

Governor's Council to Address Aging in Massachusetts

Monday, December 4th

2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

McCormack Building

One Ashburton Place - 21st Floor Conference Rooms 1 & 2

Boston, MA 02108

In attendance: Co-Chairs Secretary Marylou Sudders and Eileen Connors; Secretary Alice Bonner, Ger Brophy, Bill Caplin, Joe Coughlin, Rosanne DiStefano, Beth Dugan, Kevin J. Dumas, Tom Grape, Steven Kaufman, Undersecretary Chrystal Kornegay, Nora Moreno Cargie, Ruth Moy, Alicia Munnell, Brian O'Grady, Janina Sadlowski, and Amy Schectman

On the phone: Laura Iglesias Lino

Not present: Secretary Rosalin Acosta, Assistant Secretary Kate Fichter, Betsy Hampton, and Tom Riley

Council Staff: Amanda Bernardo, Emily Cooper, Robin Lipson, Thomas Lyons, William Travascio, and Patricia Yu

The meeting was called to order at 2:05 pm by Co-Chair Secretary Sudders, who welcomed all Council members and visitors. A motion was made by Nora Moreno Cargie to approve the minutes from the October 2nd meeting. The motion was seconded by Rosanne DiStefano and the minutes were approved by all members present and with Co-Chair Secretary Sudders abstaining, as she was not in attendance at the previous meeting.

After the minutes were approved, Secretary Alice Bonner reviewed a draft a blueprint for recommendations for the Council to give to the Governor. Secretary Bonner said that the goal of the blueprint is to: First, provide an overview of the Council since its founding in April. Second, frame the important priorities that the Council has heard about. Third, how to move forward with ideas that are important to the Council, both short and long term.

Co-Chair Secretary Sudders added that the blueprint reflects on the time the Council has spent together as well as lays out recommendations for the Governor to in advance of the State of the State Address and House 1.

Alicia Munnell expressed concern that the ideas in the blueprint did not do enough to combat elder economic insecurity.

Secretary Bonner mentioned that economic security is one of the four broad themes mentioned in the overview. The other themes mentioned are: Access to services, Age-friendly communities, Engagement and Connection. Secretary continued onto slide 6 which lists four broad goals that the Council can use to have an impact. The goals listed are: Reframe Aging –

Change the narrative, Elevate the conversation – Include aging in all policies, Develop public/private community partnerships, and Leverage technology and Innovation.

Alicia Munnell said that she thought of these points as tools for the Council to create change and not as the goals themselves. She added that partnership is a tool, not a goal.

Secretary Bonner next discussed slides 7 through 23, which she described as the background and which could be helpful for people who have not followed the progress of the Council. Secretary Bonner went on to discuss slide 24 of the blueprint. This slide breaks down the major themes (Economic Security, Access to Services, Age-friendly Communities, Engagement and Connection that the Council has heard) and where the Council can start to look for impact. At this point, Secretary Bonner asked the Council for feedback on what they had heard up to that point.

Rosanne DiStefano asked for clarification regarding what was meant by special populations under Access to Services. She asked if special populations included people with mental health issues, people who are deaf and hard of hearing, or are blind.

Tom Grape was concerned that healthcare was not listed under any of the broad themes. Tom suggested that while accessible and affordable housing is listed, senior housing should be listed as well. In addition, Tom suggested that Age-Friendly State replace Age-Friendly Communities as one of the four overall themes. He opined that the overall goal should be for Massachusetts to be an age friendly state, with each community being age-friendly.

Amy Schectman suggested the term – “affordable senior supportive housing.”

Rosanne DiStefano asked if in-home services and supports should also be included under the theme Access to Services, and not just Integration of all Services.

Amy Schectman asked if closing eligibility gaps could be added to Integration of all Services.

Joe Coughlin asked if Massachusetts could be a source of new businesses, partnership and financing schemes with aging as a structure of innovation. Joe envisions Massachusetts as an incubator where new technologies for aging well could be developed and then exported to other states.

Beth Dugan agreed and suggested that this creates an opportunity for Massachusetts to be the Silicon Valley of Aging.

Secretary Bonner noted that the Council could make Age-Friendly State under a goal under a new pillar for Innovation.

Alicia Munnell mentioned that writing this blueprint helps give the public an idea of where the Council is going. She noted that economic security needs to be high on the list of priorities

for the Council. Under economic security, three specific goals should be: 1, keep people working longer 2, Auto enrollment in IRAs for people in the workforce, and 3, leveraging their home as an asset.

Nora Moreno Cargie noted that we should be identifying principles for the Council and the workgroups to engage with the public. She added that the Council needs to make sure that it is not inadvertently widening the elder disparity gap. The Council needs to make sure that it is more deliberate about intentions and outcomes. She also noted that the Council should not just do innovation for innovation sake. The work of the Council should keep cultural competency in mind.

Steve Kaufman said that he liked the structure of the blueprint but that goals should be listed first followed by the tools that would be used to accomplish them.

Secretary Bonner discussed that slides 31 and 32 were left empty for the Council to fill-in. Slide 31 asks the Council for immediate action items that can be worked on within the next year. Slide 32 asks the Council to longer term action items that can be worked on over the next 2 to 5 years.

Ger Brophy said that overall he liked the blueprint, pillars, goals and the structure for those goals. He felt that the Council needs to find the tools to meet those goals, but overall said this was a great structure.

Joe Coughlin suggested adding action verbs to each of the major themes, such as; Enable economic security, Ensure access to services, Design age-friendly communities and Facilitate connection and engagement. Joe also asked if the term “Age-Friendly” could be replaced with a more appropriate term, such as “Age-Ready” or “Age-Usable.”

Secretary Bonner suggested “Age-Livable.”

Co-Chair Secretary Sudders said that “Age Friendly” should be changed to a term that is innovative, that the average person can connect to.

Nora Moreno Cargie felt that the term “Age-Friendly” should be used because it helps Massachusetts build upon the “traction” that has been made in other states and at the national level.

Rosanne DiStefano liked the term “Age-Ready” and suggested the term “Age-Engage.”

Amy Schectman said that from the last meeting she liked Joe Coughlin’s analogy - How can you get an ice cream cone and Aniko Lanzo’s 50-yards question. Amy said that since the last meeting she has reviewed new JCHE housing projects through those lenses. Amy felt that since new transportation systems cannot be built, how could the existing system be leveraged or changed to better help elders.

Amy Schectman noted that at the first Council meeting the themes that were brought up included: ageism, a bootstrap mentality, gaps in services, economic security, housing stock, transportation, loneliness, race, ethnicity, gender and class, and program eligibility.

Secretary Bonner asked if “inclusivity” was too broad to encompass cultural competency, race, ethnicity, gender, and class.

Joe Coughlin felt that “inclusivity” is the correct term to use.

Bill Caplin said that from the ASAP view that the Council needs to remember frail low income elders. Elders who are frail and low income need access to services and to be able to have ways to communicate their needs.

Nora Moreno Cargie suggested that the Council have a communications and outreach plan to better spread awareness about resources that are available.

Secretary Bonner said that one part of being an age-friendly community or an age-friendly state is having access to information and referral services.

Steve Kaufman offered that neither holistic planning nor longevity planning are clear. He felt that financial planning is more accurate because it encompasses planning for housing and savings.

Rosanne DiStefano felt that financial planning alone might be too narrow because as people age they need to think about much more than their finances.

Tom Grape suggested “comprehensive financial planning” instead.

Robin Lipson offered that using the term “financial planning” is limiting because lower income people may not see themselves as having “finances.” She also felt that long term planning should be more than just making a plan for one’s finances.

Co-Chair Secretary Sudders noted she wanted to elevate the conversation. The goal will be to include an overview, a current state of the state, and futuristic language. It would include a vision/aspiration of what we want the state to look like (inclusivity, equity, etc.) with the four pillars defined with action verbs. Include opportunity metrics and opportunities for Massachusetts, what makes Massachusetts different.

Tom Grape suggested that technology be added as one of the overall themes. However, he also said that the goals under the technology pillar should not just be limited to technology. He suggested that some potential goals could be: health care research, collaboration with state medical universities, and developing an economy focused on aging.

Ruth Moy mentioned that it would be important to have financial planning services available to all people, especially those who are low income. Ruth also suggested that public schools should add financial planning as a part of its curriculum.

Janina Sadlowski notes leveraging what Massachusetts already excels at and have an award program for entrepreneurs.

Kevin Dumas said that it is important to keep the slides at the beginning of the blueprint because it shows how the Council got where they did.

Joe Coughlin mentioned redefining longevity and rethinking old age because people are living longer. He felt that people need to prepare for a 100 year life. Joe suggested that there would need to be tech-enabled innovation, equity, and new business/economic development across all the pillars.

Brian O'Grady added that there should be more collaboration with the community colleges and colleges across the state to not only to develop more curriculum around financial planning but also around health care. Brian noted that more geriatricians and gerontologists need to be trained to meet the wave of aging baby boomers.

Co-Chair Eileen Connors commented that one of the challenges is perceptions of the field, with geriatrics appearing less uplifting than pediatrics.

Co-Chair Secretary Sudders explained the goal is to deliver an interim report to the Governor by the end of the month so as to help with State of the State Address and the House 1 budget. The Council should work in smaller groups and on a more detailed level over the winter and early spring and reconvene as a full group in the spring.

Steven Kaufman asked if a tagline for the Council's work should be: "quality, innovation and inclusivity."

Co-Chair Secretary Sudders suggested "older adults are our future." Secretary Sudders pointed out that we want to make sure all communities feel included, such as; deaf and hard of hearing. Also want to focus on a person-centered approach; older adults' needs are all different. The Council needs to be aware of any unintended consequences. Secretary Sudders mentioned that her, Secretary Bonner, and Eileen Connors met with Mass Medical Society recently to discuss older adults and opioids. She asked the group to stay focused on slide 24 and what words work and do not work. Holistic likely does not work and integration of services is too broad. Secretary Sudders suggested that members refer any ideas for the blueprint to Robin over the next week.

Ger Brophy suggested "plan through all phases of aging."

Co-Chair Eileen Connors asked what the next steps would be for the Council.

Robin Lipson said that feedback sent to her would be incorporated into a revised blueprint which would then be sent back to the Council for approval.

Nora Moreno Cargie mentioned that one short and long term goal that could be delivered to the Governor is the work that the Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative is doing to identify communities that are “age-friendly.”

Undersecretary Chrystal Kornegay asked about the interchange between equity and inclusivity. She also said integration of all services may need to be more clearly defined. Undersecretary Kornegay also mentioned that Dementia should be an item specifically mentioned in the blueprint. She also wondered about how success would be measured.

Amy Schectman expressed concern with the housing section of the blueprint. She suggested having a program with accessible multi-family homes and wraparound services so as to leverage the house as an asset.

Steve Kaufman suggested that the Council look at new and innovative housing models such as Ink Block micro apartments.

Co-Chair Secretary Sudders thanked the Council members for their comments and ideas. She asked that the members go around the table and give closing comments.

Amy Schectman suggested that the blueprint use the term “aging in community” and not “aging in place.”

Tom Grape suggested “accessible and affordable subsidized and market rate housing.” He also noted the absence of long term care service and settings.

Brian O’Grady said that at the recent MCOA conference, they asked the audience who would want to live in a nursing home and not a hand went up.

Secretary Bonner said we should keep issues related to dementia because they are overwhelming for communities and will have major economic impact. We can also use the national movement on dementia friendly work.

Joe Coughlin asked if the recommendation had to be budget neutral. To which Co-Chair Secretary Sudders said no. She also noted that the Council should identify state programs to “expand” rather than create new ones.

Robin Lipson noted that she recently learned that One Stop Career Centers see a lot of older workers but do not have the trainings that they need.

Laura Iglesias Lino (on phone) noted the lack of geriatric care and many academic centers do not know how to provide this, could be more information on state website.

Nora Moreno Cargie said we really want to think about how we communicate about aging and rebranding aging. We should do an “age-check” to use the right terms within the Council work.

Robin Lipson said the Council would have a revised draft in a few days.

The meeting adjourned at 3:50 pm.

The schedule for 2018 has yet to be determined.

Brief Summary of Topics Discussed by Council Members:

- On demand transportation/Joe Coughlin’s “ice cream cone” test
- “Wraparound” services
- Technology
- Community-specific approaches
- Economic insecurity
- Age-Friendly vs. Age-Ready
- Dementia
- Financial Planning
- Deaf and hard of hearing
- Mental Health
- Innovation
- Inclusivity
- “affordable senior supportive housing”