

ATLANTA COMMISSION ON AGING
MAY 19, 2009
MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Carol Edwards, Betty Holmes, Delores Lattimore, Marilyn Morton, Sanders Wilborn, Arthur Cole, George Pilkington, Tinnie Prather, Ernestine Mitchell, Anne Wofford McKenzie, Pam Mayo.

Excused Absences: Helene Mills, Joyce Jones, Inez Heard, Mary Hughes.

Absent: Jaclyn Barbarrow

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Betty Holmes (Chair)

Words of encouragement "Don't Quit"---Delores Lattimore (Vice Chair)

May Agenda and April Minutes approved.

Roll Call.

Committee Reports:

Ernestine Mitchell: Housing: Letter to solicit his support was sent to C.T. Martin regarding concerns about safety @ Park Commons.

Carol Edwards: Social Support: Information from ARC Advisory Board meeting held on May 5th, 2009. MIPPA (Medicare Improvement for Patient and Provider Act) A Medicare savings program which will be funded by a Federal Grant. The Area Agency on Aging will provide outreach information to the aging and disabled population. They will be visiting senior centers, senior housing facilities etc. to disseminate information and enroll persons into the Medicare Savings Programs. Program will be available effective July 1, 2009.

Stimulus plan is providing additional money for Weatherization and Home Repair. Persons with income under \$40,000 may be eligible for up to \$6500 per household. For more information go to web site: Gefa.com.

Aging and Disability Resource Ctr. (ADRC) will have a meeting at the Benson Center on June 2, 2009. May 21, 2009 the Benson Center will have an anniversary luncheon.

Delores Lattimore: Recreation: Will ask Sandra Long of The Golden Age Club to attend our June meeting.

Tinnie Prather: Crime Prevention/Public Safety: Completed the Preparation for Emergency Training, graduation ceremony will be held on May 28, 2009.

George Pilkington: Transportation: Senior Zone Policy is now a law in the City Of Atlanta effective 5/13/09. However, Mayor Franklin has not yet signed the official papers. We need to watch and be aware of what steps will be taken next to be sure that the policy is executed. Money has not yet been allocated for the changes outlined in the Policy. Mr. Pilkington will distribute the complete document to Board members. (It is on the City website). We are only the second city in the country to have a Senior Zone Policy.

Special Guest: Greg Pridgeon, Mayor's Chief of Staff

Mr. Pridgeon responded to several questions posed by the Commission members. He addressed the question of why Mayor Franklin has not signed the Senior Zone Policy document. The Mayor felt that the promises contained in the Policy cannot be met at this time as there are no funds to implement the safety issues posed to construct or change. She is in favor of the intent and feels that senior safety issues should be addressed.

The Mayor has presented a budget to City Council that would eliminate Police and Fire Fighters furloughs through a tax increase. This budget would be effective July 1, if approved by the Council. Many city projects and employees have been cut due to lack of funds. It will be left to the new administration to implement a budget that will allow for implementation of the Senior Zone Project and any others that have been trimmed or consolidated.

Mr. Wilborn was concerned about the tax free benefits given to the Atlanta Station project. Mr. Pridgeon advised that the developers received tax breaks not tax free incentives. They must pay business license fees which generate thousands of dollars to the city. The project also creates jobs, shopping etc. which generate revenues to the city.

Ms. Holmes was concerned with the closing of recreation centers that were not being used and why the city would not sell them to generate income. Mr. Pridgeon advised that the City plans to re-open some centers when the

economy improves. To sell them now and perhaps have to re-purchase them in the future would cost millions of dollars.

Ms. Prather advised that “Camp Best Friend” will serve about 5000 children this year and suggested that we use neighborhood volunteers to help keep facilities open. Also, churches, Y’s and Boys and Girls clubs will be offering summer programs.

Ms. Morton wanted to know why tax increase never seem to decrease after the immediate need for the tax was addressed. Mr. Pridgeon stated that 53% of our property taxes go to the Board of Education, only 23% for City government. Most tax payers only experience a small increase and everyone has the right to appeal a property tax increase.

Why did the City Council want to form the Commission?

Mr. Pridgeon: The Council felt that Atlanta City 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. The Commission would be the best format to present suggestions and recommendations to the Council on behalf of the seniors.

City of Atlanta Police Department’s Major Dallas (a 30 year veteran of the police department) and Director Jackson (Public Safety/Education) made a presentation on the responsibilities of the Police Department to the citizens of the City Atlanta. Included: 1). Public Safety Education provided in Senior Centers, Senior Housing facilities, private homes. 2.) Extensive information on the 911 system. The new 911 center is the on call center for Fire Dept., Police Emergencies and Medical Emergencies.

The Police Department has applied for Stimulus money which will be used to enhance the technology in the Call Center, i.e., infra red cameras to zero in on specific locations to assist in crime prevention and safety. Could help to eliminate furloughs and assist in recruiting new and younger police officers.

We may also have an opportunity to visit the new Call Center once everything is in place and running at full capacity.

Visiting Atlanta Citizens:

Melinda Israel—Director of a new Independent Living facility for 55+ located in southwest Atlanta. The Lillie R.Campbell House will have an open house on June 14, 2009. Commission members were invited to attend and to distribute flyers to advertise the new facility.

Mr. Ben Howard---NPU (Neighborhood Planning Unit) needs to add 100 new seniors to the NPU system. He was soliciting the help of the Commission to achieve this goal.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m. Next meeting: June 16, 2009 @ 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Edwards--Secretary