



Municipality of Anchorage

Ethan Berkowitz, Mayor

Department of Health and Human Services



SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMISSION SUMMARY MEETING MINUTES

January 24, 2018 ~ Anchorage Senior Activity Center, 1300 E. 19th Ave.

Members Present	Members Absent	Guests
Gayle Schuh, Chair Kevin Turkington, Vice Chair Theresa Brisky Dawnia Clements Hattie Gardner AnnaBell Stevens		<u>Staff:</u> Judy Atkins

Call to Order

Chair Gayle Schuh called the meeting to order with a quorum at 10:08 a.m.

Approval of the Agenda

Chair Schuh called for approval of the Agenda. Chair Schuh asked that the Legislative report from Ken Helander be moved up on the Agenda above presentations. Commissioner Turkington made a motion to accept the Agenda with changes; seconded by Commissioner Stevens. **Hearing no objections the Agenda was approved as amended.**

Approval of Minutes

Chair Schuh called for approval of the minutes for the December 13, 2017 meeting. Motion to accept from Commissioner Turkington, seconded by Commissioner Brisky. **Hearing no objections the minutes were approved.**

Introductions

Comments from the Chair – none

Legislative Report - Ken Helander

The legislature convened last week and for seniors it is a lean agenda as far as bills. Some have are connected to older individuals such as a bill having to do with the ability to try unapproved drugs for life threatening conditions; this has passed one branch already. Others: bills that address opioids how they are prescribed and warnings to be provided to patients; smoke free workplace bill which passed in senate and referred to House. There is no scheduled hearing for senior benefits bill-AARP is working hard to get this one moving. The money is appropriated in governor’s budget but it must be reauthorized or it sunsets at the

end of June, leaving 11K without support. Another bill is looking at alternatives for the guardianship system in Alaska. Many seniors end up having guardians. The new approach is “supported decision-making” involving the client and guardian working together. It will make entire system more responsive and easier to manage. Kevin commented that there should be a better system for screening the guardians also.

Mr. Helander provided a handout on the Medicare Information Offices. Across the country, they are funded through the State Health Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program (SHIP). Money is not a given and they have to fight for it every year. These programs provide seniors with one-on-one counseling to help them take full advantage of their benefits. Funding this important program is not only important for this year but for the future as well. They do a lot with a very small budget and it would be a great loss. Chair Schuh will draft a letter from the commission urging the congressional delegation to support the appropriation.

Another related issue in is the bill that limited Medicare therapy payments, (physical, occupation, speech). The caps are very low and it is so easy to burn through the allotted amount which could be devastating to the client. Every year Congress has done an extension with is expired now.

Presentations

Midnight Sun Home Care – Kevin Turkington Midnight Sun Home Care provides quality senior care and companion care services in Anchorage and surrounding areas. Founded by Kevin Turkington, they are dedicated to helping keep Alaskans independent. They provides services such as: companionship, meal planning, transportation, post-surgical care, light housekeeping, medication reminders, and respite care and information and referral services. Their services are available 24/7. Also available is Lifeline and Auto Alert. Mr. Turkington provided a background story on how the business came to be and his special interest in supporting nonprofits such as the Arthritis Foundation and Hospice of Anchorage. Additionally he provides presentations and seminars on topics such as Senior Targeted Fraud & Scams, Caregiving as an Occupation and Homecare 101.

Cycling Without Age - A handout was provided on the Cycling Without Age program which helps seniors get back on their bicycles, offering free rides to the local nursing home residents. Mike Price is starting the program in Alaska and is looking for monetary support for insurance. The commission will take it under advisement.

Old Business

Older Americans Month Kick Off Event – Judy Akins

The event has been scheduled for Wednesday, May 2, 2018 from 10:30 am-12:30 pm at the Anchorage Senior Activity Center, 1300 E. 19th Ave. This year’s theme is Engage At Every Age, emphasizing that you are never too old to take part in activities that enrich your life. The guest speaker has not been determined. After discussion it was agreed that Commissioner Turkington will ask Johnny Ellis to be this years’ speaker. After a short review of last year’s event, commissioners’ volunteered to assist in areas needed. Funding was discussed. A door prize donation letter will be provided to the members to provide to prospective donors.

Ron Hammett Award

An article will appear in the February Senior Voice asking for Ron Hammett Award nominations. A fillable nomination form has been posted on the Senior Commission website for convenience. Deadline for submission is March 31, 2018. Nomination review will be in April.

Commission member recruitment status – there are at least three commissioner applications for our commission. We remain patient while waiting for the Mayor’s office to process and for Assembly approval.

New Business

Board Elections – Chair and Vice Chair

Commissioner Clements moved the Gayle Schuh retain the position of Chair and Kevin Turkington retain the position of Vice Chair; Commissioner Stevens seconded the motion.

After receiving confirmation from both that they would retain their positions, the Commission unanimously voted in the affirmative.

Announcements

Commissioner Stevens inquired if the commission would like to hear a speaker on the opioid crisis. She will schedule someone for the April meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.