SENIOR AFFAIRS ADVISORY BOARD
Meeting Minutes
WEDNESDAY, October 21, 2026
In Person Meeting: 10:00 AM
Location: **Park de la Cruz Community Center**
3901 Landis Street, San Diego, CA 92105

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Item 1: Call to Order

Chair Gwenmarie Hilleary called the Senior Affairs Advisory Board meeting to order at 10:05 AM.

Item 2: Roll Call

Theresa Frazier, Gwenmarie Hilleary, Michelle Matter, Bob Prath, William Peetoom, and Mary Scott Knoll present.

Antoinette Alioto, Kasey Cheal, Marissa Feliciano and Jacqueline Jackson absent.

Item 3: Approval of the July 15 Meeting Minutes

Gwenmarie Hilleary introduced the item. Bob Prath made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by William Peetoom. The motion passed with four votes in favor and Theresa Frazier and Mary Scott Knoll abstaining.

Item 4: Elections

The Board considered the proposed slate of officers including Gwenmarie Hilleary for Chair, William Peetoom for Vice Chair, Michelle Matter for Secretary, and Bob Prath for Legislative Officer.

Mary Scott Knoll made a motion to approve the proposed slate of officers. Michelle Matter seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 5: Chair Report

Gwenmarie Hilleary provided an update on the City's cryptocurrency ATM ordinance addressing financial fraud and exploitation. She acknowledged the Board's advocacy efforts and the support

of Council President Joe LaCava's office. William Peetoom attended the City Council Rules Committee meeting and spoke in support of the ordinance. Gwenmarie also shared information about a proposed Day of Action on November 13, suggested by Joaquin Quintero, to support continued community engagement and awareness.

Board members were also reminded to complete their required annual online training and Gwenmarie requested an update on Board attendance at the next meeting, with William Peetoom and Kristi Fenick assisting in reviewing attendance records.

Item 6: Information: Vice Chair Report

William Peetoom shared his participation in several events focused on issues affecting older adults including the ElderHelp Community Update, UC San Diego AI and Healthy Aging Symposium, and the St. Paul's Health Reimagined event focused on the "hidden middle" population. He noted projections that approximately 300,000 middle-income older adults in San Diego County could face challenges affording care and services by 2035.

William identified several recurring themes from his community engagement such as access to information and resource navigation, housing affordability and financial stability, transportation, financial exploitation, caregiver support, and access to technology. He emphasized the importance of helping older adults understand available services, eligibility requirements, and where to turn for assistance.

The Board discussed opportunities to improve outreach and access to trusted information, including potential website resources, community education, and assistance from student interns. Members also discussed inviting the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) to provide a presentation on transportation services, reduced fares, and rider education for older adults.

Mary Scott Knoll emphasized the connection between housing instability, social isolation, and older adults' well-being. She recommended additional education on fair housing protections, reasonable accommodations, and housing rights, including a possible housing seminar or resource fair. Michelle Matter discussed opportunities to share age-friendly resources with socially isolated older adults.

William emphasized the importance of strengthening relationships with community organizations and elected officials to better identify concerns and bring recommendations to the Mayor and City Council.

Item 7: Information: Legislative Report

Bob Prath acknowledged the Board's successful advocacy related to the cryptocurrency ATM ordinance and discussed opportunities for public education as implementation approaches.

Bob also shared proposed changes to City of San Diego water rates and the potential disproportionate impact on older adults living on fixed incomes, particularly residents of single-family homes. Board members discussed the importance of understanding how housing investments and policy changes will benefit older adults, particularly those with limited incomes.

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Transportation discussions included MTS reduced-fare programs, access to PRONTO passes, rider education, and regional transportation planning through SANDAG. There were concerns about the accessibility of enrollment processes and the need to ensure older adults are aware of available discounts and assistance. In addition, the use of autonomous vehicles, including Waymo, and their potential benefits and challenges for older adults.

Bob shared updates on affordable housing initiatives, rental assistance, and proposed City efforts to address additional fees charged to renters. There was a discission on the importance of understanding how housing investments and policy changes will benefit older adults, particularly those with limited incomes.

Item 8: Staff Liaison Report: Kristi Fenick

Kristi Fenick distributed ID cards for Board members and welcomed Theresa Frazier to the Board. Kristi also reported that the Senior At-Large position remains vacant and that the process to fill the vacancy is ongoing.

Kristi shared information about the City's emergency preparedness efforts in anticipation of potential El Niño-related storms. The City is coordinating educational opportunities in November, including in-person and virtual sessions addressing emergency alerts, preparedness resources, and assistance available to older adults. She encouraged Board members to share this information with their networks.

Kristi also discussed SB 707 and the potential for expanded teleconference participation in public meetings, subject to City Council approval and implementation procedures. The Board may have an opportunity to consider remote participation options once the City establishes the necessary policies.

Board members were reminded to complete their required annual training. Kristi noted that the City is working to improve the process for tracking completion.

She also shared information about the Veterans Appreciation Dance scheduled for November 12 at Balboa Park.

Item 9: Update – County of San Diego Aging and Independence Services

Antoinette Alioto was unable to attend but provided an update by email. Topics included caregiver support, safety and emergency preparedness, the silver economy, dementia, housing, and opportunities for older adult participation.

The update also emphasized flood preparedness in anticipation of potential El Niño-related storms, including the importance of registering for emergency notifications through AlertSanDiego and Genasys and accessing information about preparing for and recovering from emergencies.

Item 10: Discussion: Strategic Planning

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Gwenmarie Hilleary facilitated a discussion on the Board's strategic priorities. She reviewed the Board's previous planning efforts, including priorities identified in February 2025 related to transportation, home security, intergenerational programs, meal delivery, housing rights, coordination with County services, digital literacy, and cybersecurity.

Gwenmarie also highlighted the Board's recent accomplishments and activities, including advocacy related to the cryptocurrency ATM ordinance, support for the Older Americans Act, review of City budget priorities, and meetings with City Council offices to better understand the needs of older adults throughout San Diego. Common themes from these meetings included housing affordability, transportation, access to trusted information, and community engagement.

The Board discussed several potential priorities for the upcoming planning period, with particular emphasis on supporting implementation of the City's Age-Friendly Action Plan. Members discussed opportunities for SAAB to play a more active role in monitoring progress, encouraging accountability across City departments, and identifying opportunities for improvement.

Bob Prath suggested reviewing the Age-Friendly Action Plan and considering updates to reflect emerging needs. Michelle Matter raised the idea of a designated City aging leader or coordinator to help strengthen accountability and coordination across departments. Kristi Fenick discussed opportunities to work with the City's Department of Race and Equity to support implementation and accountability.

Mary Scott Knoll emphasized the importance of housing rights education, particularly fair housing protections and resources to help older adults remain safely housed. Members also discussed continuing to monitor legislation, submitting letters of support on relevant policy issues, strengthening relationships with City Councilmembers, and participating in community advocacy activities.

Item 11: Action: Meeting Time

The Board discussed changing the regular meeting start time. Michelle Matter made a motion to change the regular meeting start time to 9:30 a.m. William Peetoom seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 12: Discussion: Board Member/Officer Discussions (Topics for Future SAAB Meetings)

The Board briefly discussed potential topics for future meetings, including transportation services, autonomous vehicles and older adults living with dementia, community outreach, and opportunities to strengthen engagement with City departments and community partners.

The Board also agreed to continue its strategic planning discussion at the next meeting.

Item 13: Non-Agenda Public Comment

None

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Adjournment

Michelle Matter made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mary Scott Knoll seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

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