



**SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMISSION**  
**SUMMARY PLANNING SESSION MINUTES**  
January 22, 2020 ~ Special Olympics, 3200 Mountain View Drive

Members Present	Members Absent	Guests
Theresa Brisky, Chair Hattie Gardner Pam Kelley Emily McMahan AnnaBell Stevens Dawnia Clements Jim Bailey	Gayle Schuh (E)	Mary Shields, Facilitator      <b><u>Staff:</u></b> Judy Atkins

**Call to Order**

Chair Theresa Brisky called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. with a quorum.

**Approval of the Agenda**

Chair Brisky called for approval of the Agenda. Commissioner Kelley moved to accept the Agenda as presented; seconded by Commissioner McMahan. **Hearing no objections, the Agenda was approved.**

**Approval of Minutes**

Chair Brisky called for approval of the minutes for the December 18, 2019 meeting. Motion to accept the minutes as presented from Commissioner Bailey, seconded by Commissioner McMahan. **Hearing no objections, the minutes were approved.**

**Introductions**

**Legislative | AARP Report | Ken Helander**

Prior to providing his report, Mr. Helander asked if he has been giving the commission the information we want and/or need. Commissioner Bailey commented that he likes hearing the broad legislative picture; it brings a sense of awareness of what we need. The general consensus was that Ken is educating the commission of what is going on and sparks the commission into action. **Legislative:** The session has just opened with budget issues high on the list of action items; Committees have been reassigned with some legislators losing their chair or position on a committee. The off site meeting in Wasilla held earlier in the year which was attended by some legislators resulted in consequences to those who did not meet in Juneau with the majority. The complete committee member list will be posted soon. Several bills were introduced yesterday: make giant cabbage the state vegetable; importation of bees,

car registration for persons with disabilities; Medicaid coverage. The budget introduced was the one at the end of last session with the request for a full dividend however the Governor indicates there is no more money, so the legislature has some hard decisions to make. Which priorities will be funded? How will new revenue be identified? Issues of concern: shipping of prisoners and those with psychiatric issues out of state; cost increase at pioneer homes; licensing and certification of nurses. There is only one person in the state of Alaska that approves licenses and investigates issues that may occur... a process that needs to be streamlined so someone does not have to wait months before starting work. Mr. Helander will notify the commission when the above bill is introduced. **ACTION ITEM: Make the public aware of this situation by providing a letter of support from the Commission.** **AARP:** the organization has been providing support for a bill that would help older adults fight back against age discrimination on the job. 61% of older workers say they have faced or seen age bias in the workplace. AARP will continue to support this important legislation.

### **Presentations - None**

### **Comments from the Chair**

Chair Brisky turned the podium over to Mary Shields, planning session facilitator.

### **New Business**

**Election of Officers.** Ms. Shields called for nominations for Vice Chair. Commissioner Bailey nominated AnnaBell Stevens, who accepted the nomination. Ms. Shields called for nominations for the Chair. Commissioners McMahan and Bailey nominated Theresa Brisky, who accepted the nomination. **MOTION** by Commissioner Clements, seconded by Commissioner Bailey to elect Theresa Brisky as Chair and AnnaBell Stevens as Vice Chair. **Motion approved by a show of hands.**

### **Planning Session**

**Alzheimer's Awareness** will be the focal point for the Senior Commission this year. It is most important to be aware and prepare for this disease when a person is younger. Commissioner Kelley says there are two aspects the community needs to bolster: 1. Elevating awareness of the prevalence and incidence of Alzheimer's as it affects people living in our communities; encouraging folks to recognize factors and the progressive condition; 2. The opportunity to benchmark where we are in our community by doing early memory screening, partnering with the Alaska Mental Health Trust. Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska is moving forward with a project the commission could be involved in. It will launch in February - case management for family caregivers, starts them earlier in the process and offering an advanced packet of services facilitated by them. Ms. Kelley is excited because it is designed to test the theory that if you intervene earlier in the stress burden of caregivers, you will expand time the individual can remain at home to age in place. They will be attending every community council within the municipality to tell them about the project. Commissioner Bailey is in favor of the Commission supporting this project but how can we do so? Commissioner McMahan suggested tying it into the Older Americans Month theme, something we have not done in the past. Commissioner Pam Kelley, our resident expert on Alzheimer's, was asked by the

Commission to be the guest speaker for the Older Americans Month Kick Off Event – she accepted. Thank you, Pam. Commissioner Clements suggested asking the Mayor for a letter of support or endorsement to take to community council meetings. Commissioner Kelley will draft a letter to the Mayor endorsing their efforts for caregiver support for individuals who are providing in home care for individuals dealing with Alzheimer's. She will email the draft letter to the Commissioners to review. Is there community awareness in general for this topic? If not, could we identify an area where the senior commission could help; however we don't want to duplicate efforts. It was suggested that recognizing and honoring caregivers in some way would be a great idea; perhaps the Health Department could honor a "Caregiver of the Year".

Senior Friendly Project. The intention of SFP is to create a community that will maintain the dignity, independence, and standard of living for all our senior citizens. The project was aimed at improving the shopping and social experience of our older citizens and creating a community that is senior friendly. The project was to be funded through sponsorships, senior friendly business certification fees and contributors. It involved voluntary participation from area businesses and establishments. The question is whether the Commission wants to continue to pursue this project. There is no ability to get funding so realistically it would be difficult to find someone to voluntarily take it on as it is not sustainable. At the last meeting the topic of doing an educational piece was brought up, with the Commissioner showing interest in preparing a presentation to take to various organizations offering information on what could make a business senior friendly. It was again suggested taking it to the Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Partnership, small businesses. Additionally a flyer should be drafted.

Older American's Month. The kickoff event has been scheduled for May 6, 2020 at the Anchorage Senior Activity Center from 10:30-12:30. Guest Speaker will be Pam Kelley, Executive Director of Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska; our local theme will be on the topic of dementia. Members of the Ron Hammett Award committee are Jim Bailey, Dawnia Clements, Pam Kelley and Kris Warren (tentative). They plan to meet within the next few weeks and will ultimately choose our winner. Ms. Atkins will meet with the center to discuss food, setup and decorations; the Mayor will be invited along with the Congressional delegation who usually provide videos to be played at the event. Several Commissioners agreed to assist with parts of the event. Funding needs to be secured. Next meeting the emcees must be identified. Commissioner Bailey suggested that a resolution in support of Older Americans Month 2020 be prepared and submitted to the commissioners for approval to send to Mayor and Assembly.

Future Projects. Think about the upcoming months and areas identified we could assist in; for instance, June is Brain Health month, September is Alzheimer's Awareness month and November is Caregivers month. It was agreed that we can show our support and bring awareness to core issues by writing resolutions on a more regular basis. On behalf of the Commission, Ms. Atkins will schedule a meeting with the Mayor in April to present the

Annual Letter to the Mayor and discuss future issues. Chair Brisky and Co-Chair Stevens will work on the 2020 letter.

### **Commissioner comments/Announcements**

Commissioner Bailey will draft a letter to the assembly supporting bond issues for the senior centers and libraries. Chair will sign and Ms. Atkins will send to the Assembly.

Commissioner Clements asked if any progress had been made in developing an Area Agency on Aging (AAA) for Alaska. It would be helpful to understand how funding is allocated. Having a AAA in Alaska would enable both the Anchorage and Mat-Su ADRC's to be better advocates for senior and disability issues. Think about it carefully and decide if we want to be a member.

The Alaska Commission on Aging has not appointed a new Executive Director as of yet, Lesley Thompson is the Acting Director.

Commissioner Kelley spoke about the challenges of working together with a national organization as it relates to fundraising and politics.

Our presentation next month will be on the 2020 Census.

### **Adjournment**

Move to adjourn by Commissioner Bailey, second by Commissioner McMahan; meeting was adjourned at 12:55 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Wed., February 26, 2020.