



SENIOR AFFAIRS ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

WEDNESDAY, April 15, 2026

In Person Meeting: 10:00 AM

Location: **Park de la Cruz Community Center**
3901 Landis Street, San Diego, 92105

Item 1: Call to Order

Chair Gwenmarie Hilleary called the Senior Affairs Advisory Board meeting to order at 10:09 AM.

Item 2: Roll Call

Kasey Cheal, Marissa Feliciano, Gwenmarie Hilleary, Jacqueline Jackson, Michelle Matter, Bob Prath, JB Robinson, William Peetoom, and Rosemary White Pope present.

Antoinette Alioto and Mary Scott Knoll absent.

Item 3: Approval of the March 18 Meeting Minutes

Gwenmarie Hilleary introduced the item. JB Robinson made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by William Peetoom. The motion passed unanimously, with Kasey Cheal, Marissa Feliciano, and Rosemary White Pope abstaining.

Item 4: Action – FY 27 Budget Letter to Mayor Gloria

JB Robinson introduced the item. The Board reviewed a letter to Mayor Todd Gloria outlining priorities for the upcoming budget, including preserving access to senior and recreation centers and libraries, ensuring older adults are included in homeless services and outreach, and supporting affordable multigenerational housing solutions.

Michelle Matter made a motion to send the letter to Mayor Gloria and Councilmembers, which was seconded by William Peetoom. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 5: Action – Older Americans Month Letter to Councilmembers

Gwenmarie Hilleary introduced the item. The Board reviewed a letter to Councilmembers encouraging them to celebrate Older Americans Month in May through proclamations, community events, and outreach with local senior centers. A toolkit from the Administration for Community Living was also shared in the letter.

JB Robinson made a motion to send the letter to Councilmembers, which was seconded by Jacqueline Jackson. The motion was approved unanimously.

Item 6: Information – Chair Report

Gwenmarie Hilleary shared an update on a recent meeting with Councilmember Elo-Rivera on Friday, April 9. The discussion included concerns related to cryo-cryptocurrency signage and recent educational efforts on the topic, including a session held on Friday, April 10. During the meeting, Bob Prath shared data from AARP and examples of how other communities across the country are addressing this issue, including similar legislation in Nebraska. Councilmember Elo-Rivera requested input on the City budget and the Board's priorities. GMH noted this was a successful engagement for the SAAB and expressed interest in continuing similar advocacy efforts.

Gwenmarie also noted that Jacqueline Jackson serves on the Accessibility Advisory Board and asked her to provide quarterly updates on relevant activities.

There was also a discussion regarding SAAB meeting locations. The May meeting will be held at Park de la Cruz, and the June 17 meeting will be held at the George Stevens Senior Center. Michelle Matter suggested a potential meeting location for the fall at the Meals on Wheels Senior Innovation Hub in Kearny Mesa and will follow up regarding scheduling.

Item 7: Information – Legislative Report

JB Robinson provided updates on several legislative and policy items, including AB 561 (Elder Abuse Restraining Orders) and a San Diego Housing Commission proposal to increase the family contribution for elderly and disabled households from 28.5% to 32%.

JB also shared information on the Property Tax Exemption initiative, which is currently collecting petition signatures and would exempt certain homeowners aged 60 or older from property taxes. He also provided updates on changes to CalFresh work requirements, effective June 1, which may impact family caregivers. The updated requirement includes 80 hours per month, though exemptions are available.

Bob Prath suggested the possibility of inviting Ricardo Flores from LISC to present on housing issues at a future meeting.

Item 8: Discussion – SAAB to host Listening Sessions

The Board discussed the potential for SAAB to host listening sessions to better engage with the community and understand issues that matter most to older adults.

Kasey Cheal noted opportunities to connect through existing networks within senior communities. Bob Prath shared that similar listening sessions were conducted by Aging & Independence Services (AIS) as part of the Area Plan process, which is mandated by law. He noted these sessions are often most effective when integrated into existing group settings, such as mobile home parks or community groups that already meet regularly.

Michelle Matter shared prior experience facilitating listening sessions and suggested advocacy training for older adults as an alternative.

The Board discussed strategies for outreach, including requesting time on existing group agendas to provide an overview of SAAB, its purpose, and its work. Bob emphasized the importance of clearly communicating the Board's role and impact.

Rosemary White Pope shared that she works with several groups serving older adults and noted opportunities to engage, including a weekly Friday lunch gathering attended by approximately 25 individuals. Jacqueline Jackson shared a similar project she worked on to ensure the voices of parents and students were heard and referenced the development of a "blueprint for action" to support community engagement.

Bob Prath emphasized the importance of storytelling in influencing elected officials, citing examples of older adults effectively advocating for their needs.

The item will be held for future discussion. Gwenmarie Hilleary noted the importance of further refining SAAB's outreach strategy, including where to focus engagement efforts and how to clearly communicate the Board's role and value to the community.

Item 9: Staff Liaison Report

Kristi Fenick shared that a listening session will be held at the Cathy Hopper Senior Center to explore what longevity means within the community, made possible through a grant from the San Diego Senior Community Foundation. She also noted that a meeting with Councilmember Campillo in Council District 7 is scheduled for May 14, with Kasey Cheal, Marissa Feliciano, and William Peetoom planning to attend.

The YANA (You Are Not Alone) Program remains a topic of interest, and Kristi is continuing to identify a potential speaker or contact.

Additionally, Cathy Hopper will be hosting a Senior Center financial resource fair on May 22 focused on fraud prevention, and a flyer will be shared with the Board. Potential speakers for upcoming meetings were also discussed, including a possible presentation on health disparities for the June meeting, suggested by Rosemary White Pope. Bob Prath offered to help identify a speaker on fraud prevention, noting that 17 "Scam Jam" sessions for older adults have been held to address current fraud trends.

Item 10: Update – County of San Diego Aging and Independence Services

No report.

Item 11: Discussion – Board Member/Officer Discussion (topics for future SAAB meetings)

Bob Prath shared information about an upcoming AARP-sponsored shred and fraud prevention event taking place on Saturday, April 18, at Park de la Cruz Recreation Center. Approximately 160 individuals have signed up for the event, which will include a drive-thru shred opportunity and resource fair.

Rosemary White Pope shared updates on ongoing programming at the George Stevens Senior Center, including technology classes held on the first and last Wednesday of each month to support older adults in using cell phones. She also announced an Older Americans Month and Mother's Day celebratory luncheon scheduled for Friday, May 8, which will include brain health and Alzheimer's education, a panel discussion, and community resources.

Item 12: Non-Agenda Public Comment

None

Adjournment

Michelle Matter made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Marissa Feliciano seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 AM.