



**REGULAR MEETING
Approved Minutes**

The Commission On Seniors convened in a regular meeting on WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2014, Boards and Commissions, First floor in room 1101, 301 W. 2nd Street in Austin, Texas.

Chair Ann Kitchen called the meeting to order at 12:05p.m.

Board Members in Attendance:

Dr. Tom Coopwood	Joyce Lauck	Dan Pruett
Erica Garcia-Pittman	Fred Lugo	Jennifer Scott
Ann Kitchen		

Staff in Attendance:

Willie Williams, COA-HHSD	Edna Staniszewski, COA-HHSD
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1. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION

- Mary Teeters – Update on the information on specialized training for Austin Energy Customer Care Practices.
 - i. Commissioner Joyce Lauck made a motion for the Commission on Seniors to submit a letter to Austin Energy.
 - ii. Commissioner Dan Pruett seconded the motion.
 - iii. Motion passed 6-0.

- John Woodley – item moved after Future Agenda Items. He would like the board to be aware that transcripts of the meeting are not available.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2014 MEETING.

- Commissioner Dan Pruett made a motion to accept the minutes.
- Commissioner Jennifer Scott seconded the motion.
- Motion passed 6-0.

3. NEW BUSINESS

A) Presentation - Rebekah Baines Johnson Center Project (Helen Varty).

- Facility is an independent living facility with all bills paid.
- Total of 250 tenants
 - i. 60 – in the 80's age group
 - ii. 130 – in the 70's age group
 - iii. Rest – below the 70's age group

- iv. Transportation:
 - 1. Not offered by facility
 - 2. Capital metro stops on site
 - 3. Tenants are offered discounted tickets
- v. Waiting list is 6months to a year.
- vi. Section 8 units are efficiencies and there is a 2 year waiting list.
- vii. Waiting list for a one bedroom is 10 years.
- Property is being surveyed as part of Phase I, once build begins, it should take approximately 2-3 years to complete.
- Current tenants will be relocated to new facility when completed and then the old facility will be renovated.

B) Election of Officer

- Chair and Vice-Chair
 - i. Commissioner Tom Coopwood motioned for the current Chair and Vice-Chair to continue term.
 - ii. Commissioner Dan Pruett seconded the motion.
 - iii. Motion passed 6-0.

Commissioner Erica Garcia-Pittman joined the dais at 12:50pm.

4. OLD BUSINESS

A) Commission Work Plan – Standing Item.

- i. Presentation - Tax Proposal Option (Jacqueline Angel and Chair Ann Kitchen)
 - **Option #1:** The People’s Property Tax Education Group has proposed a state law change to allow a freeze of all property taxes for all tax entities on residential homesteads when the property owner reaches age 65 and only if the appraised value of their residential homestead is at or below the median appraised value within each Texas County. This proposal expands a property tax freeze for all property taxes from all taxing entities not just the tax from the affected school district (Texas Property Tax Code (TPTC) §11.13, §11.26, §11.261, and/or other sections; People’s Property Tax Education Group State of Texas, Travis County Proposed Legislation, 2014).
 - **Option #2:** Another option is a benefit program that reduces property tax assessments by as much as 50% based on a sliding scale. Under the “sliding-scale” option the full discount is given to seniors whose incomes are less than \$22,000. This discount decreases progressively and is zero above \$44,000 (senior 2010 median household income, Robinson, 2014). See The New York State Department of Taxation and Finance, 2014 for details of the program.

- **Option #3:** Encourage seniors to apply for a reverse mortgage through an FHA approved lender. The HECM allows seniors who have equity in their homes to supplement their income.
 - ii. After some discussion, the board decided to eliminate Option #3.
 - iii. Suggested actions:
 - Submit a letter of recommendation to Council regarding Commission on Seniors considering options #1 and #2.
 - Check if we can request legal guidance on what can be done at Local or State level.
 - iv. To include in letter:
 - Current project with Austin Energy.
 - References to questions 1 and 2 and how we got here.
 - Current work plan.
 - The limits to Option #1.
 - Looking at age inclusive affordable housing.
- Commissioner Tom Coopwood motioned to construct a letter of recommendation on behalf of the Commission to include the above items.
- Commissioner Jennifer Scott seconded the motion.
- Motion passed 7-0.

5. STAFF BRIEFINGS

A) Overview of City of Austin Commission on Seniors.

- Follow up items:
 - i. Summary or grid of the Commissions past and future items.

6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

A. Adopt the Meeting Calendar for 2015.

B. Request for identified entities to present at future meetings:

- i. Aging Services Council
- ii. Asian Community
- iii. African American Community
- iv. Housing works
- v. AARP
- vi. AustinUp!
- vii. Legal representative

ADJOURNMENT

- Meeting adjourned at 1:30p.m.