



Donna M. Corrado, PhD
Commissioner

2 Lafayette St.
New York, NY 10007

212 602 4100 tel
212 442 1095 fax

SENIOR ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, March 20, 2013
2 Lafayette Street 7th Floor
Janet Sainer Conference room
9:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Members Present:

Isabel Ching, Carol Dunn, Claire Hall, Gladys Joyner, Evelyn Laureano, Hattie Lucas, Katherine Martinez, Mary Mayer, Zamira Setaro, Marcia Stein, Eartha Thompson-Washington, Gloria Lind Vanterpool, Rabbi Moshe Wiener, Doris Williams (14)

Members Absent:

Michael Adams, Jennifer Jones Austin, Doralina Colon, David Gilcrist, Nancy Wackstein (5)

DFTA Staff Present:

Commissioner Donna Corrado, Verna Arthur, Michael Bosnick, Kim Hernandez, Jon Minners, Caryn Resnick, Yolanda Rodriguez, Karen Taylor, Jennine Ventura, Joy Wang, Linda Whitaker

PROCEEDINGS

Doris Williams, co-chair of the Advisory Council, called the meeting to order. A motion was passed to accept the December 5, 2013 minutes. The Commissioner was officially introduced and welcomed by the Advisory Council.

The Commissioner thanked everyone for their congratulatory notes and said it was a wonderful way to launch this new aspect of her career. She welcomed Members' remarks and input, and is looking forward to getting to know each member personally.

She further stated that she had come to know DFTA staff in a way she would not have if she weren't in this position. The senior staff at DFTA is excellent, ambitious, smart, and that they have the wherewithal to do what is needed to be done for the seniors of New York City. She stated that with the support of the

Mayor and the City Council, we could move mountains.

The Commissioner's focus for the past few weeks was the Agency's agenda and vision, an agenda which could not be complete without the input of the Advisory Council Members, whom she asked to weigh in on what they think she and DFTA should be doing to move the Agency forward.

Members Suggestions/Concerns with Responses:

- **Doris Williams** stated that during her involvement with the Advisory Council, she has learned about housing regulations and how landlords allow their buildings to deteriorate as a strategy to force out tenants, renovate their building and rent to new tenants at a higher rate. Doris Williams stated that she also had the opportunity of going to Albany, where she learned about housing legislation.
- **Gloria Lind Vanterpool** expressed her concerns about the Mayor's policy on seniors and asked the Commissioner to share information, if any, on conversations she may have had with the Mayor to discuss his plans for seniors.
- **The Commissioner** said that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor Lilliam Barrios-Paoli both want senior issues incorporated into his agenda. While the Mayor's platform may not always address senior concerns directly, his general priorities do impact seniors. For example, senior housing is part of the Mayor's housing agenda. The Mayor is also putting intergenerational programs on his agenda, as well as scattered site housing.
- **Gloria Lind Vanterpool** stated that she would like to see some apartments set aside in regular housing for seniors so that seniors can communicate with younger people. This approach would show youth that we are all fighting the same fight.
- **Claire Hall** asked about DFTA's expectations for a Board of Directors.
- **The Commissioner** said that a Board of Directors should be representative of the community and have the expertise to run an organization and run an organization well. If an agency doesn't have that level of expertise on their Board, DFTA can help bring them up to that level. Some Board members don't understand their fiduciary responsibility and the Commissioner stated that DFTA needs to identify agencies that have that weakness and help them.
- **Marcia Stein** volunteered to assist with teaching Board members.
- **Rabbi Weiner** noted that the State just passed legislation formalizing the responsibilities of non-profit boards. This legislation is very specific and detailed with standards. Rabbi Wiener's organization runs Nonprofit Help Desk which provides technical assistance to non-profit organizations. Rabbi Weiner then stated that having worked with many Commissioners for many

decades, he has learned that some Commissioners are good managers but lack the passion and sensitivity to the needs of the community. Rabbi Weiner stated that other Commissioners come from the academic world with the hopes of implementing their studies and models in NYC. Rabbi Weiner stated that the most successful Commissioner comes from within the field. Besides having the education and a certain level of sophistication and management skills, this person knows the aging field because they have sat at the same table with us, and dealt with the same issues and frustrations. Rabbi Weiner stated that this is the kind of Commissioner Donna Corrado is and that he is excited, encouraged and confident the Commissioner is the right fit for DFTA.

- **Mary Mayer** noted two issues. First, that we have too high a level of poverty. She asked about where New York stands in regard to the degree of poverty among older persons in New York City. Mary Mayer noted that DFTA helps by helping people find benefits that may be important for them, but that the City needed to look at the issue of poverty at a higher level. Ms. Mayer also asked what was happening in Albany in regard to homecare, managed care and EISEP. She asked whether seniors would be able to get what they really needed and stated that the drive toward managed care may be something that should be looked at closely.
- **The Commissioner** stated that there has been extensive discussion at DFTA about the move to managed care; what DFTA's role is and how we can use managed care to bring more resources into the DFTA network by qualifying and quantifying what we can offer managed care companies and hospitals, as DFTA is good at providing low cost interventions that save lives.
- **Michael Bosnick** discussed the Affordable Care Act and how DFTA is looking for ways of providing high quality services to various populations while controlling cost. DFTA is working with four case management agencies in Queens who have paired up with five different Queens hospitals which have very high readmission rates for Medicare patients. Readmission is very expensive and is related to poor outcomes for the patients. Michael Bosnick explained that short term intervention is where case management agencies go into a hospital prior to the patient's discharge and try to engage them in a 30-day follow-up program. For those 30 days, the agency interacts with the older person to find out what their needs are, then does a home visit and informs them of what is needed in order to prevent readmission. The Center of Medicare and Medicaid Services is travelling across states, measuring whether this program is actually lowering costs. We are in the first year of the program and it is promising.
- **Evelyn Laureano** brought up elder abuse and how we need to work with other providers to leverage the resources, not just the money, to bring attention to elder abuse. She stated that it was very promising that City tax dollars had been baselined for these programs. Ms. Laureano also described how seniors in the immigrant community were not eligible for benefits and entitlements and stated that their suffering was an important focus for DFTA.

- **The Commissioner** responded that DFTA is scheduled to meet with Commissioner Rosemonde Pierre-Louis of the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence to discuss the need for aging-specific programs. The Commissioner stated that since domestic violence is one of the Mayor's priorities, that connection may assist DFTA. The Commissioner agreed that the need for immigrant services is something DFTA should examine. She stated that at Catholic Charities, they ran immigration programs and she was aware of their importance. She has asked the staff at DFTA to write a concept paper on putting together a pilot program to address these issues and stated that DFTA needed to set up a task force or committee to specifically address immigration related issues.
- **Katherine Martinez** stated that Presbyterian Senior Services has a Kinship Program where grandparents are raising grandchildren. This is a unique program, the first of its kind, where grandparents and grandchildren live together and when the grandchild transitions out, the grandparent can transition in to the seniors-only building once there is an opening.
- **Doris Williams** noted that communication is very important when dealing with seniors – people must be trained in the best ways to communicate.
- **Evelyn Laureano** stated that the prevalence of an ageist attitude was problematic. She suggested that DFTA produce a Public Service Announcement incorporating some humor, to show how older people are sometimes treated and that this might help curb the ageist attitude.
- **Claire Hall** stated that many seniors in Central Harlem need help with heavy duty work. For example, with cleaning windows, cleaning stoves or moving heavy furniture, etc.
- **Gloria Lind Vanterpool** brought up the problem of seniors and clutter and the need for training on this topic. She stated that clutter issues should not be indicative of older people.
- **Karen Taylor** noted that the Housing Authority has a task force on hoarding and that DFTA is on that task force.
- **Marcia Stein** is very concerned about the way in which seniors are consistently portrayed in the media, and suggested the Commissioner get together with her Los Angeles counterpart and address images of aging in advertising and television programming.
- **Mary Mayer** stated that the Commissioner might be able to participate in the Mayor's lobbying in DC and to make sure aging is on their agenda.
- **Gloria Lind Vanterpool** suggested we watch our words and use words of action and not words of begging. Let our steps and movements go accordingly. Do not say words like "I hope" but instead say "I will."

- **Claire Hall** asked if anyone has an idea how to get students interested in gerontology.
- **Evelyn Laureano** suggested connecting with schools. Schools provide students for internship opportunities at Neighborhood SHOPP.
- **Commissioner** stated she will work toward every senior center having a Master's level social worker. The Commissioner further stated that reducing caseloads in case management will afford seniors the attention they deserve.
- **Zamira Setaro** stated that Con Edison conducts workshops on gas safety and services for seniors. She is willing to conduct presentations to any senior center or organization that needs to be informed. Con Edison's Spotlight is a newsletter for customers 62 years and older as well as persons with disabilities. This newsletter is available to persons who call and register with the program.
- **Isabel Ching** was glad to hear social workers will be at senior centers. An important focus is mental health. She would like to see more technology in senior centers.
- **Carol Dunn** stated that Innovative Senior Centers have impacted Neighborhood Centers negatively.
- **Evelyn Laureano** raised that Casa Boricua as an Innovative Senior Center seeks to expand to have geriatric social worker and a Casa Boricua Performing Arts Institute.
- **Doris Williams** asked members to think of a nominee to chair the Advisory Council since Dr. Brickner resigned due to illness.

Announcements:

- **Eartha Thompson-Washington** complimented Verna Arthur for supplying her with the necessary information in order for her to conduct a presentation at her organization.
- **Zamira Setaro** announced that Con Edison will be conducting its Advocacy Conference entitled -- *Deter, Detect, Defend: Safeguarding Your Personal Information* on Friday, June 20 from 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at Con Edison on 4 Irving Place.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 noon.