

JUNEAU COMMISSION ON AGING MINUTES

June 20, 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 1:30 pm.

Present: Emily Kane, Kathleen Samalon, Carol Ende, Jennifer Carson, Sue Warner, Deborah Craig, and Jennifer Garrison. Ann Stepetin arrived later.

Absent: Linda Kruger

Others present: Michelle Hale, Assembly liaison

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Agenda was approved as amended by adding an update from the Senior Activity Subcommittee.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the 2023-05-16 JCOA minutes was tabled as requested by Carol Ende in order to review the discussion regarding the Senior Housing Subcommittee.

D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

There was no public participation on non-agenda items.

E. AGENDA TOPICS

1. Monthly meeting time

The JCOA monthly meeting will continue to be on each third Tuesday at 1:30 pm.

2. Final Review of JCOA Annual Report to the Assembly Human Resources Committee

After input from many commission members, Emily Kane presented the finalized JCOA annual report to the Assembly. She suggested that the reporting period include the 2022/2023 fiscal year that ends in June, because it reflects JCOA activities beyond the calendar 2022 year. Carol Ende expressed concern that the report portrays the JCOA as working with AARP more than it actually does, specifically regarding the recent Listening Sessions and potential AARP grants. Emily countered that AARP has heft and is the largest senior lobby in the country and can help JCOA attain its goals. Carol referred to the goal of a senior center and said that JCOA has not talked about a senior center.

Emily has been told that goals are not usually part of an annual report, but she wants the opportunity to plant seeds for projects that will definitely come up in the near future. She noted that she is willing to delete JCOA goals from the annual report. Sue Warner said she wants to keep the senior center goal in the report, because she is a big proponent of Juneau seniors having a center. She added that the first meeting of the new subcommittee designed to promote senior fitness and socializing kept coming back to the need of a senior center. Carol noted that seniors want to know where to go for services, and a senior center would be a solution to that, but she wants a clear understanding of what a center would be. Emily said the JCOA is planting a seed and she will task the JCOA commissioners to learn more about senior centers in Alaska. Deb Craig said she agrees that the report can prime

the assembly. She noted that the new position of “navigator” works well with the idea and that the position may be housed at the Teal Street Center.

Kathleen Samalon is on the JCOA subcommittee on age-friendly construction, and she noted that the annual report highlights only one goal of many and asked to make the language more general. She will provide new language. Emily said it ties into whether JCOA wants to press for “universal design,” accommodating all age groups for multiplex buildings. Carol, also on the subcommittee, said the catchphrase is “universal design, everybody wins.” Michelle Hale said it doesn’t hurt to get the assembly thinking about it, but her concern is that the CBJ is really pushing for affordable housing, and developers say that more requirements makes for higher costs. She is hesitant to add more requirements to the building code, but it doesn’t hurt to get the assembly thinking about encouraging that kind of building. Emily said the idea is so people can age in place. Kathleen said that the recommendations to the city from the housing subcommittee mostly includes ways to help builders, like special loans and credits for developers who participate. Coax, not codify, she said, by encouraging voluntary compliance.

3. Grand Opening of Bartlett Mental Health building

Jennifer Carson said that the new unit speaks to dignity and welcomeness so as not to make patients feel marginalized. Senior mental health needs will be met there, although there is no psychiatrist that specializes in elders. There are six programs including outpatient services, an autism program, adolescent crisis stabilization, and beds for up to seven days. They are in search of more medical staff, she added.

4. Assembly liaison comments

Michelle was asked about the electrification of the cruise ship docks, and she said it was a high priority for the assembly. Cruise companies are considering other cleaner fuels, as well. With regard to seniors, the assembly is looking at Juneau school consolidation and what needs can be met with extra buildings. She said the school-age population is shrinking and senior numbers are increasing in Juneau, so perhaps school buildings can be repurposed [for seniors]. There is a committee she participates in that is forming ideas. Emily offered JCOA’s help to encourage creating a senior center with a school building.

5. Senior Fitness and Social Activity Subcommittee

Sue reported on the subcommittee’s first meeting. Members also include Jennifer Carson and Linda Kruger. In discussing fitness and social activities for seniors in Juneau, the need for a senior center was discussed. The committee listed current fitness opportunities for Juneau seniors and determined its first goal is to contact some of the private gyms and ask for more senior-friendly programs. Subcommittee members will also meet with municipal recreation officials to see if they can encourage senior fitness with discounts and programs. Emily asked about the UAS recreation facility. Carol said the UAS gym can be affordable if a person takes a class and becomes an alumnus, and there are elders currently using it.

6. JCOA Brochures.

Emily suggested a brochure listing places with senior exercise programs. She noted that Carol and Kathleen have created information for builders and city policy makers on senior friendly housing, and that can be made into a brochure. There might be money to do it. Michelle said the money might be found in the community development department. Sue noted that a JCOA website has been suggested. A brochure for builders sounds useful, but exercise times and programs change frequently and a web listing would be more appropriate. Emily said the future navigator can do that. Deb said information could live on the navigator’s website and the navigator can operate it. A discussion about senior centers ensued.

7. Southeast Regional Eldercare Coalition update.

Deb told the committee that the hiring team narrowed the candidate for director down to two people who will be interviewed this week and JCOA members are invited. An offer may occur within a week.

F. NEXT MEETING DATE

Tuesday, July 18, 2023 at 1:30 pm

G. ADJOURNMENT

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