

JUNEAU COMMISSION ON AGING WORKGROUP SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES

March 25, 2025 at 3:00 PM

Zoom Webinar



<https://juneau.zoom.us/j/82442177751?pwd=Y4xxvhXb6L2fFmL2IDkWD9aTw9H1wn.1>

Or Call In: 1-253-215-8782 Meeting ID: 824 4217 7751 Passcode: 111520

Please note, this Zoom link is different from Regular JCOA meeting Zoom link

A. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL – Chair Craig called the JCOA workgroup meeting to order at 3:00pm via Zoom

Present: Deborah Craig, Linda Kruger, Carole Ende, and Barb Murray

Absent: n/a

Others Present: Kathleen Samalon, former JCOA Commissioner

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – agenda approved as presented

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - none

D. AGENDA TOPICS

1. Housing - focus on Housing Issues for Seniors

Kathleen Samalon & Carol Ende developed housing related materials for JCOA and provided an overview of previous efforts and recommendations going forward.

- a) **UPDATE and Distribute to all CBJ employees the “Can You Support Age Friendly Construction in Proactive Ways?”** paper and urge them to do whatever they can in their role in city government to prioritize and implement requests, including "as was done to create accessory apartments, can a new program be created that would make grants available to seniors to help cover the cost of retrofitting a multi-story home with an elevator or other senior friendly requirements."
- b) **Propose to CBJ:** grants/subsidies for elevators, including chair lifts which are less expensive. People want smaller homes and Juneau needs workforce housing. There is plenty of low-income/subsidized housing. Juneau needs help with "missing middle" housing, especially housing for caregivers and hospital staff.
- c) **Reach out to Developers & Chamber of Commerce:** Scott Ciambor, for JCOA's interest in connecting with developers, reaching out to Southeast Alaska Building Industry Association (SEABIA) and their members is the most direct way to reach the majority of the local building community. The Chamber of Commerce has a developer "subcommittee" and we should present to them.
- d) **Reach out to CBJ:** Juneau Planning Commission, Assembly Lands, Housing, and Economic Development Committee, and the Law Department: Ask to list federal ADA requirements that are enforced by CBJ or have been incorporated into CBJ ordinance. Can you list out the mandates already required of Juneau housing developers per the 1991 Fair Housing Act? Can they be added to the Planning Commission review process prior to approval?
- e) **Freeze Property Taxes:** A possible way for the city to address the effect the property tax increase will have on all seniors is to freeze the current tax rate for anyone over 65 or 70. That is done in some localities. Nearly all seniors in that age bracket are not working and therefore are on fixed incomes. Qualification would be if the resident holds a CBJ Senior Citizen sales tax exemption card. As an alternative, a subset of seniors in Juneau, those who already qualify for the Senior Citizen Hardship Sales Tax Rebate, would not see their taxes increase. Or increase the level of the already tax-free amount for homeowners.
- f) **Elections:** Communicate with Assembly candidates regarding housing needs; "the quality of life for residents is substantially higher than in the relatively institutional models that Juneau has in its inventory. The Juneau Commission on Aging (JCOA) was established by CBJ to advise the Assembly on issues regarding seniors in Juneau. A key issue for elders is the availability of age-friendly housing, including smaller homes spanning across all price

points. We know you already recognize that housing is a huge problem in Juneau. If elected to the Assembly, we ask that you push for ways to facilitate age-friendly housing, homes that are attractive to 1st time buyers as well as those residents who need to downsize - Universal Design.”

- g) **Home-sharing:** Janna Auger presentation, The kind of services that could be negotiated between host and housemates include housekeeping and lawn work, cooking, transportation, shopping, etc. What wouldn't be possible is any kind of personal care such as dressing, feeding, medication management, bathing etc.
- h) **AARP Grant with RL Mace Universal Design Institute** for webinars and/or outreach on Universal Design. Linda has already reached out to CBJ, local builders and architects regarding attending RL Mace Universal Design Workshops that will be held in the fall.
- i) **MOST IMPORTANT** We discussed messaging and education to explain what Universal Design entails and why it is important for everyone. **Linda asked everyone to think about 3-5 housing priority actions we could put into the Age-Friendly Plan. Things that could be accomplished in 5 years.**

Subdivisions of Note:

- **Comment of note about building from local developer Rich Harris to Kathleen Samalon:** “Yes, we have incorporated many of the items you have listed over the past years. And yes, you are also correct in that there is very little flat land in Juneau for single story homes. That being the biggest deterrent for building this style of housing unit. I cannot produce anything to add to your list as a suggestion at this time”.
- **Chilkat Vistas local developer Bill Heumann commented:** “Our single-story houses would likely meet all of these requirements. It's a question if we would do zero step thresholds and 36” interior doors as standard but I'll look at it; what kind of housing do you imagine needing and wanting for yourself as you move towards Elderhood?”
- **Condos at the Cinema:** They are 3-story buildings, but the 1st floor units are entirely senior-friendly with no steps, a walk-in shower in master, grab bars, and wide doors. Ten first floor units have already been built, and are all sold, almost entirely to seniors and one younger wheelchair person. The initial price for the 2 BR units was only \$245K, though they expect the additional 14 units will be in the range of \$279K. The local builder is Travis Arndt, and he was previously a Commissioner on the Juneau Planning Commission.
- **Ridgeview:** JCOA needs to stay on top of what is happening at Ridgeview. Only 4 out of 24 units have been sold and 2 of those are on the ground floor. The next buildings are supposed to be apartments. Need to push for our age-friendly features, number 1 being an elevator, even if it is just three stories. CBJ could insist on that, even though not required by code, due to their non-compliance, perhaps, on the first building. FYI The Juneau Commission on Aging (JCOA) submitted comments in regard to a request for a Conditional Use Permit for an Alternative Residential Subdivision for up to 444 dwelling units at 7400 Glacier Highway.
- **Six-unit high-end condo building in Douglas:** per Paul Voelckers, this project is not proceeding due to cost. *“barrier-free, allowing owners to age in place without access constraints, eliminating stairs and tight access”* - and he even mentions pocket doors.
- **Telephone Hill:** Some obvious opportunities
- **Aak'w Landing plans:** proposal includes park and public performance area, and possibly housing. A lot of opportunity for elders in this controversial project. At one time, the top floors were going to be condos. That option should be pushed. JCOA represents all elders in the city, regardless of income or assets.

E. COMMITTEE MEMBER / ASSEMBLY LIAISON COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS - none

F. NEXT MEETING DATES - at 3pm via Zoom (check top of agenda for correct Zoom link)

April 8 JCOA Workgroup - Age-Friendly Planning Presentation by Linda Kruger

April 15 JCOA Regular Meeting

April 22 JCOA Workgroup – Recreation and Wellness

May 13 JCOA Workgroup – TBD

May 20 JCOA Regular Meeting

May 27 JCOA Workgroup - TBD

G. SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

- 1. Housing Workgroup Review of Previous Documentation from cancelled 2/11/2025 JCOA Workgroup Meeting**
- 2. Kathleen Samalon's Comments on Previous Housing Efforts**

H. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the workgroup, meeting adjourned at 3:53 p.m.