

CITY OF ROCKVILLE  
SENIOR CITIZENS COMMISSION  
ROCKVILLE SENIOR CENTER  
1150 CARNATION DRIVE

June 16, 2022, 10:00 a.m. (virtual)

**Members Present:** Anne Herbster, Chair; Lynn Wagman, Commissioner; Krishna Kumar, Commissioner; Kevin Leary, Commissioner

**Staff:** Alexis D'Angelo Swope; Fran Jablonski; Trish Evans, Mariella Correal, Terri Hilton

**Absent:** Elaine Koubek, Commissioner; Norma Brailsford, Commissioner; Jack Sprague, Commissioner; Carla McCaffrey, Commissioner; Beryl Feinberg, Mayor and Council, Liaison,

**Guest:** Asmara Habte, Director, City of Rockville Department of Housing and Community Development

**Chair, Anne Herbster** started the meeting at 10:00 a.m. She started with greetings and well wishes to everyone. She introduced **Asmara Habte**, Director, City of Rockville Department of Housing and Community Development. **Chair Anne Herbster** explained that the Mayor and Council requested that the Commission investigate senior housing. She said that 25% of the Rockville population are 65+ and affordable senior housing and reliable internet connection are the big topics with seniors today.

**Asmara Habte** told the Commission a little about herself. She came from a development background She worked with mixed income projects in the District of Columbia. She has been employed by the City of Rockville for six years. Two years ago, the Mayor and Council created a Housing and Community Development Department. There are fourteen employees in the department. The department does deal with affordability of housing for the entire city. Since the late 1990's most developments/buildings set aside a portion of moderately priced dwelling units (MPDU) within each community. The city does not keep track of how many MPDUs there are, the property owner keeps track. **Chair, Anne Herbster** said that seniors seem to have the most need. She asked if anyone is looking at the senior affordable housing needs. **Asmara Habte** said there are on going discussions twice a month at the regional and national level on how to meet the needs of affordable housing. Code Enforcement deals with the standards of housing and work with developers to get a few accessible units. **Kevin Leary, Commissioner** asked if Rockville residents get preference. **Asmara Habte** said people who live and work in Rockville receive priority. **Chair, Anne Herbster** asked how rent increases are handled and **Asmara Habte** said that the city does not cap rent and suggested for the renters to negotiate with their landlord. She also suggested that if a person is behind in their rent the REAP program has funding available to bring up someone's balance. REAP also works with the County to help with any other landlord/tenant complaints. **Kevin Leary, Commissioner** asked if the city has shared housing. **Alexis D'Angelo Swope** said she had a presenter on this topic and will be offering it again in the fall. **Mariella Correal** would like to see more data on seniors, low income, waiting list for affordable housing and list of seniors that have received housing. **Chair, Anne Herbster** asked **Asmara Habte** if she had the funds what would she do to help seniors in Rockville. **Asmara Habte** said she would love to be able to provide more housing for seniors with amenity rich resources. **Chair, Anne Herbster** asked what housing in Rockville was designated for seniors. **Asmara Habte** said there was Residents on The Lane, Brightview, Victory Court, Bethany House, and Heritage House. **Chair, Anne Herbster** asked what the Commission could do to educate seniors with their needs. **Asmara Habte** said seniors could advocate at the Federal level to receive more funding. **Chair, Anne Herbster**, and the Commission thanked **Asmara Habte** for attending and providing all her information.

**Judy Rudolph** shared that there will be a Town Hall meeting about Rockville Housing on July 19 from 10:00 to 11:00.

**Chair, Anne Herbster** suggested inviting Code Enforcement to a future meeting.

**Chair, Anne Herbster** asked if anyone had any comments, or changes to the minutes of the last meeting. There were none. **Kevin Leary, Commissioner** made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. **Lynn Wagman, Commissioner**

seconded. All approved.

**Kevin Leary, Commissioner** reported on Hometown Holidays. He said he did not see a lot for people with disabilities. **Chair, Anne Herbster** said there was a lack of food, too many bugs, and not happy with location. She also heard it was hard to get around the traffic on the narrow road when entering. There were complaints about tickets to get food.

**Chair, Anne Herbster** suggested doing a survey "Are you concerned about senior housing and what is the area that is a concern for you? **Mariella Correal** suggested a time limit to complete and produce it in multiple languages. **Alexis D'Angelo Swope** suggested a banner or an easel with the question, what are your questions or concerns about housing? on it in different languages and they could comment. **Terri Hilton** suggested doing it and a commissioners table at the Open House on July 20, 2022, from 1:00 to 2:30 PM. She suggested, complete the survey, and get a key chain.

**Trish Evans** reported that there will be a Village sponsored event on June 26, 2022, from 3:00 to 4:30 at the Pump House. East Side Live, Rockville Swing Band will be performing. It is open to the entire public. **Terri Hilton** reported on the progress of the Green House. She said the windows are going in and will be completed and ready for the Open House. She said the Center received two awards from the County Executive for transportation of food during COVID and assistance to giving AARP a home. She said there will be a Fathers' Day picnic on Friday, June 17, 2022, at 12:30 to 2:00. **Mariella Correal** said she is working with the County on a Federal grant for free Wi-Fi and tablet for a senior. She is not sure how many are available and how a person qualifies. **Alexis D'Angelo Swope** is working on the Farmers Market application along with **Andrea Rogers** and **Mariella Correal**. The Farmers Market provides fresh produce to low-income level seniors.

**Liaison/groups:**

**RSI:** Nothing reported.

**Pete Sante Fund:** Nothing reported.

**United States Seniors of Maryland (USM) Forum:** Nothing reported

Meeting adjourned at 11:20 AM. **Next meeting:** July 21, 2022 –Virtual – 10:00 AM