



Santa Cruz County Seniors Commission

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Meeting Minutes

DATE: Tuesday, August 18, 2020

TIME: 12:30 PM – 2:30 PM

LOCATION: Remote Meeting

PRESENT: Michael Lewis (*1st District*), Lynne Simpson (*1st District*), Antonio Rivas (*Vice Chair - 2nd District*), Mark Johannessen (*2nd District*), Lois Sones (*3rd District*), Enda Brennan (*3rd District*), Louis J. Tuosto (*4th District*), Patricia Fohrman (*4th District*), Carol Childers (*Chair - 5th District*), Lynn McKibbin (*5th District*)

EXCUSED: Charles Molnar (*CSL Ex Officio Member*)

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Kaite McGrew (*Commissions Coordinator*), Mitsuno Baurmeister (*County EEO Officer*)

GUESTS: Pam Arnsberger (*Seniors Council President*), Jean Brocklebank (*Mobile and Manufactured Home Commission*), John Daugherty (*Commission on Disabilities and Santa Cruz Metro*), Patty Talbot (*Seniors Council*)

1. Call to Order/Roll Call/Agenda Review

Meeting convened at 12:33 PM.

2. Approval June 16, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Motion/Second: Lewis/Rivas

Motion passed unanimously.

3. Public Comment:

Daugherty reported that Metro Paracruz and buses are operating at about 50% occupancy and are a low-fee alternative for seniors needing transportation to medical appointments. The new free “Ecolane” mobile application has been launched, allowing riders to schedule, pay for and track rides. Information is available in English and Spanish and English. Interested parties can contact Daugherty by email to get the application. Daugherty will share outreach ideas with Metro leadership.

4. Senior Legislature Report: None

5. Santa Cruz County Seniors Needs Assessment

Seniors Council President Pam Arnsberger reported the 2020 Senior Needs Assessment results for Santa Cruz County. Eight hundred and seventy-five surveys were collected with 44 questions on challenges for seniors and 14 demographic questions. Twice as many surveys were completed online this year as had been during the last assessment.

- New demographic data included sexual preference, gender identification, domestic partnership. Data for Asian Americans has also been separated from data on Pacific Islanders.
- Twenty-three percent of those surveyed reported annual income of less than \$12K per year
- Usage of electronic devices was included for the first time. Seventy-seven percent of seniors surveyed reported using a cell phone. More than 50% had a home computer. We anticipate that close to 100% of seniors surveyed next time will have some digital access.

- Top ten issues/needs for Santa Cruz County seniors were home repair/maintenance, housework, understanding Medi-Care/Medi-Cal, difficulty paying for dental care, difficulty paying for health care in the home, difficulty finding reliable home help, depression, loneliness/isolation, lack of savings for emergencies, difficulty paying for health care. Transportation was not included, but the data indicates that many seniors rely upon friends/family to provide private transportation for them.
- One-third of caregivers surveyed identified as experiencing stress, and few needs were identified, although a need for help was expressed.
- Senior population in Santa Cruz County is growing at 109% which is higher rate than that experienced by most other California counties.
- 22-23% of seniors surveyed report being depressed all the time, which is significantly higher than the 18% reported by the Center for Disease Control, which is the only national data available on senior depression rates.

Arnsberger will send results by zip code/area to identify disparities. Commission would like to support greater and more diverse participation in the next assessment. Brennan requested that the Commission invite Census representatives to speak on 2020 Census results next year. Baurmeister expressed appreciation for the addition of new, more diverse demographic elements such as gender identification, sexual preference, etc.

6. New Business/Action Items: None

7. District Reports:

7.1. District 1:

Simpson reported concerns regarding the placement of Supervisorial campaign signs. Lewis reported concerns about proper PPE usage training for private drivers of seniors.

7.2. District 2: None

7.3. District 3:

Sones reported that Elderday is providing remote services but not congregate services. Elderday and Community Bridges are collaborating with Parks departments from Watsonville, Santa Cruz Cities and the County Parks to provide free remote classes for anybody over 60. Amazon Fire tablets are being provided to qualified seniors.

7.4. District 4:

Fohrman reported that a church food distribution program has closed. Brennan confirmed that Grey Bears continues to deliver to homes.

7.5. District 5:

McKibbin reported extreme heat and power outages with no cooling centers and reported current COVID-19 numbers by zip code. Childers reported that Meals on Wheels has been distributing information packets for the emergency preparedness (Volunteer Center "Get Ready" Program). Geographic isolation is extensive.

8. Staff Report

Staff reported current COVID-19 data. Seniors 65+ have the lowest rate of confirmed positive cases.

9. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 2:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted by: Kaite McGrew, *Commissions Coordinator*