



**REGULAR MEETING**  
**Approved Minutes**

*The Commission On Seniors convened in a regular meeting on WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2015, Boards and Commissions, First floor in room 1101, 301 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in Austin, Texas.*

**Commissioner Dan Pruett called the meeting to order at 12:10p.m.**

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Jacqueline Angel	Erica Garcia-Pittman	Dan Pruett
Angela Atwood	Martin Kareithi	Monica Saavedra
Cecilia Crossley	Fred Lugo	

**Staff in Attendance:**

Edna Staniszewski, COA-HHSD

**1. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION**

- Shubhada Saxena – Parents of immigrants healthcare
  - Documented visitors and the difficulty in receiving healthcare while here.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 11, 2014 MEETING.**

- Commissioner Fred Lugo made a motion to accept the minutes.
- Commissioner Angela Atwood seconded the motion.
- Motion passed 8-0.

**3. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. Commission Work Plan – Standing Item.**

- Tax Options by Jacqueline Angel (Commission on Seniors commissioner).
  - Commissioner Martin Kareithi recused himself from this item.

Senior Tax Exemption	Features	Benefits	Cost
#1 Property Tax Freeze	Freezes the taxable value of a homestead property that is below the median value of all homesteads.	Helps low-income seniors with property that falls below median value.  Stimulates the Austin economy.  Minimal revenue implications given that it applies the exemption to those households at or below the median appraised value.	May lose freeze if home appreciates above the median value.  City will be locking away a large source of revenue as Baby Boomers turn 65.  County may raise the tax rate that is applied to taxable value.  Taxable value may increase if homeowner makes improvements to property.

			Homeowner must apply for the exemption each year. Is it reasonable for a household that falls slightly above the median appraised value to be disqualified while one that is just below receives it?
#2 Circuit Breaker/Sliding Scale	Taxpayers earning below a certain income level are given some amount of property tax relief when their taxes exceed a certain percentage of their income.	Targeted exemptions are less expensive to a jurisdiction than across the board property tax breaks.  Ties tax payments to income. Benefits go to the taxpayers for whom property taxes are most burdensome.	Balances equity and relative income adequacy.  Reduces tax liability.  Credit may be available to elderly or non-elderly taxpayers, or both.  In absence of State income tax difficult to verify income.  They are only given to taxpayers who apply for them, in the form of a credit or refund, and are not automatic.
#3 Property Tax Deferral	Sec 33.06 allows seniors to postpone payment of property taxes until they move out of their home or die.	Provides absolute guarantee that a senior would not be forced out of their home because of taxes.	Although senior homeowner would no longer owe taxes their heirs (estate) then owes the back taxes. Low participation rate owing to high Interest rate 8%. Legislative approval needed to peg rate of deferred tax payment to some current measure of interest rate.
#4 Reverse Annuity Mortgage Program	Encourage seniors to apply for a reverse mortgage through an FHA approved lender if they have equity in their homes.	Allows lower income seniors the ability to borrow the equity in their homes and benefit from additional income.	Unappealing due to excessive administrative costs.  Money unavailable for other purposes.

The board reviewed and discussed the four (4) tax options. Chair Dan Pruett proposed that option 4 be eliminated and Commissioner Cecilia Crossley was in agreement. Commissioner Fred Lugo proposed to submit 2 or 3 of the options to council and Commissioner Angela Atwood was in agreement.

- Commissioner Cecilia Crossley made a motion to recommend Tax Options 1, 2, and 3 as separate recommendations to council.
- Commissioner Jacqueline Angel seconded the motion.
- Motion passed 7-0.

#### **4. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **A. Draft Internal Review**

- Add Vision Zero to presenters section.
- Commissioner Martin Kareithi made a motion to take the draft internal review from month of February and changes from that conversation for Edna to compile and send to commissioners for review with track changes. Once Edna receives all track changes then give Dan authority to finalize so we can turn it in on time. If need be, Edna will find out if we find we can extend and if we have that option to do so then we can review in April's meeting.
- Commissioner Jacqueline Angel seconded the motion.
- Motion passed 8-0.

#### **5. STAFF BRIEFINGS**

##### **A. Overview of City of Austin Commission on Seniors.**

- i. Meeting Calendar changes for August 12, 2015, September 9, 2015, and November 11, 2015.

The boards and commission's room is not available for the above dates listed. Item will be presented to the new board in July for discussion. A suggestion was made to ask the Mayor's Taskforce for Disabilities if we could attend their meeting in November. To be presented to newly appointed board in July.

#### **6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- A. Asian American Quality of Life
- B. African American Quality of Life
- C. Hispanic American Quality of Life
- D. Corporate Budget
- E. Foundation Communities
- F. Affordable Housing
- G. Transportation issue
- H. Commissioner Jacqueline Angel students are on a year long course study on community care. Specifically care for the elderly involving conversations with partner organizations as well as engagement with the City. Would like to have organizations present to be on board as participant's then present data collected to board at a future time. Chair Dan Pruett suggested Foundations that support work with older adults such as St. David's Foundation and Anderson Foundation.
- I. Austin Energy – Weatherization and home repair. Chair Dan Pruett will pass on information as to when they can come in to present to the board.
- J. Home renovation for seniors – Commissioner Martin Kareithi will send Chair Dan Pruett and Edna Staniszewski information for future item.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

- Commissioner Cecilia Crossley made a motion to adjourn.
- Commissioner Angela Atwood seconded the motion.
- Motion passed 8-0.
- Meeting adjourned at 1:16p.m.