to its constituency on matters that vitally affect their lives and well being.

FIRE CAPTAIN TALKS ON CODE

On March 17, Captain Shedrick A. Gardner of the Fire-Rescue Dept. spoke on Code Sec. 78-65 High-Rise Residential Occupancy for the elderly and its implementation. He assured this body that high-rises are inspected

yearly and that managers are instructed on how to comply. We requested that each building make a list of non-ambulatory residents for emergency evacuation, if necessary. Captain Gardner stated that fire inspectors will now require such a list. His department regularly provides materials and programs on fire safety to senior facilities.

POLICE MAJOR SPEAKS ON 911 CALL SYSTEM

On May 19, Major Dallas, a 30-year veteran of the APD, talked about the educational efforts his department gives to seniors. He reported on the new emergency call center, an upgraded 911 service, which will handle all emergencies: police; fire; medical;

etc. They have applied for stimulus funds for improved technology, i.e., infra-red cameras in various locations to assist in monitoring the city for criminal activity.

COA HONORED

In April, this body was honored by the Atlanta Board of Ethics for 100% participation in filing Financial Disclosure materials. Copies of the award letter were distributed.

FREE SEATS FOR SENIORS: 501.3C

Free tickets for events are awarded by the city of Atlanta to 501.3C agencies who distribute them to seniors. Contact Sandra Kelly, in the Mayor's Office: 404-330-6023.

SENIOR ZONE POLICY DERAILED

On December 01, 2008, Councilmember Mary Norwood introduced her Senior Zone Policy as Ordinance 08-0-2427 to the City Council. **Eight months later**, on April 29, 2009, after the Transportation Group finally passed it on, senior advocate George Pilkington addressed the City Council and described the 14 point Policy he helped develop. **It was finally passed and became law on May 13, 2009.**

This was a great boon for Atlanta seniors who comprise 20% of Atlanta's population in 78 senior facilities; 11 senior centers; and 67 senior residences. It required that senior zones be designated around senior focal areas that require street and traffic control devices; special signage and crosswalk designs; ramps, arrows, and reflective markings; all beautifully thought out for the enhancement of senior life in Atlanta.

It became law except for the Mayor's signature, which she withheld.

It is not hard to understand fiscal

prudence in hard times such as these, we just wish that seniors got what they needed when they needed it. Waiting for the recession to abate will be definitely too late for some, and likely too little for most.

GREG PRIDGEON, MAYOR'S CHIEF OF STAFF GUEST SPEAKER

On May 19, 2009, a mere 6 days after the Senior Zone Policy was passed but shot dead in the water, the Mayor's Chief of Staff, Greg Pridgeon attended our monthly meeting to explain why she did what she did (or in this case, didn't).

He explained how although there are no arguments about the issues, there are no funds to implement the measures described in the Senior Zone Policy. He stated that the next administration would be the ones to establish the changes we need for an expanded safety program. It is now our responsibility to be extra cautious on our badly-marked streets, and especially in traffic, since the City of Atlanta is passing the buck to the next crew of City Hall Movers and

Shakers to wrestle with our outrageous demands for ramps, and reflective signage around the high-rises and senior centers.

Ironically, when asked why the City Council formed this Commission, Mr. Pridgeon stated that "the Council felt that Atlanta seniors needed a **stronger voice** to speak on their behalf and the Commission would provide a **friendlier**, more efficient forum to address issues facing seniors living in the City of Atlanta."

Clearly, we are not loud enough nor friendly enough . . . so far.

WELCOME ABOARD

Arthur Cole, mentor to this body and Assistant Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office, introduced his new intern, Mr. Williams, who will become a regular at our meetings.

CENTENARIANS TO BE HONORED

It was decided at the June meeting, that we will honor seniors on their 100th birthdays with official greetings from the City of Atlanta. Please inform us of any candidates for this with their contact information and birth dates. We will also need a short bio.