
Commissioners: Lenore Gunst (Chair, PRESENT), Blake Spears (Vice-Chair, PRESENT), Asha Beene-Clarke (EXCUSED ABSENT), Robert “Bob” Scott (PRESENT), Jennifer Seibert (PRESENT – LATE), Suzi Kalmus (EXCUSED ABSENT), Jacqueline Johnson (PRESENT), Lisa Malul (PRESENT)

Human Services Department (HSD) Commission Staff: Ana Bagtas, Aging and Adult Services Manager; Marshay Boyd, Commission Clerk

MAYOR'S COMMISSION ON AGING

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Meeting Minutes

1. Call To Order

Chair Gunst called meeting to order at 10:10 AM.

2. Roll Call/Determination of Quorum

After roll call chair Gunst provided a reminder of the three times on the agenda when the public can speak to the commission.

3. Adoption of Agenda

ACTION ITEM: Lisa Mulal/Blake Spears/Carried

4. Election of New MCOA Chairperson

Chair Gunst began this item by reminding the Commission of her announcement during the January 15th special meeting that she will be stepping down as MCOA Chair. She then opened the floor for nominations for a new chairperson. Commissioner Scott nominated himself, and Commissioner Mulal also nominated Commissioner Scott for the position of Mayor’s Commission on Aging (MCOA) Chairperson.

ACTION ITEM: M/S/Carried Lisa Mulal/Jacqueline Johnson/Blake Spears/ Motion Carried

5. Public Comment (Specific Agenda Items, limit of two minutes)

No speakers at this time.

6. Budget Advisory Commission Update

No update at this time.

7. Advocacy Updates

Chair Gunst opened this item with an apology for initially skipping it and expressed gratitude to everyone who attended the Downtown Oakland Senior Center ribbon-cutting ceremony. She then addressed the ongoing budget cuts, noting that there is currently no funding for Meals on Wheels, Mercy Brown Bag, or Spectrum, which may lead to changes in how senior centers are utilized moving forward. She invited Kim Olsen, a representative from Meals on Wheels in attendance, to share how the budget cuts are affecting their program. Olsen explained that seniors in Oakland are increasingly

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anxious about when or if they will receive meals, as these services are crucial, particularly for those relying on home-delivered meals. The organization is actively working on ways to conserve funding to keep the program running. Commissioner Seibert inquired about an outstanding balance of \$150,000, to which Olsen clarified that the actual amount owed is \$300,000. Commissioner Mulal emphasized the need to bring this issue to City Council to raise awareness and address the uncertainty and confusion surrounding these cuts. Chair Gunst stressed the importance of highlighting the direct impact on seniors and collaborating with the senior coalition to address these concerns. She also noted that efforts may need to start from scratch. Additionally, she proposed scheduling meetings with various council members to inform them about the commission's work and share insights gathered from needs assessments. Brandon Hemphill raised concerns about unpaid past contracts and asked how they could be resolved. Chair Gunst responded that while the issue is significant, it falls beyond the commission's scope and will need to be addressed at a different level.

8. Presentation: Oakland General Plan Update Phase 2 – Laura Kaminski & Timothy Green, Planning and Building Department

Chair Gunst welcomed the Oakland General Plan team to present their update. Project Manager Joanna Winter provided an informational overview of the project's progress, sharing detailed slides with valuable insights. She then opened the floor for questions, allowing commissioners to ask questions, share concerns, and provide comments, which Joanna addressed.

9. 5-year Strategic Action Plan Update – Ana Bagtas, Aging and Adult Services Manager, HSD

Chair Gunst opened the topic by welcoming Ana Bagtas. Bagtas provided an update on the 5-year strategic plan, announcing that thanks to Scott Means, the commission has secured \$17,000 from the AB to support this initiative. She encouraged commissioners to attend the Zoom orientation on Friday, February 7, 2025, at 3 PM if they are interested in becoming facilitators. She also asked them to review the draft survey, ensure their questions are addressed, and submit feedback as soon as possible. The survey will be available online and in print, with discussions underway to distribute it by mail to specific neighborhoods, as well as through social media. Chair Gunst suggested utilizing libraries for outreach. She also asked Commissioner Scott about a document he previously shared, which included a list of senior community organizations, and whether it could be used to reach out about the listening sessions. Commissioner Scott agreed, adding that the Zoom introduction session on Friday should be recorded for those unable to attend live. Commissioner Mulal suggested including the survey information in City Council meetings and inviting council members to the listening sessions. Commissioner Scott also inquired about the possibility of issuing a proclamation to recognize Lenore's contributions as Chair.

10. Human Services Department/Aging & Adult Services Report – Ana Bagtas, Aging and Adult Services Manager, HSD

Ana Bagtas opened the discussion by thanking everyone who attended the Downtown Oakland Senior Center ribbon-cutting ceremony. She shared that the West Oakland Senior Center ribbon cutting will be next, with construction expected to be completed by March/April 2025 and a reopening target of July 1, 2025. She reminded all senior center directors to utilize the MySeniorCenter platform to continue collecting essential data. Unfortunately, due to budget constraints, the East Oakland Senior Center construction project is delayed indefinitely. Ana also addressed letters sent to contractors notifying them of service cuts, noting that the letters were vague and lacked clarity on specific cuts. This situation is already impacting Meals on Wheels, particularly with unpaid contracts for meals delivered last year. Contracts funded by General Funds are the ones being affected. She emphasized

that advocacy efforts should be directed to City Council. Commissioner Seibert inquired about the Soda Tax funds and whether they could be used to pay the outstanding balance owed to Meals on Wheels. Ana explained that those funds are depleted and provided context on how and why they were used. She also mentioned that the budget includes layoff notices for staff. On a positive note, Ana is meeting with city administration to discuss expanding senior center services, including the possibility of adding adult day programs. She also confirmed that they are fully committed to applying for the CalAIM PathSighted grant, with applications due in May 2025. Commissioner Johnson brought up a survey sent to senior centers to gather feedback on potential closure days due to service reductions. Ana shared that they have already received over 500 responses as of yesterday. Commissioner Scott highlighted the need to reduce reliance on City funding and explore alternative funding sources to sustain senior programs.

11. Open Forum (Limit of two minutes)

Commissioner Scott would like to spend 1 hour ahead of him serving as chair with each commissioner as an onboarding method. Also, opening the floor to comments, none at this time.

12. Closing Remarks & Adjournment

12:03 PM

ACTION ITEM: M/S/Carried Jennifer/Blake/Motion Carried