

# JUNEAU COMMISSION ON AGING MINUTES

October 17, 2023 1:30 pm

Zoom Webinar



<https://juneau.zoom.us/j/81491760970?pwd=bkFwWk42Mllmazl0aFdMS3ArTG5qZz09>

Or Call In: 1-253-215-8782 Meeting ID: 814 9176 0970 Passcode: 858248

## A. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Chair Emily Kane called the Juneau Commission on Aging (JCOA) meeting to order at 1:32 pm.

**Present:** Emily Kane, Kathleen Samalon, Deborah Craig, Linda Kruger, and Jennifer Garrison.

**Absent:** Sue Warner, Carol Ende, Jennifer Carson, and Ann Stepetin

**Others present:** No others were present.

## B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Agenda was approved with addition of a discussion of the structure of JCOA.

## C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the 2023-05-16 JCOA minutes was deferred.

## D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

There was no public participation on non-agenda items.

## E. AGENDA TOPICS

### 1. Meeting with New City Manager, Katie Koester

Emily Kane will meet with Katie Koester on October 31 to update her on JCOA activities and goals. Emily asked how comfortable the commissioners are on her representing JCOA efforts and whether she should broach the topic of a city position to serve Juneau seniors. Linda Kruger stated her support and clarified that such a person be hired as an actual CBJ employee. Kathleen Samalon concurred. Emily suggested pushing JCOA's universal building design idea as the city has a fair amount of leverage by issuing permits. She noted that builders from Idaho were recently shut down because they weren't paying taxes and didn't have insurance for a housing project near the Juneau Fred Meyer. Outside contractors "are just not responsible to the community in the same way," she stated. Kathleen said she is good with Emily representing her and Carol Ende's work on promoting universal design, and she will provide Emily with some points to cover.

Deb Craig asked if the commission voted on a regulatory universal design position. Kathleen said it is not regulatory. Deb said she would not support onerous regulations, and there should be a vote before JCOA is represented in public, as it would clarify what JCOA supports. The city manager should receive a list of what the commission actually supports, she added. Every organization needs a clearly defined purpose, and JCOA should have "pretty clear positions on what we're advocating for," and then those would be JCOA goals for the following year. Emily suggested forming a subcommittee to do that, but there is not time to vote prior to her meeting with the city manager.

Deb said she could write a description for a city senior navigator. There are already navigators in Juneau but more coordination is needed. The Southeast Regional Eldercare Coalition is meeting on this. She suggested not recreating the wheel, but also that she is losing hope that the coalition will succeed in being a senior services coordinator. It makes sense for CBJ to have that role, she added. Emily agreed that there are navigators in every senior service organization, but they are specific to their own services. The second mandate of the Juneau Assembly economic plan is to grow the senior economy, she pointed out, and Juneau senior needs cannot just be

offloaded to others. Emily said the aim is to develop a proactive, coordinated, holistic strategy to solve the issue of services for an aging population. Rather than a “navigator,” suggested Jennifer Garrison, CBJ needs a “senior advocate.”

The JCOA needs to codify its positions. Emily said she will find a template for JCOA to do that. A motion was made to create a subcommittee to develop position papers and a structure for future JCOA positions. The motion was seconded. Without objection, the motion carried.

## **2. Juneau wellness assessment**

This discussion was deferred until the next meeting.

## **3. Housing subcommittee update**

Kathleen emailed CBJ Assembly candidates requesting support for universal design, and she read the enthusiastic positive responses from elected incoming members, Paul Kelly and Ella Adkison. Emily expressed the importance of holding the new assembly members to their statements.

Telephone Hill in Juneau will potentially provide new housing, and Kathleen requested a design to include common amenities, open space, compact homes, and energy efficiency. Whatever is built, JCOA is pushing for universal design, she added. As a citizen, Emily said she is pushing for workforce housing and universal design on Telephone Hill. She noted the few residents of Telephone Hill pushing for renovation of the historical houses, but the buildings are not that significant, and it is costly to renovate. Other voices need to be heard, she added.

A discussion ensued regarding a possible cruise ship dock near Park Shore Condominiums and the option of providing electricity to docking ships to reduce air pollution. Emily owns a condominium and notes that other seniors live there. She is concerned for fumes that reach that area as well as the Mountain View apartments for seniors.

Kathleen does not think the dock is a JCOA issue, but there was talk about housing next to the dock. Deb said JCOA may have a role in Juneau tourism policies, because tourism can make downtown much less accessible, but the dock seems to be a “stretch” for the commission. Emily countered that one more dock might lead to more seniors leaving town in the summer. Kathleen said the dock is a done deal. Deb suggested a “quality of life” committee. Emily said that is the overarching purpose of the work of JCOA.

## **4. Southeast Regional Eldercare Coalition (SREC) update**

Deb reported that the coalition is meeting monthly and JCOA members can attend. Many good things are going on in Juneau, but they are in silos. For example, there is a lot happening with senior housing, including new units for low-income seniors. She added that she and others on the SREC steering committee met with Brian Holst (Director, Juneau Economic Development Council, JEDC) because of the lack of outcomes, including JEDC’s unsuccessful recruitment for positions. The committee has made suggestions to JEDC, but “almost none of the things that were written into the grant are coming to fruition.” A planned spring summit may be moved to the fall because of this.

Emily asked about a reporting requirement to the funders. Deb surmised that JEDC would blame the steering committee for any delays, because they did not want the project in the hands of JEDC and that slowed things. A report is due in November, and JEDC has been allocated \$1.2 million. A \$800,000 payment in November may be held up because of the problems. Emily asked how JCOA can help, and what would funders say to replacing the JEDC as fiduciary. Deb said she suspects the grant will not be renewed, and she does not know what the funders would do if the fiduciary was changed. She noted a four-hour steering committee meeting planned for November, and there may be a time in the future that JCOA may be asked to express its support. Regarding the funds for caregiver wage supplementation, there was a poorly drafted survey sent to service providers that may not give useful information. Deb added that there have been verbal discussions, but nothing is documented, so she doesn’t know the content of the discussions. The wage subsidy is a million dollars, and Deb said she doesn't know where that money will go.

Emily suggested that providers ask JEDC for the money. Deb said the SREC steering committee is discussing that and asking how JEDC plans to spend the money and how it will document those expenditures. The original plan was to supplement wages for 50 caregivers for two years by giving money to the employers of the caregivers, but the money may be going to transportation and childcare [for the caregivers] instead, “but that is an accounting nightmare.”

**F. NEXT MEETING DATE**

Thursday, November 21, 2023 at 1:30 pm. There will be a December recess.

**G. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm.