MINUTES
COMMISSION ON AGING
Wednesday, May 15, 2002
South Berkeley Senior Center
2939 Ellis Street, Berkeley, CA  94703

I. Meeting called to order by Commissioner Chair Gibson at 1:32 p.m. Members Present: Commissioners Charles Betcher (Vice-Chair), Eleanor Gibson (Chair), Annette Goldberg, Harold Heath, Margo Norman, Fredia Smith, and Allen Stross. Members Absent: Gene Scott. Staff: Secretary Lisa Ploss. Public, other City Staff and Invited Guests: Drew King (City of Berkeley Housing Department), Jerri Holan (Berkeley Ferry Committee), Paul Kamen (Berkeley Waterfront Commission) and Linda Perry (Berkeley Ferry Committee).

II. Public Comment – None.

III. Minutes from April 17, 2002 were approved with the following changes: under V. Report from Transportation Subcommittee the following sentence should be deleted: “That the Commission approve the following statement and approve its reading by Commissioner Young on behalf of the Commission at the 5/7/02 City Council Public Hearing regarding 2517 Sacramento Street”.

The vote to agree that Public Hearings should not start after 10:00 pm was “Aye” by Commissioner Goldberg.

M/S/C (Betcher/ Goldberg) Ayes: Smith, Norman, Goldberg, Betcher, Heath, Gibson; Absent: Stross, Scott.

IV. Announcements
Commission Chair Gibson announced the resignation of Commissioner Lenora Young who was also the chair of the COA Housing Subcommittee. Her resignation was tendered to Councilmember Hawley on 5/8/02. The Commission acknowledged the excellent contributions that Lenora Young made and agreed that this was a loss to the Commission.

Action taken:
(M/S/C) (Stross/Smith) That the Commission sends a letter to Lenora Young urging her to consider joining the Commission on Aging again. Ayes: Goldberg, Stross, Betcher, Norman, Gibson, Smith; Noes: Heath; Absent: Scott.

V. Update and Progress of Work Plan – Commissioner Betcher agreed to track the progress of the installation of the Bus Shelters.

VI. Report on the May 1, 2002 visit to the Gaia Building – Commissioners Goldberg, Smith, Norman, Young and Gibson all participated in a lovely 1½ hour tour of the Gaia building given by Patrick Kennedy.

VII. Update on Occupancy of Harriet Tubman Terrace by Drew King, Housing Department of the City of Berkeley – The history of Harriet Tubman Terrace was described. Originally, the use permit in 1972 called for 91 units for seniors. It has been difficult to determine if only seniors and disabled are being housed since people have a right to privacy and many disabilities are hidden. HUD reviewed 18 – 20 files in December of 2001 and no problems were found regarding eligibility for the building. Regular inspections have been occurring since December as well to be sure that the housing code is being complied with. In the short term, a meeting with the following representatives will be convened: code inspection, crime prevention, fire department representative, tenant council, housing rights, HUD and Drew King. In the longer term, the question remains: how can we assure that Harriet Tubman is more responsive to residents and assure that it remains for low-income residents? Perhaps, look to local non-profits and for profits.

VIII. Berkeley Ferry Update and Recommendation – Jerri Holan and Linda Perry from the Berkeley Ferry Committee –

Action taken:
(M/S/C) (Betcher/Smith) That the Commission submit the following resolution to support the exploration of the establishment of regular ferry service from the Berkeley-Albany waterfront to City Council. Ayes:
Whereas, Policy T-9 of the 2001 Berkeley General Plan provides that it is City Policy to work with the City of Albany, AC Transit, regional transit authorities, and other interested parties to explore the establishment of regular ferry service from the Berkeley-Albany waterfront; and

Whereas, the California State Legislature established the San Francisco Bay Area Water Transit Authority (WTA) to investigate and plan for the establishment of an environmentally sound public ferry system providing affordable water transit for the San Francisco Bay Area; and

Whereas, by September 2002 the WTA must issue its draft Programmatic EIR and its Implementation and Operations Plan, including recommendations for new ferry routes;

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Berkeley Commission on Aging that it recommend the City Council take the following actions:

1.) Prior to July 23, 2002, send a letter to the Water Transit Authority affirming Berkeley’s support for an environmentally responsible ferry service from the Berkeley-Albany waterfront to San Francisco and other destinations in the Bay Area such as Angel Island and the GGNRA consistent with Policy T-9 of the Berkeley General Plan;

2.) Recommend that the City Council request that the City Manager take timely action to advocate establishment of ferry service from the Berkeley-Albany waterfront and actively participate in the WTA planning process in order to ensure that Berkeley’s adopted policies and interests are effectively advocated during the WTA’s EIR and planning process.

3.) Recommend that any ferries that serve Berkeley be equipped with grab bars in the public bathrooms and escalators or elevators between decks so that all passengers can have full access to all passenger areas.

IX. Time Compensation for Taxicab Drivers who redeem Scrip at Finance Counter. This item was tabled for more information including what is the City’s position on this recommendation including the Taxi Scrip program as well as the Finance department. The Commission also expressed concern that the 3% proposed as compensation by Gene Biggins of the Taxi Scrip program not come out of taxi scrip that is allocated.
X. Formative Evaluation Project with UCSF re: Older Adults and Exercise by Kate Clayton, Public Health, City of Berkeley – An overview of the project with the UCSF Center for Healthy Aging was presented to the Commission. The COA members were offered an opportunity to participate in a focus group that will discuss physical activity in older adults. The focus group information will be sent to Commission Members. Tentatively, the focus group will be held on June 12, 2002.

XI. Use of Taxi Scrip to pay for rides provided by Jewish Family and Children’s Services –
Action Taken:
(M/S/F) (Betcher/ Goldberg) That the Commission recommends that the City Council does not support the use of Taxi Scrip to pay for rides provided by Jewish Family and Children’s Services. Ayes: Heath, Goldberg, Gibson, Betcher; Noes: Stross, Norman; Absent: Smith, Scott.

XII. Increase in Taxi Fares –
The COA recently learned that Taxi Fares were increased by 20% and there is concern that this means allocated taxi scrip will not go as far. Neither the COA or the COD was consulted and older adults and disabled are the prime users of taxi scrip.

Action Taken:
(M/S/C) (Betcher/ Smith) That the Commission request that in the future, any changes in taxi fares be discussed with both the Commission on Aging and the Commission on Disabilities before changes are implemented. Ayes: Heath, Goldberg, Gibson, Betcher, Smith, Stross; Absent: Scott, Smith.

XIII. Public Hearing regarding 2517 Sacramento Street – Commissioner Chair Gibson reported on the recent Public Hearing re: 2517 Sacramento Street.

XIV. Paratransit Meeting Update – Commissioner Goldberg attended a recent Paratransit Meeting regarding Measure B.

XV. Proposal to Re-Establish COA Transportation Subcommittee
Action Taken:
(M/S/C) (Betcher/Smith) That the Commission re-establishes the transportation subcommittee with Gene Scott, Margo Smith and Charlie Betcher as the chair. Ayes, Heath, Norman, Goldberg, Stross, Gibson, Betcher; Absent: Scott, Smith.

XVI. Commissioner reports – Commissioner Norman reported on the work she has done with traffic lights.