

Area Planning Advisory Council

Harris County Area Agency on Aging

General Membership Meeting
December 4, 2008
Southwest Multi-Service Center

Meeting called to order by Marla Turner.

Guests were welcomed and asked to introduce themselves

Agenda approved. No changes to the minutes of November 6, 2008.

Donna Sullivan was highlighted from the Area Agency on Aging. She is the Information and Referral Specialist with a background in benefits counseling and advocacy for older persons regarding benefits and entitlements. She and her husband Walter have been working with the Thanksgiving H.o.M.E. project for 10 years.

Marla Turner presented Certificates of Appreciations to the following people for their contributions to APAC: Marilu Ellis, Adele Gorody, Mari Okabayashi, Timothy Stewart, Marilyn Vargiu, and Carla Vigilante. A presentation will be made to Linda O. Black of United Way for their contribution to the 2008 H.o.M.E. project.

The AAA report was made by Thelma Samuels.

- Contracts will be going before City Council later this month. Goal is for the letters to go out by January 1. There has not been a cessation of benefits and there is not plan for any interruption of services.
- IKE funds are being used to purchase gift cards for food and clothing, purchasing appliances such as refrigerators and microwaves, working on debris removal. These funds are to be used by the end of the year.
- Henry Ansah will be working with the Support Services Subcommittee. Jolly Mathews will be working with the Education Committee.
- Coupons for the digital converter for televisions were discussed. There are organizations that are helping to get these coupons to seniors—JCC, IM, Ombudsmen. A contact is Samantha Green with IM.

Under old business, Carla Vigilante discussed the new member event on January 15, 2009, from 4:30 pm to 7:00 pm at the Living Well Health Center, 1315 St. Joseph Parkway, Suite 1400. Please RSVP Jasmine Alberto at 281-727-3404. Everyone is to bring at least one guest.

Mari Okabayashi presented the legislative points that APAC will give to the legislators for Senior Day at the Capitol on February 10, 2009. She asked that anyone interested in going with APAC on the buses with the Chinese Community Center let her know. Spaces are limited. Lynn Foley and Barbara Sitzman discussed the groups that they are taking. Betty Streckfuss stated that the TSHL full versions will be coming out shortly. Patrick Rose of Dripping Springs will be sponsoring some of these bills. After January 13, we should all email and write our legislators to indicate our interest in these points.

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| 1 | Create Legislative Committee on Aging to Address Aging Population Issues |
| 2 | Utilities—Protect consumers from extreme weather electricity disconnections. Last session both the Texas House and Senate passed versions of a bill that would have accomplished this but the bill died in the final 5 minutes of the sessions. |

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| 3 | Require Geriatric Curricula in Texas Schools of Health care Studies . . . to practice in Texas |
| 4 | Allow grandparent caregivers to enroll child in school . . .and be provided access to State programs for grandchildren |
| 5 | Long Term Care-- Increase in rates for direct care workers in nursing homes as well as health care workers. |

The Thanksgiving H.o.M.E. project was discussed by Mari Okabayashi. Members involved were Timothy Stewart, Carla Vigilante, Marilu Ellis, Lalita Sen, and Mari Okabayashi. The distribution of meals went well and we fed over 3000 seniors. United Way funded the project with a donation of \$15,000. Marla said we need to work on obtaining funds for 2009.

Under new business, the election of officers was held. Jimmie Matthews presented the slate:

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| Chairperson | Marla Turner |
| First Vice Chair | Mari Okabayashi |
| Second Vice Chair | Beng Ho |
| Secretary | Walter McFadden |
| Assistant Secretary | Diane Persson |

Betty Streckfuss moved that we accept the slate as presented. Timothy Stewart seconded the motion. The motion passed.

An announcement was made by Barbara Sitzman about the Annual Christmas Open House at Madison Jobe Senior Center on Tuesday, December 9, 2008, from 10 am to 2 pm.

Monica James presented the Support Services Subcommittee report. The next meeting will be at the JCC in January. Henry Ansah will be the AAA staff person involved with this committee. Issues to be discussed are caregiving, in-home services and resources needed.

Becky Tobias presented the Membership Subcommittee report. She stated that not all of our members have attended this past year. Marla said that these members will be dropped. The City of Houston will be reappointing some of its members, but the process does take some time and that the appointees should continue working with APAC until their reappointment comes through. Becky discussed what government entities need to appoint members. We need to recruit people who are willing to work on the subcommittees.

Mari Okabayashi presented the Housing Subcommittee report. In January the subcommittee will be meeting with CDC's to show our interest in the community with housing for seniors. The committee is also working on a resolution about independent living and the tragedy from Hurricane Ike. Some high rise independent living facilities had no backup plans on how to get seniors down from the 15th floor. Even though it is independent living, a person of 80+ years cannot climb those steps on a daily basis. Even people in wheelchairs cannot get from the second floor to the first floor when the elevators have no power. Representative Sylvester Turner is interested in this topic. Housing would also like to bring this topic before the state legislators.

Our next meeting is January 8, 2009. Our steering committee will be meeting December 20, 2008 at 9:30 am.

Respectfully submitted,
 Mari Okabayashi
 First Vice Chair