



Santa Cruz County Seniors Commission

701 Ocean Street, Room 510, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

P: (831) 454-2772 F: (831) 454-2411 TTY/TDD 711

commissions@santacruzcountyca.gov

www.sccseniors.org

Santa Cruz County Seniors Commission

2022 - 2023 Biennial Report

1. THE ROLE OF THE COMMISSION

The Seniors Commission is an advisory body to the Board of Supervisors on issues affecting seniors in Santa Cruz County. The Commission was established to:

- Advise the Board of Supervisors on all matters affecting senior citizens and make recommendations to the County Administrative Officer and the Board of Supervisors on any senior citizens program proposal to be considered by the Board of Supervisors;
- Review the needs of senior citizens in the County, and develop a set of comprehensive goals and objectives for effectively meeting those needs;
- Monitor the various services made available to senior citizens by public and private agencies in this County to ensure efficient delivery of those services; and
- Communicate with Federal and State agencies and commissions serving senior citizens, and assist in the preparation, implementation and review of any regional plan or program designed to serve senior citizens. [Ord. 3464 § 1, 1983; Ord. 2119, 1975; prior code § 3.25.020].

2. MEETINGS DATES, TIME, AND LOCATION

Seniors Commission meetings are scheduled for the third Tuesday of every other month (February, April, June, August, October, and December) from 12:30 until 2:30 PM at the United Way of Santa Cruz County office (4450 Capitola Rd, Suite 106, Capitola, CA 95010). Because of the pandemic, all meetings in 2022 and one meeting in 2023 were held remotely.

In 2023, one regularly scheduled meeting was canceled for lack of a quorum.

3. COMMISSION STRUCTURE

The Seniors Commission is composed of ten voting members; two appointed by each of the five County Supervisors to represent their districts. Elections for Commission Chair and Vice Chair are held each year during the April regular meeting.

On December 31, 2023, the Seniors Commission membership was as follows:

| District | Commissioners |
|--------------------------|---|
| 1 st District | Dena Taylor, Suzanne Doty (Vice Chair) |
| 2 nd District | Antonio Rivas, Mark Johannessen |
| 3 rd District | Lois Sones, Seat Vacant |
| 4 th District | Patricia Heath Fohrman, Katie Limas |
| 5 th District | Carol Childers (Chair) , Lynn McKibbin |

Commissioners who completed their terms, resigned, vacated their seats under the provisions of SCCC Chapter 2.38.200(A)(1) or were replaced during the reporting period were Tom Haid and Enda Brennan. Commissioners who were appointed during the reporting period were Suzanne Doty and Katie Limas. Commissioners Patricia Heath Fohrman and Lois Sones were reappointed.

4. COMMISSION STAFF

Kaite McGrew (*Commissions Manager*) staffed the Commission for the entirety of the reporting period.

Between Commissions meetings, County Staff was available by phone, email, or in-person for information and referrals. The County EEO Commissions Office is located in the County Government Center (701 Ocean Street, Room 510, Santa Cruz, CA 95060).

5. ATTENDANCE

Please see attached *Seniors Commission 2022-2023 Attendance Report*.

6. COMMISSION OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The Commission's priorities and subsequent activities are determined by the Commission's mandate and emerging needs as expressed by the community and identified by the Commissioners.

OBJECTIVE 1:

Conduct outreach and advocacy to elected officials on behalf of Santa Cruz County Seniors

During the reporting period, Commissioners monitored the following government-related activities and advocated with the following elected officials and government representatives:

- Individually communicated Commission activities and priorities to appointing District Supervisors
- Participated in a District 1 Town Hall event regarding the Live Oak School District property
- Reviewed, discussed, and advocated with the Board of Supervisors for California Senior Legislature's top legislative priorities
- Monitored local efforts to attain *AARP Age-Friendly Community* designation
- Monitored the County's implementation efforts related to Governor Newsom's *Master Plan for Aging*
- Monitored California Senior Legislature activities
- Monitored Santa Cruz County Commission on Disabilities activities
- Monitored Santa Cruz County Strategic and Operational Plans
- Monitored Watsonville City Council activities
- Monitored the County's Employee Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Survey process
- Monitored the County's Equal Employment Opportunity/Cultural Plan update process

OBJECTIVE 2:

Promote the interests of Santa Cruz County seniors through community outreach, advocacy, and the provision of resources

During the reporting period, Commissioners conducted the following outreach, advocacy, and provision of the following resources to the community:

- Advocated for a proposed veteran's housing project to prioritize placement for unhoused senior veterans
- Promoted senior participation in the AAA Senior Needs Assessment
- Promoted senior participation in the *A Santa Cruz County Like Me* community workshops
- Promoted community feedback on the County's Emergency Action Plan

OBJECTIVE 3:

Monitor and assess local services, resources, programs, and agencies to advocate for effective service delivery to Santa Cruz County Seniors

During the reporting period, Commissioners monitored the following services, resources, programs, and agencies:

- Ben Lomond Senior Center activities
- Ben Lomond Community Clinic

- Community Bridges Meals-on-Wheels Program
- Community Bridges Services and Programs
- Disability and Aging Community Living Advisory Committee
- Elderday Adult Day Healthcare Services
- Farmers Markets Food Distribution
- Hwy 9 Proposed Veteran's Housing Project
- LiftLine Taxi Scrip Program
- Live Oak Senior Services
- Retired Public Employee Association articles of local interest
- RTC/METRO Services E&D TAC
- Seniors Council/Area Agency on Aging efforts
- Senior Network Services
- Watsonville Senior Center

During the reporting period, Commissioners heard reports from the following services, resources, programs, and agencies:

- Alicia Morales (HSD Director for the Adult and Long-Term Care Division) provided an overview of County Social Services including Adult and Long-term Care Division services, *Master Plan for Aging* implementation process, efforts to address senior homelessness issues, and shortages in the senior caregiver workforce
- Supervisor Koenig and Jamie Sehorn (District 1 Analyst) on his efforts to negotiate an extended tenancy agreement between the Live Oak School District (LOSD) and the seniors' services being threatened with eviction at the 1777 Capitola Road location
- Steven Matzie (Long Term Care Ombudsman Coordinator for Advocacy Inc.,) providing an overview of the LTC Ombudsman program, including the lack of County CORE funding in 2022
- Corey Azevedo (Senior Network Services) on the status of the possible eviction of senior services tenants at the LOSD property on Capitola Road
- Sven Stafford (CAO's Office Principal Administrative Analyst) on the 2023-2025 Operational Plan Process and the *A Santa Cruz County Like Me* (ASCCLM) initiative
- Kathleen McLaughlin (Climate Policy Student Worker & Environmental Science Masters Candidate) on the *Santa Cruz County Climate Action and Adaptation Draft Plan*
- Coco Raner-Walter (SLV Senior Center President) on recent developments at the SLV Senior Center related to available funding, services provided, and upcoming or recent events
- Clay Kempf and Zachary Johnson (Seniors Council) on CORE funding concerns
- Alicia Morales (HSD Director for the Adult and Long-Term Care Division) on the Public Guardian's conservatorship programs and the State-mandated Community Assistance and Recovery Empowerment Court (CARE Court)
- Heather Miller (County Public Defender) on the new Public Defender's Office programs and services

OBJECTIVE 4:

Monitor and assess issues impacting Santa Cruz County seniors and advocate on their behalf

During the reporting period, Commissioners monitored and/or took action on the following issues impacting Santa Cruz County seniors:

- Available beds in skilled nursing and senior care homes
- State funding for programs serving seniors
- County CORE funding for programs serving seniors
- Changes in the County's mobile and manufactured home rent control ordinance impacting seniors in senior parks.
- Eighty percent increase of the County's senior population since the last census
- Scarcity of available IHSS caregivers for seniors and people with disabilities
- County and community efforts to address the immediate and lasting impact of storm damage and flooding on Santa Cruz County seniors in affected areas
- County efforts to negotiate with Live Oak School District on continued use of LOSD property
- County and community efforts to attain *AARP Age-Friendly Community* designation
- Senior food insecurity and State and local funding for senior nutrition programs
- South County's flood recovery efforts
- North County's storm damage recovery efforts including first responder efforts and key community partner participation
- Vandalism and crime in South County senior communities
- Road repairs and transportation barriers exacerbating social isolation in rural seniors

7. COMMISSION MEMBERSHIPS & AFFILIATIONS

During the reporting period, Commissioners served as members of, were affiliated or engaged with the following commissions, organizations, and community partners:

- Aging and Disabilities Services Providers Advocacy Group
- Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council
- Cakes for Care for Seniors Board of Directors
- California Association for Adult Day Services Board of Directors
- California Senior Legislature
- Diversity Center
- Elderday Adult Day Health Care
- Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Commission (E&D TAC)
- Grey Bears
- Homeless Garden Project
- Housing Advisory Commission
- IHSS Advisory Commission
- Master Plan for Aging Steering Committee
- Meals on Wheels - Community Bridges
- Mid-County Senior Center
- Mid-County Democratic Club Board of Directors
- Retired Public Employees Association Board of Directors
- RTC/METRO Services E&D TAC
- San Lorenzo Valley Highlands Senior Center
- Santa Cruz County Bar Association
- Santa Cruz County Superior Court
- Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office
- SEIU 2015 Caregiver Union
- Seniors Council
- Valley Women's Club
- Watsonville City Council

- Watsonville City's Senior Advisory Board
- Watsonville Senior Center

8. COMMISSION SUBCOMMITTEES

During the reporting period, the Commission established the following ad hoc subcommittees:

- Ad Hoc CSL Legislative Subcommittee (membership included Childers, Doty, Taylor and Johannessen) to identify and advocate for CSL legislative priorities. Subcommittee completed their limited-scope project and had been dissolved at the time of this report.

9. COMMISSION ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

During the reporting period, the Commission addressed the following issues:

- Letter to the Board of Supervisors advocating for their support for community partner efforts to find alternative solutions to the proposed LOSD eviction of organizations serving seniors
- Letter to the Board of Supervisors advocating for support for the California Senior Legislature proposed legislation

During the reporting period, the Commission participated in no special projects

Because the compounded natural disasters disproportionately impacted County seniors (particularly those in vulnerable communities), throughout the reporting period, special projects were postponed to allow the Commission to focus on programs, services, and community efforts to protect the senior community.

Because of the complexity and scope of these intersecting crises, the Commission focused the majority of its resources, time, and efforts on monitoring the developing situation, sharing information and resources where appropriate, and providing a platform for the community to offer feedback on the most pressing issues facing seniors during the reporting period.

10. FUTURE GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In 2024-2025, the Seniors Commission will continue to:

- Monitor the implementation of the Senior Needs Assessment and advocate for meeting the needs identified therein
- Monitor and support disaster recovery efforts for Santa Cruz County seniors
- Monitor and participate in activities that promote accessible, affordable housing for seniors, particularly those that support age-in-place opportunities
- Monitor and advocate for the availability of accessible, affordable transportation for seniors and persons with disabilities
- Monitor and support County and community *Master Plan for Aging* implementation efforts including efforts to attain *AARP Age-Friendly Community* designation
- Monitor funding, availability, and access to community services and programs that support vulnerable seniors, particularly the ongoing scarcity of available IHSS caregivers and the availability of Enhanced Care Management (ECM)
- Monitor the developing tenancy situation for organizations serving seniors in the LOSD's Capitola Road property and advocate for efforts to find resolution
- Promote awareness of the Commission by attending and supporting local events aligned with the Commission's scope and purpose, particularly the *2024 Solutions Summit*
- Monitor the County's ongoing promotion of diversity, equity & inclusion, and advocate for appropriate senior representation in those efforts
- Monitor the County's CORE funding process and advocate for appropriate levels of funding to senior-specific programs and services

In 2024-2025, the Seniors Commission recommends that the Board of Supervisors take the following actions:

- Provide policy leadership and funding to support to community services and programs that specifically address the needs identified by the 2023-2024 Senior Needs Assessment and prioritized in the findings
- Provide policy leadership and funding to legislation, programs and policy supporting disaster recovery for Santa Cruz County seniors impacted by recent natural disasters
- Provide policy leadership and funding to legislation, programs and policy promoting accessible, affordable housing for the senior community, particularly those that support age-in-place opportunities
- Provide policy leadership and funding to legislation, programs, and policy to increase the availability of accessible, affordable transportation for seniors and persons with disabilities
- Continue to provide policy leadership and funding support to agencies tasked with leading County efforts to implement the *Master Plan for Aging*, including attaining AARP *Age-Friendly Community* designation.
- Provide policy leadership and funding to community services and programs that support vulnerable seniors, particularly those that seek to mitigate the ongoing scarcity of available IHSS caregivers and promote the availability of Enhanced Care Management (ECM)
- Monitor the developing tenancy situation for organizations serving seniors in the LOSD's Capitola Road property and intervene where appropriate to support resolution
- Continue to promote diversity, equity and inclusion in County programs and services and ensure that all such efforts appropriately consider and include seniors as a protected class
- Ensure that the appropriate levels of CORE funding are allocated to senior-specific programs and services, and use only senior-specific programs and services, (rather than including "all-age" or "family" programs and services) when calculating "funding allocated for seniors"

Approved by the Seniors Commission at the December 19, 2023 regular meeting.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the *Santa Cruz County Seniors Commission*,

DocuSigned by:

Carol Childers

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Carol Childers, *Commission Chair*

December 19, 2023

Date

DocuSigned by:

Suzanne Doty

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Suzanne Doty, *Commission Vice Chair*

December 19, 2023

Date

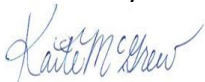
SENIORS COMMISSION 2022-2023 ATTENDANCE REPORT

| District/ Supervisor | Commissioner | Feb 2022 | April 2022 | June 2022 | Aug 2022 | Oct 2022 | Dec 2022 |
|---|------------------------------------|----------|------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| 1st District Supervisor Manu Koenig | Dena Taylor | P | P | P | MEETING CANCELED FOR LACK OF QUORUM | P | P |
| | Tom Haid | A | A | - | | - | - |
| | Suzanne Doty | - | - | - | | - | P |
| 2nd District Supervisor Zach Friend | Antonio Rivas Vice Chair | P | P | P | | P | P |
| | Mark Johannessen | P | P | P | | P | P |
| 3rd District Supervisor Ryan Coonerty | Lois Sones | P | P | P | | P | P |
| | Enda Brennan | P | A | P | | P | P |
| 4th District Supervisor Greg Caput | Patricia Heath Fohrman | P | A | P | | P | P |
| | Seat Vacant | - | - | - | | - | - |
| 5th District Supervisor Bruce McPherson | Carol Childers Chair | P | P | P | | P | P |
| | Lynn McKibbin | P | P | P | | E | P |
| Ex Officio Non-Voting Member California Senior Legislature | Seat Vacant | - | - | - | | - | - |

Attendance: P=Present A=Absent E=Excused (-) = Not Seated

| District/ Supervisor | Commissioner | Feb 2023 | April 2023 | June 2023 | Aug 2023 | Oct 2023 | Dec 2023 |
|---|-----------------------------------|----------|------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1st District Supervisor Manu Koenig | Dena Taylor | P | P | P | P | P | P |
| | Suzanne Doty Vice Chair | P | P | P | P | P | P |
| 2nd District Supervisor Zach Friend | Antonio Rivas | P | E | P | P | P | E |
| | Mark Johannessen | P | P | P | P | P | P |
| 3rd District Supervisor Justin Cummings | Lois Sones | E | P | P | P | P | P |
| | Enda Brennan | A | - | - | - | - | - |
| 4th District Supervisor Felipe Hernandez | Patricia Heath Fohrman | P | P | P | P | P | P |
| | Katie Limas | - | P | A | P | P | P |
| 5th District Supervisor Bruce McPherson | Carol Childers Chair | P | P | P | P | P | P |
| | Lynn McKibbin | P | P | E | P | E | P |
| Ex Officio Non-Voting Member California Senior Legislature | Antonio Rivas | - | - | P | P | P | E |

Submitted by:



Kaite McGrew

Commissions Manager

December 31, 2023

Date