

**SENIOR CITIZEN TASK FORCE**

***Of the***

***Suffolk County Legislature***

**Minutes**

A meeting of the Senior Citizen Task Force of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Clerk's Conference Room of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York, on March 1, 2007.

**Members Present:**

Legislator Steven Stern - Chairman  
Holly Rhodes-Teague - Director/Office of the Aging  
Pamela Giacoia - Town of Southampton/Director of Senior Services  
Amanda Cooke - Town of East Hampton/Dept of Human Resources  
Priscilla DeMasi - Administrator San Simeon by the Sound  
Susan Harty - Town of Huntington/Director-Senior Citizens Division  
Thelma White - Town of Riverhead/Senior Retirement Center  
Mary Ann Barone - Resident of Bohemia  
Elizabeth Lorenz - Town of Islip/Human Resources Commissioner  
Karen McLaughlin - Town of Southold/Director-Human Resource Center  
William Stoner - Associate State Director for AARP  
Karin Bennett - Town of Shelter Island/Senior Citizens Center Mgr  
Eugene Pritz - Media Consultant/Department of Health & Human Services  
Carolyn Gallogly - Chairperson/Office of the Aging

**Members Not Present:**

Tanya Gilliard - Town of Babylon  
Rita Glasheen - Town of Smithtown  
Robert Kern - Associate Director-Seniors Against Discrimination

**Also In Attendance:**

Mary Young - Aide to Legislator Stern

**Minutes Taken By:**

Alison Mahoney - Court Stenographer

*(\*The meeting was called to order at 2:02 PM\*)*

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Good afternoon, everybody. Thanks so much for coming. This is -- it's an exciting day for me personally, but I think it's a great day for Suffolk County seniors; seniors of Suffolk County today, seniors for Suffolk County of tomorrow.

Before we get into the agenda and talk about the things that I'd like to be able to accomplish today, I guess we -- it's not like we need a pledge or anything here, right? But I guess to start off and for the record, I'd like the record to reflect that we're all going to observe a moment of silence in remembrance of Ed Seigman, someone who, of course, we all know was a tremendous champion for seniors, seniors rights and their families here, in Suffolk County and all throughout Long Island. And much of the policy suggestions, much of what he had been talking about for so long, I hope to be able to capture much of that in our proceedings as we go forward together in the next several months. So let's observe just a very short moment of silence in his memory.

***Moment of silence observed***

Thank you. For those of you who don't know me or my background, for those of us who are meeting now for the first time, I'm Suffolk County Legislator Steven Stern. I am serving my first term representing the 16th Legislative District which is parts of Huntington and Babylon, Dix Hills, Melville, Deer Park, North Babylon. It is also my privilege to serve as the Chairman of the Legislature's committee on Veterans & Seniors. And in my colleagues' wisdom, they get pats on the back for appointing me to that position, which I guess is a good thing, they get kudos for really tapping in to what has been my background experience and really my passion throughout my entire career.

I've worked as an elder law/estate planning/special needs attorney for just about 15 years here in Suffolk County, and working with seniors, their families, the disabled has really been my passion and my commitment through this entire time. And prior to my election, I had the opportunity to serve with Gene and with Carolyn on the Senior Citizens Advisory Board, I've been close with the County Executive for many, many years in working together on some of the issues affecting seniors throughout Long Island. And I was very excited about not only winning election, of course, but having the opportunity to bring that background experience and that passion to this area.

And now is the time, really, now is the time to bring it forth in this more formalized way. And I've had some good bills, you know, my first year. I've worked very closely with Holly and with Director Ronayne on Veterans issues and we've done some good things in the Veterans & Seniors Committee, things that I'm very proud of. But we all know that if we continue to do things piecemeal, if we continue to react rather than be proactive, not only do I believe we are already behind the eight ball, but it's just going to become an exacerbated problem as time goes on.

And so what I wanted to do, the vision really, was to create a task force with like-minded professionals, to bring those together who have such wonderful and varied experience dealing with senior issues to begin to come up with a real, formalized policy on how we work with seniors, how we deal with seniors and their families and how we can set long-term goals. And I guess really, you know, we can bounce ideas back and forth, but for me, the idea behind this is task force was really just one question, and that is is it good to grow old in Suffolk County. And I think how we answer that question now will say a lot about, of course, where we're at, but hopefully at the end of this process, months down the road, we'll be able to answer that question more definitively and at least have some good ideas on how we can best proceed to hopefully answer that question in the affirmative. So that was really the idea behind wanting to put together this type of a group.

Now, as far as having all of you specifically participate in this effort, I know very well, having worked in dealing with Federal issues and State issues and local issues, that we can formulate great policy

and come up with some great ideas at the County level of government, but I know very well that it's those that work at the town level that are the ones that are dealing with these issues and on the ground, real life people day-to-day, and for the most part the delivery of those services is done at that level. As I'm learning in so many other issues affecting my district and all of Suffolk County, in order to get anything done it has to be a cooperation among all various levels of government. And so to be able to do anything meaningful, of course, had to include those that are on the front lines at the town level.

And so thank you to everybody for stepping up and agreeing to be a part of this. But that really was the vision, to bring everybody together who has this type of experience, but to then hold public hearings throughout the spring, inviting people to come down and give us their thoughts on how they think things are going and what they would like to see, you know, coming up in the future.

This is a select group not just for your background experience, but for your ability to kind of sit back and listen and take in, you know, the different points of view, the different expertise that hopefully many of our speakers are going to bring. I could have created a commission made up of a housing expert and a transportation expert and a long-term care expert; I chose not to do that because I wanted to have five housing experts come in, I wanted to have everybody who had a stake in transportation and everybody that knows a little something about the delivery of long-term care services throughout Suffolk County to come in and give their thoughts and give everybody the opportunity to bring in their various perspectives. So this task force is charged with listening; listening to various professionals from different geographic backgrounds and different levels of government to hear what they're doing at all these various levels and kind of come up with an idea as to what might work, what might not work, what works in other states, other municipalities and see how we can best apply that across the board here throughout Suffolk County. So that was really the idea behind it.

I'm very excited about the work ahead of us over the next couple of months. I'm very excited about coming up with a report at the end of this listening tour and being able to come up with not just good proposals that are going to make for a good press conference and make for a good written report that's going to collect dust at the end of the day, but a real plan for real, meaningful change in policy so that when we ask the question is it good to grow old in Suffolk County, we can say, "Yes, and we did all that we could to make it that way."

So thank you, everybody, for being here. I guess before we begin, maybe we can quickly go around the table and have everybody introduce themselves and say hello. Will?

**MR. STONER:**

Sure. My name is I'm Will Stoner, I'm the Associate State Director for AARP. I'm a Suffolk County resident and I'm responsible Statewide for our Livable Communities Campaign which is housing, transportation and coordination of services and I'm happy to be part of the group. Thanks.

**MR. PRITZ:**

I'm Gene Pritz, I sit on the Office of the Aging, I'm also a Media Consultant to the Department of Health & Human Services; that's about it.

**MS. HARTY:**

I'm Sue Harty, I'm the Director of the Town of Huntington, their Senior Citizens Division. It is a pleasure to be here and be part of this group.

**MS. COOKE:**

I'm Amanda Cooke, I work in the Town of East Hampton.

**MS. BENNETT:**

My name is Karin Bennett, I'm from Shelter Island. We're about to implement Phase I of the {narc

assessment} on Shelter Island. I'm very pleased to be here.

**MS. GALLOGLY:**

I can't complain about how long it took me to get here, I didn't have to get on a boat. I'm Carolyn Gallogly and I'm the Chairperson for the Office of the Aging and with this board I'm just a liaison.

**MS. McLAUGHLIN:**

And I'm Karen McLaughlin, Director of Human Services for the Town of Southold. Thank you for having me.

**MS. DeMASI:**

I'm Priscilla DeMasi, I'm the Administrator of San Simeon by the Sound, a long-term care facility and we're gladly introducing medical model day-care to the north fork in the coming years. So I'm grateful to be here. Thank you.

**MS. BARONE:**

I'm Mary Ann Barone, I'm just a concerned senior citizen.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Welcome.

**MS. WHITE:**

I'm Thelma White with the Town of Riverhead, I'm concerned about the senior citizens. I, too, that has also been my passion, seniors, but I've served on the Senior Citizen Advisory Board in the Town of Riverhead and now I work with the Senior Retirement Center.

**MS. LORENZ:**

Hi. I'm Elizabeth Lorenz, I'm the Commissioner of Human Services in the Town of Islip. I oversee five divisions, one of them is the Senior Citizens Division.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

I'm Holly Rhodes-Teague, Director of the Office for the Aging and I've been there almost ten years. I've worked with many of you in a lot of different capacities and I have to say truly that I think Suffolk has one of the best cooperative relationships with the towns that I can even imagine. We do a great job with each of the levels of government, I think we're very fortunate that we have what we have here.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Welcome. Okay, what I -- Holly suggested that we take a look at Project 2015 as a way to kind of kick-start the process, which I think is an excellent suggestion. So Holly, maybe you can take us through it.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

Sure. It's a real quick -- you know what, let me pass out the handouts so you all have them. It's a real quick presentation, just to tell you a little bit about how the population shift that is occurring as we speak.

The way it really came about, I guess we'll shift over to I guess three. The purpose of the 2015 Project was to provide information and education about the different demographics and also to let local government know what's happening and maybe start planning for it. This was a project that came about on the State level approximately 2001 or so, the Governor's Office charged each of his departments to get together and really look at what was going on within State government and where they were going to have issues down the road as the population got older. And they did get together, there were many white papers done on different issues that would come about, and they did this project. Not just the State government, but they got together with the State Society on Aging and there were demographic projections done by Cornell Institute and there were a couple of other agencies involved, but as soon as that Census data got out there for 2000 they really started

to work on this project.

And then after they did it on the State level, they came to the County levels and said, "Listen, you might want to put this project together on a local level and see what your statistics look like." So we did that for Suffolk County. We looked at the demographics and we looked at aging and we also looked how the population is becoming more diverse. We looked at the Census stats from 1990 to 2000 and then what the projections that were made for 2015 for some of these areas. So that when you look at it, the County median age has increased from 26 years in 1970 to 29 years in '80, and now it's at approximately 36 years. This is really due, as we all know, to the baby boom, because most of those people, the baby boomers, and 1946 was the beginning of it, they're now over 60. So your population has already started to age and I think most of us are part of that in some form or fashion with the exception of a few people in the room.

**MS. HARTY:**

Those please leave; no, I'm kidding.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

You can see all the bulges that happen here on this next graph. In 1990, you can see the bulge of the baby boomers is a little lower on the chart. And then now on the next one, particularly 2015, it gets a little -- it gets a little bumpy there, but you can see that the major bulge is now higher up and that's the baby boomer turning 60 and older. You can see, we really are still outdoing most of the population, it's going to make major changes for us.

In the next slide you're going to see how the growth in the 85 population, 65 population, a few slides actually, and the 60 population, some of the impacts of it. The first one talks about the aging impairments, and what you really see is that the 85+ population which is expanding quite quickly, they're going to have more chronic multiple health conditions which is going to, you know, increase the impairment rate. What we know is that people 85+ generally have more serious health conditions and require assistance for activities of daily living. With the increase of the ADL's, the need for community-based service becomes greater. So we know as the population ages that when you get to the extreme older population, the 85+ population, we are going to definitely need more services available to the seniors.

The next chart, you can see that your population for 2000 projection over 60, 65 and 85, our numbers are jumping, if you look at 2000-2015. On the next one after that, you can see 2000 -- in 2000, you know, the Census it was 224,000, they're predicting a 37% increase in 2015, and if their projections are even close, that's a huge number. I don't have it on the graph, but the prediction for the overall population in Suffolk County is only 3.4% increase, so we are taking over a large part of Suffolk County's population.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

And Holly, if I may, what I'm finding fascinating is that I'm sure much of those numbers are based on our current population. And I don't know if anybody had the opportunity to read USA Today a couple of days ago, a big cover story on the boomerang effect and how so many seniors -- so many parents of those who live here on Long Island are down in Florida and the retirement states, and as they grow older and more frail and need to be closer to their children, how are they are boomeranging right back here. So that effect isn't even in those numbers; as more and more need to be closer to their families, those that thought they were going to Florida to live out their days are going to be coming right back here home to us.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

There's another graph someplace in here where we talk about the outward migration, inward migration, that's part of that.

So you see here, 37% increase, you know, the 60+, then in the 85+ it's a 73% increase. You're still talking small numbers, 20,000 versus 34,000, but still, it's something to consider, we're going to have a 73% increase in those who are 85+. And I know those who are in the town levels who are

working in home care, you know, we have difficulty now providing all the service we need in home care, so think about a 73% increase in that population. I mean, it really -- the numbers are a little scary sometimes when you think about them.

**MS. BENNETT:**

There's staggering.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

Yeah, they really are. In the next chart, it just tells you a little bit about what's happening in other Counties. You know, Nassau, which has always outdone us in terms of the 60+ population, we always say Suffolk County is the second largest County in terms of senior population in New York State, outside of New York City, because nobody can compare to New York City and then it goes Nassau and then Suffolk. By 2015, they anticipate we will have a larger percentage of seniors, and that is really due to the fact that we do have people in Nassau County, when they retire they head east, so you have migration coming from the other counties. And their -- it's different statistics there. Westchester has always been smaller than us, but you can see our numbers are going up in greater percentages, so it just gives you an idea what's happening locally.

Our next one, we talk a little bit about migration and immigration, and these are all going to have impacts, one on workers and also the types of service workers that provide and how we provide services. So what they've told us in the population is that there's definitely set ways that people come into New York State out of New York State, and what the trend really has been -- if you go to the next one, Roger -- is that people tend to leave New York State when they're younger, you know, the 20 to 34 year old age group, which impacts the people you have in the work force. And then you see everybody at 50 years old are moving to Florida, which is exactly what Legislator Stern said. They go out, they're healthy, they go have their fun and play golf, whatever they do, and then -- again, exactly what you said before -- now they're getting more frail, relatives are here, they can't really live on their own, we have better services in New York than in a lot of other places and they come back when they are in need of service. So that definitely impacts on how we provide services, and who we are providing that service to.

I can't tell you how many phone calls or e-mails we get in our office in a month that say, "Now, my Mom lives here and we want to move her back and she has no money, we have no place to put her, do you have any ideas?" You know, that in a nutshell is a lot of the calls that we get and I know on the local level you get those calls, too. So this definitely impacts on what's happening in another ten years here in Suffolk.

All right, the next one talks a little bit about immigration and things like that. In New York State they're saying that the population, the foreign-born population has increased from 16 to 20% from '90 to 2000; we expect that it continues. In the next graph, it just gives you a little bit of the numbers that they're talking about. This is on the State level, so you can see how many people are born here versus the ones that are not born here. It definitely will have an impact on the services that we need to provide and how we provide them in terms of diversity and cultural sensitivity and who's out there to provide the services.

According to the 2000 Census, on the next one, there are over four million New Yorkers who speak a language other than English at home. And then here in Suffolk County it's 225,000 County residents who speak a language other than English. Those are big numbers, and we need to be able to prepare to be able to provide services to those people in other languages and in other cultures. So, you know, something else to think about.

The next graph tells you how many people, according to the Census, who they describe as speaking English less than very well, and it's 51% of those speaking Spanish, 29% Indo-European's, 17 in Asian and 3 was in another language. So less than very well means we're going to have language barriers if we don't do something about that. I mean, it's not that we can even -- you know, they're speaking less than very well, we have to speak better in whatever language, you know, we're talking about. Here in Suffolk County it's 88,000 people who identify themselves as speaking English less

than very well, and again, that's the breakdown of the languages that we're talking about.

The next one talks about as closer to New York City, the people that are foreign-born, the percentages are even higher with one in two speaking a language other than English within the New York City area, and then as you go -- which is much higher than the Statewide average of 28%. The next chart will show, you have New York City which is the -- you know, one in two is speaking a different language. They said in Upstate, New York, it's approximately 9% and then here on the Island they're saying it averages out to about 22, 23%. You know, the numbers are up there of people who are speaking another language in the house.

In Suffolk going from the '90 Census to the 2007 Census, the African-American population increased by 11%, Asian 33 and the Hispanic population increased by 41%. Now, again, in the next chart I think we show -- it just shows you the numbers, the white non-Hispanic was minus -- you know, we had a downturn while the other populations -- those numbers don't add up and they don't add up because of the way the Census data -- there's other populations involved but they were such low numbers and also the fact that I think it's the way the population data was done between 90 and 2000, so they don't add up, but those percentage changes on the side are correct for each of those populations.

And here, this is for age 60+ in Suffolk County. And again, it tells you the white, black, Asian/Pacific and Hispanic and, you know, there's a lot of changes there, 10%, 26%, Asian/Pacific Islander a 129% increase, Hispanic population 59% increase, and so they are becoming much more diverse in Suffolk County.

The next few charts are or things are going to tell us a little bit about how the household and family living arrangements are changing. And the information that's there is really on the State level what's going on, but it will definitely impact because the family structure impacts on particularly family caregivers. You know, as the households change, who is there to take care of Mom is an issue for everybody. So you will see in the next few. They're saying non-family households have increased, you know, what they said is since 2000 we had an increase in more than 34% -- actually, it's increased to more than 34% of the population. So in non-family households, 34% are now -- actually, the total population, 34% are non-family households which means they live alone or they live other non-family relatives, and that's up from 22% in 1970.

**MR. PRITZ:**

Is that Federal figures?

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

These are New York State; you know, they come from the Census data but it's New York State numbers we're talking about. In 1970, 83% of all families were married couple families, in 2000 that's decreased to 71%. Married couple families with children is now just a third of all families, so the numbers are changing and the next chart, graph it tells a few more things. Single female households, this is an interesting one, this one has increased by 22% from 2000 -- I think it was the -- oh, shoot, I don't have that. I'm sorry, I can't tell you what that increase was from, but it's increased to 573,000 families in New York State are single family householders. And the single male houses, while not large, those numbers have changed as well, we have an increase in the single male householders.

Why these are particularly important to us is that we had done a care giving survey in Suffolk County in 2003 and we had a study done by Stony Brook University, and what they found in caregiving is that 7% of all Suffolk households are providing care to somebody over 60, but 76% of those caregivers are female. Now, if you have single female householders, if they're taking care of children, how are they then going to take care of Mom, Dad, the aunt who doesn't have family or whatever it is? So there's a big, big issue with the type of households that are in Suffolk versus who's going to take care of the informal caregiving that is done by a huge number of our population. So it's just something to think about as we go through some of the other things, what's out there.

This definitely makes a difference as to how services are provided. The unpaid caregiver provides a huge service to Suffolk County in terms of there's a benefit economically to Suffolk County, actually to any County, in that Medicaid dollars aren't paying for -- you know, government is not paying for those care givers, for a formal paid caregiver. So there's a huge economic benefit to having unpaid, informal caregivers in the family structure, and clearly that's probably what most people want anyway, is to have someone they know taking care of them as opposed to having other people take care of them.

Concluding on a lot of these things, we are getting older, we are getting more diverse, the language spoken home is different, ethnicity is changing, living arrangements are changing and obviously we are aging. Some of the things that came out of the white papers in New York State, things that you don't normally think about, public transportation, obviously we need more of it. People, as they get older, they can't drive, they can't see at night, we need to change the way our transportation is done. Those who can drive, there are things that can be done to make it easier, you know, your signage for the people as they're driving down the highways, bigger, sooner, you know, longer turning lanes, there's a lot of things that could happen. I think the State of Florida has done a lot with that.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Yeah.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

But maybe we need to take some lessons from their -- you know, what we do here. Health care, obviously with the numbers changing, we're going to need more of it. Home care is a huge interest I think for everyone, the types of housing that's available to seniors, do they need the 5,000 square foot house that they built that now has one person in it, two people in it? I don't think so. But they're also going to want some kind of housing that's attractive to them, not just shoved into a thousand square foot apartment someplace. So we have to think about those things. Banking, you know, you have scams that are being -- you know, taking advantage of seniors every day, so the banking industry needs to become even more aware than they already are. Educational institutions, if we don't find some way to make home care more attractive to people to go into to take care of our elderly, then who's doing it? So your educational institutions need to be on board, they need to provide programs, incentives for people, maybe they start at the entry-level, they can move up. You know, there needs to be a way to get people into the different types of industries that we're going to need over the next 30 some odd years.

So these are just things to think about. I think that's the end, isn't it? Oh, here we go, the conclusion. We need to work together to get the needs met. Services available, not only do they have to be high quality, but we need to make them more widely available. We all know there's some services out there but, you know, how many people can really access them? Some of them are very small numbers that we're able to provide the service to. People want to be home, they want to be in their house and we need to maintain them independently as long as they can in their homes. You know, nobody wants to be institutionalized if they can help it. And we have to make the services user friendly, you can't just say to people, "Get on a computer"; if they've never been on a computer, if they have never been on a computer, how do you expect them to access your services?

Obviously that will change, you know, because I think a lot of the buildings are very user-friendly to the computer, but those are all things we need to think about. The technology that's out there, how we can get that into people's homes, a lot of thoughts. So that's it.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Great. Holly, thanks. And I think that was a most appropriate way to begin our thought process here as to -- they're the kinds of things that not only need to be done, but more particularly the kinds of things that we want to examine during the course of this process. Things like transportation, affordable housing, different types of housing opportunities, how government can

play a roll in partnering with the private sector on making those housing opportunities available, access to long-term care and, yeah, who's going to provide that care and working together with the schools to make that happen and offering incentives.

So these are some of the ideas that, you know, that I would certainly like to address. But let's maybe go around, there were wonderful suggestions that were in there in one of the slides, but maybe we can spend a couple of minutes going around and talking about some of the issues that you would like to see addressed during the course of this process.

**MS. WHITE:**

One of the things that bothers me, I'll have calls from a senior citizen, "Where can I go for a certain service?" And I can tell them what to do, but what I would like to see is somebody who can take them through that process to cut out a lot of the leg work, because they can't do it.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

In terms of contacting various agencies?

**MS. WHITE:**

Right.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Getting to various agencies.

**MS. WHITE:**

Have a person, someone who can do that for them. You know, you can easily sit on the phone and say, "Okay, you want your windows replaced, you can do so and so," but more so when it comes to medical with care, they don't know where to go, it's really hard for them.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

So a better delivery of services or at least taking somebody in a more personalized way through the process?

**MS. WHITE:**

Yes.

**UNKNOWN AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

Point of entry with (inaudible).

**MS. MAHONEY:**

You have to speak up.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

I don't really think it's point of entry, I think you're looking from more the point of entry because she is a point of entry, we wanted somebody who walks them hand-in-hand through a process; I mean, that's what it sounds like you're looking for.

**MS. HARTY:**

I think the {North Program}, we are fortunate enough in the Town of Huntington as well that in Huntington we're going to start about a week from Tuesday, as a matter of fact, you know, having a social worker, a medical person in this case that's a nurse, go directly into the house, do an evaluation of what -- and help them through the different services, even if it's just telling them, gee, they have a center down there, go down and have a nice nutritious meal, those types of things. But often it's a lot more complicated than that for the individual and the senior, but at least they are giving them the hands-on assist with it. So it is probably a lot of getting people into the home to

stop before a crisis happens, give the assist.

**MS. GIACOIA:**

I would like to say that, you know, as we saw from those slides, as this population ages, I mean, we see it now out in the field -- I'm Pam Giacoia from the Town of Southamptton. How the Mental Health needs, we're just seeing more and more seniors with mental health needs. And we can't get them into service, they won't go, you know, they're 85 years old, they don't believe in mental health to begin with, but they need someone to come into their home. Mental health in the elderly is getting very big now and as we go forward, we're going to need to figure out how we're going to get these mental health services into the people.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

There was some pilot projects that were going to be done on the State level, there were a couple applied for from Suffolk County but they were restrictive in what you could apply for and none of them really allowed for --

**MS. GIACOIA:**

In home.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

You know, how we always had the screening teams?

**MS. GIACOIA:**

Yes.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

These were geriatric screening teams that were well used and well known by the network, they were defunded, what, ten years ago?

**MS. GIACOIA:**

It's got to be ten years ago.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

And it's the only service I've ever heard that people still cry and complain about because it went away ten years ago. So it was a well used service and we would like to see that come back and it's been difficult to find funding for.

**MS. GIACOIA:**

Absolutely. It's something that we really have to consider because they're there, we don't have the means now to get the services. While there are mental health services in all of our areas, it's very difficult, if not impossible, to get someone to go out into their home.

**MS. DeMASI:**

We run a shuttle bus to Family Service League for counseling for our seniors, and that there's a huge waiting list. So when someone's really -- it's not a crisis where they need to be hospitalized, but you can really see they need some support.

**MS. GIACOIA:**

If you could get them to get on a bus, if you can get them to go, I'm not talking about the ones that can't, won't.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

And talk about potentially adding in a significant way to that problem, you know, so many seniors are the primary and probably sole care givers of their disabled children, who are themselves starting to become elderly. And once their senior parents pass away, a tremendous question is going to be who's going to care for their now themselves elderly disabled child? You can really see that this

problem is going to grow expedientially.

**MS. GIACOIA:**  
Skyrocket.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**  
What else, what are some of the other --

**MR. PRITZ:**  
I think it's interesting, in bringing up all these issues and without getting political about it, there was a White House Conference in December last year and there were 50 resolutions brought up by over 2,500 Delegates -- and they're all published in this book; if you like, I can get you a copy -- and they come up with 50 resolutions of things that are very important that Congress should act on. As I say, without getting political, the whole thing is Congress has done nothing, absolutely nothing about any of this. And I, for one, as I said before, I'm a Media Consultant, Department of Health & Human Services and almost daily I e-mail them what's happening.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**  
Yeah.

**MR. PRITZ:**  
And if I'm lucky I'll get back an answer, "We're working on it." But as I say, here are 50 resolutions, this is from people all over the United States, 2,500 delegates who felt these are the important issues and you go through them, they're all the things that we're talking about right here. So it's not a Suffolk problem, it's not a State problem, it's a national problem.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**  
Well, to get political about it, I think to all of us it was crystal clear that there would be nothing done with those recommendations. And I think we all recognize that we -- I don't think that we need to recreate the wheel here, and if lightning strikes that's great. But we know the issues and we know what many of the good suggestions already are, and so one of the primary goals here as I see, the vision of this task force, is to just take it the next step. Because we know what the issues are, we know what the challenges are, there are a lot of great ideas out there and how do we take it off the shelf and implement those important and very good suggestions? So here, I see this is very much a working group and not just to come up with great theory but really roll up sleeves and at the end of day come up with a blueprint on how we can get from A to B and how we can make it a reality, you know, within our towns and throughout the region.

**MR. PRITZ:**  
The only other thing I wanted to mention, I agree with you, it's something we should do locally, but there are things in here like Social Security, the drug bill that's before Congress and so on; those things are really national, those are Federal. So I know we can do a lot, you know, locally but --

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**  
That's always going to be the issue, unfortunately. We can throw up on the wall a tremendous laundry list of everything that's wrong and how we want to make it right, but yeah, of course, our charge here is to come up with things that we can have jurisdiction over and implement.

**MR. PRITZ:**  
Well, what I would like to throw out is perhaps this task force could write to Congress. We're an important body here in Suffolk County, we're an important part of what's going on, why don't we take the initiative and write to them and say, "We agree with your issues, what's happening?"

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**  
Well, I'll invite everybody to get on the bus and go down to DC with our final report and put it on the Speaker's desk --

**MR. PRITZ:**

Terrific.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

-- and see if we can push from local up rather than, you know, top down. Because I think we all know, whether it's this issue or some of the other issues, that Suffolk County and certainly the Suffolk County Legislature has taken the lead and really set an example for things that have become now national policy, and I would hope that we would take that same approach here.

**MR. STONER:**

A couple of quick issues, if I may. Transportation was highlighted in that presentation and to touch on it quickly, there are going to be significant barriers as the population ages to mobility, and all the studies and data that we have show that mobility and engagement in your community actually adds to longevity, and we don't want to hinder that in any way. So we actually have to come up with creative ways to make sure that people's mobility is not --

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

Hindered.

**MR. STONER:**

-- negatively affected. And it's a challenge nationally but, you know, Nassau's problems are a little bit different than Suffolk's, Suffolk's got a mixed version, you know, we've got downtowns, we've got very little areas. I live in Mt. Sinai, I don't know where the nearest bus stop is. So as I get older, I don't know what I'm going to do once I can't drive. You know, rely on family members and that's usually the typical response when people lose their keys. So not to talk about what we're doing, but we are going to be hosting an event in Suffolk County with the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council, and I think they have contacted your office in some way. If not --

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

They will be, yeah.

**MR. STONER:**

We're going to be talking about driving aspects, about public transportation aspects and walkability, looking at those issues and hopefully coming up with some committees and working groups to recommend some solutions and then work toward those solutions.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

One of the things, and I just highlight this because when you talk about transportation, all the towns have senior centers and we -- we don't own one, they're all town based. And the best example of a senior center that is in a great place transportation wise is Pam's, in Southampton theirs is just behind Main Street, big, beautiful building, they've got the post office, the bank, the grocery store, the drug store, Starbucks.

**MS. GIACOIA:**

Everything.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

Everything is right there and she's able to bus people in and then they could get whatever services they need; that is I think an ideal way to provide some service.

**MS. GIACOIA:**

It's the ideal way, it's the way to go.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

You know, again, each town has their limits and issues in terms of what they already have going for the last years, where their centers are and stuff. I mean, in the future, that is a prime example of

something that is a huge benefit.

**MS. GIACOIA:**

And the other thing that we've done is we take our vehicles, our buses, we have about 20 vehicles and we have begun to wrap them with really colorful things, you know, that pertain to the Town of Southampton and they come into the senior -- the main center and everybody sees them. So it's like, "Oh, that doesn't say senior bus, it says community bus." People who -- like you said, they don't want to get on a bus to begin with because this is not the way it is out east, they'll get on that bus because it's got this big beautiful farm scene or whatever, you know? It's been kind of amazing.

**MR. STONER:**

Yeah, that's great.

**MS. GIACOIA:**

You know, it's a simple solution, wrapping those buses, it doesn't really cost that much and yet it gives -- you know, the whole community sees it and people are willing to do it, you know, to get on that kind of a bus in a rural kind of an area.

**MS. McLAUGHLIN:**

I just had a humorous call the other day. Somebody was in the car and they said, "My father is driving and we're behind your bus and that's how I got your phone number, I'm visiting. Oh my God, could you pick him up?" It was the funniest call, I thought it was a joke, she said, "No, this is for real. I'm from Florida, he insists on driving," and I hear him saying, "Who are you talking to?" "We're going to the doctor" and sure enough, she said, "I'm taking the car away." So we called the guy, we took him to the doctor the other day. He did say his car was broken. So we tried to do, you know, the farm and that kind of thing, but transportation is a huge issue and one of the biggest things we've been hit with lately is the oncology, the chemotherapy, the radiation because that's usually a five day deal, dialysis.

**MS. GIACOIA:**

Dialysis, even physical therapy, it's multiple trips.

**MS. DeMASI:**

Yeah. So I just started hitting foundations, you know, some of the cancer foundations, whatever, to see if they can just give us some funds. I said, you know, the town is willing -- you know, for our vehicle, we'll insure it, if they're over 60, certainly they've covered under programs anyway, but if that can offset the cost of just hiring a couple of more drivers that are on-call. I think the town is very willing to do that, I don't think they can come up with a lot more money to pay me for more staff, but if we can get creative that way, certainly whatever equipment or whatever --

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

I tell you, that's one of the things that I would like, you know, to come out of this, is how the towns can work better in coordinating their efforts. Whether it's personnel, you know, one town has vans rolling all day long and another one has, you know, half their fleet sitting idly by half the day. How can there be better coordination with the resources that we already have and everybody in each individual town has their own personal responsibilities. But sitting at a level of government, there has to be more regional an approach. You know, we see, yeah, we can take the great resources of here, here and here and through just better coordination and communication and perhaps bringing in, you know, greater technology even, how we can kind of feed off everybody else's strengths to pull a system back together.

**MS. GIACOIA:**

Even an idea of some sort of regional hub. You know, there's funding available for a regional hub and we don't all have to give up our own individual transportation, but we can somehow -- that's

where I think you can help us to encompass all of them. I mean, think about coming from the east end of Long Island, East Hampton -- is anybody from East Hampton?

**MS. COOKE:**

Yeah, it's a big problem.

**MS. GIACOIA:**

And then you have to come up here to Stony Brook, you know, "Their bus can't stop by us," you know, "We can't stop in Brookhaven," and it's ridiculous. Some sort of a regional hub would bring in extra dollars for all of us and we could coordinate better.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Sure.

**MS. GIACOIA:**

It's an idea whose time has come, long overdue.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Absolutely.

**MS. DeMASI:**

We have this one cancer organization, they're wonderful people and they would give -- they said, "We'll pay for transportation," but that's a voucher to ride the Hampton Jitney. I don't know about you, but if I'm getting chemotherapy, I don't want to have to be running after a bus.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Yeah.

**MS. DeMASI:**

You know, that seems like it's a nice attempt but, you know, so I pushed the envelope a little bit, I'll let you know how I make out.

**MS. GIACOIA:**

But there's Federal dollars for those regional hubs.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

Can I ask from the towns, are you also doing transportation for the disabled no matter what age?

**MS. GIACOIA:**

I do.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

I didn't know who was doing what with it, if it's -- because that's another part.

**MS. GIACOIA:**

There's a lot of them out there, disabled under the age of 60 who need to -- they can't drive and they need a ride.

**MS. DeMASI:**

We just merged our program from disabled under our umbrella, so we'll probably be doing more of that.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

So we have a pretty good idea as to the main issues, and I really hoped that this would really be a combination of a couple of different things. One, inviting those speakers to come to our task force

to talk about, you know, some of these ideas, some of the experiences that they've had, not just locally but regionally and even in other states. Things might work here, but at least we should know what their best practices are to see what we can kind of pick and choose from and what might be most appropriate for our region.

But then I'd also look to really hear from as many seniors throughout Suffolk County as we can. And that's why we chose to have -- there's going to be four public hearings in various locations, various times of day, because we know not everybody can make it in the morning, not everybody can make it at night, not everybody can drive to the west end, not everybody is willing to drive out east. So we really did want to have a diverse opportunity for as many members of the community and their families to participate in the process. Who knows what we're going to get, but that's kind of what makes it fun. So part of what we want to do here is yeah, we want to have the professionals, but we really do I think need to hear from seniors and their families as to what's working, what's not working and how we can improve going forward.

And so with that, Mary, does everybody have a copy, most recent copy of the times, the days?

**MS. YOUNG:**

Yes.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

By the way, did everybody have the opportunity to say hello to Mary Young of my office, my Legislative Aide who really was very valuable in coordinating all of our efforts together. So if you have any questions, never hesitate, get on the phone with her.

**MS. GIACOIA:**

We want to get to know you.

**MS. YOUNG:**

Okay, not a problem.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Okay? We have -- the date for the first --

**MS. YOUNG:**

March 27th.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

March 27th which is going to be here at the Legislature. And we're going to be holding one in April, that's going to be out east and I think there are two sessions, a morning and an afternoon, that's going to be at the Legislature in Riverhead.

**MR. PRITZ:**

What time?

**MS. GIACOIA:**

What date is that one?

**MR. PRITZ:**

The 27th.

**MS. YOUNG:**

Of March, 9:30 to 12:30.

**MS. GIACOIA:**

And April's date was?

**MS. YOUNG:**

April 26th.

**MS. GIACOIA:**

Okay.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

May is going to be -- is it May 24th I think; May 24th, that's going to be at Suffolk Community College, Main Campus in Selden.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

That's a tough campus for seniors.

**MS. BARONE:**

Do we have a time on that?

**MS. YOUNG:**

Nine thirty.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Maybe we can have something available to run --

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

I don't think it helps because you've got to walk the hills.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Well, maybe we can have something to bring -- I mean, there are roads, right?

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

Have you been over there? It's not an easy -- it's just not an easy campus to get around.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Well, that's right now, maybe we could take a look at different areas in the campus or, yeah, if you think that we need to change something, we can certainly do that.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

We'll talk about it.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Yeah. The last, I don't know if we have a date set, but that's going to be in June.

**MS. YOUNG:**

We don't have a date yet.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

We don't have a date yet, but that's going to be held at the Seneca Junior High School in the Holbrook/Ronkonkoma area.

**MS. BARONE:**

And the 27th of March is here?

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

That's here.

**MS. BARONE:**

And the 26th of April?

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

That's going to be at the Suffolk County Legislature in Riverhead, so the County Center in Riverhead. And there are going to be two that day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, or evening.

**MS. YOUNG:**

Five thirty to 8:30.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Right, because we wanted to give those on the east end every opportunity to come, if they couldn't make it in the morning, they can come in the evening.

**MS. McLAUGHLIN:**

I'm thinking Seneca and the Suffolk Community College Center are kind of close together and we don't really have anything aimed toward Babylon, you know, that southwest area.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Yeah, that was considered during all of this, and so the idea was to hold something in the Town of Islip, Islip close to Babylon, that area. And I think hearing back from those in the Town of Islip, that they came up with the Seneca location, but I put it out to the Supervisor and to others, that's what they had come back to us with.

So throughout those hearings, again, we want to have every effort made to let people know that we're doing it, that our door is open and that we are inviting everybody from all walks to come and participate in the process. They can come talk about their personal lives, they can talk about how they're dealing with parents or with children. I'm sure we're going to hear a lot of good stuff, I'm sure a lot is going to be tough, but this really I see as a significant opportunity for those in the community to come and ensure that their voices will be heard as we go through this process. And of course, when we were talking about these kinds of issues, there will be no better voice than those we're looking to serve. So we're really looking to have a combination of professionals and those, you know, Suffolk County residents who are participating in the process.

So I would really ask everybody to do a couple of things. One is to come up with a list of those professionals that you would think would be able to play a real role here because of their professional training, because of their background, because of their demonstrated commitment to these issues, experience with those that you've had at the town level, on a professional basis, those that you've gone to receive your Masters in Gerontology with, you know, who have gone on to do other things; anybody that you think might have something to contribute. And then, of course, the other part is to come up with our best ideas on how we can publicize these public hearings, you know, throughout our town centers, the libraries, the various senior programs that we all work with, again, to do what we can to get the word out.

I think my hope here is that in looking really to seize this opportunity. I would really, you know, hate to see months down the road anybody come back to us and say, you know, "I didn't know. Never heard it. Didn't know that you guys were doing this, really would have liked to have had the opportunity to participate and just never knew about it." So I know through my office and with Mary's assistance and through the Legislature, we're going to do what we can do get the word out. But again, I think the underlying theme here is we can do all we can at the County level, but it's going to be so much more effective getting this information out at the town level because you guys are on the front lines.

**MS. GIACOIA:**

One of the things that we could do to assist in this process is to have transportation available and run vehicles back and forth.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

That's a huge benefit.

**MS. GIACOIA:**

If we do that, you're going to have more people than you want.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

If we have it at a location like the campus and we coordinate on that day with that kind of transportation, does that help?

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

You know, let me just talk a little bit about Suffolk Community College. I mean, I don't know how many of you are familiar with that central campus, I went to school there 30 years ago so, you know, I'm going back in my history, and I know you park in the parking lots that are all the way out wherever and then you have the main quad, but everything is kind of like a walk uphill to get to that main quad.

It's not so much I think where you park as much as once you get out of whatever you're in, you do this and that's where I see the difficulty.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

If we have transportation that is provided from the main parking lot bringing people from the parking lot up to say the auditorium; is that a possibility? I don't know.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

You know what, I don't know if -- I think it's the hill. I think, you know, you're not driving a car up the hill, I think they have to do the feet up the hill.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Yeah.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

But, you know, I don't know, you'd have to look at -- I don't know where you were planning on having it at the college, but you'd have to look at that building.

**MS. YOUNG:**

In the theatre.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Well, they had offered the theatre, yeah.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

I think you'd have to look at that and see where that entrance is and see, you know, if you could get a car right up to that entrance and how easy it is. Because that's -- you know, I'm not saying that it's a bad place because it is centrally located, it's just what I remember getting around Suffolk Community College Campus is that it's one of these to get to that main quad campus.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Well, I guess before we announce, formally announce that location and time, we'll -- I think we should reconsider.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

Well, all of us can go take a look at it.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

All of us can go and take a look.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

Because there might be an entrance that's right front level.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

We'll have administration walk us through it and see how it is.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

Because, you know, honestly it's been a long time, but that's what I remember.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Okay. No, an important suggestion, so we'll take a look.

**MR. PRITZ:**

If you give me a press release with the dates, my deadline is the 15th of every month, I'll get it published in 50 Plus Lifestyles.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Very good, great. So maximizing public participation, I think is critically important. And yeah, reaching out to those allied professionals is also very important because we're going to want to hear from them. But we've already started the process through my office on identifying, you know, real stakeholders in this area, both locally and nationally, other elected officials have been invited to join us and talk about the things that they're doing at various levels. Assemblyman Englebright, you know, just introduced a great package of legislation at the State level and so we're going to want to hear from them, you know, how that's going to impact us here and what we can do to help, push it through in Albany.

So yeah, I guess anybody that you can think of that you think can play a meaningful role in this effort over the next several months, let's bring them in.

**MS. BARONE:**

I've never seen this before in my --

**MS. MAHONEY:**

Can you state your name again, please?

**MS. BARONE:**

Excuse me?

**MS. MAHONEY:**

Can you please state your name again?

**MS. BARONE:**

Maryann Barone. And we publish a newsletter every month, we have people coming Malverne to the Hamptons and I'll make sure it's in the newsletter every month.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Very good.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

Maybe you can work both ways that, you know, we can get information to your office but also if you send us whatever official document it is that you want publicized --

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Oh, yeah.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

-- we can put it out in other ways.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Yeah, we'll -- from our office, we'll give you --

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

Specific notice, we'll have a million ways to do it.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

-- the notice and then, of course, you can pick and choose, but we'll give you the information and then you can use it as you see fit. But we're expected then at the close of the public hearings to come back together and go through all of the good stuff that we've heard and all the things that we've learned and to help formulate really a policy, a blueprint for a policy going forward.

In all of the back and forth in committee meetings, dealing with all of the various issues, you know, one thing that I've learned over this past year is that, you know, ultimately, constitutionally anyway, it is the Legislature that is supposed to make the policy and, you know, then look to everybody else to implement that policy. Now, does that always happen? Not necessarily, but that's really what we're charged to do and so that's really how I'm approaching this, is really to formulate policy and at the end to come up with real steps that we commit to to be taken, whether that's legislation, whether that's a more concerted effort among various levels of government and seeking grants and hauling our Federal representatives, you know, here into this building and hearing from them on the kinds of things that we should be doing, literally whatever it takes to get from A to B is really what I certainly hope to achieve. Anything else?

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

You've covered it pretty well.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

I guess really the charge for now is to start thinking about some of the things that we've been able to discuss today, coming up with various subjects that we'd like to see discussed, various professionals and others who would like to be heard, doing what we can to get the word out to the public, inviting them to participate, and then taking it from there.

Now, our first meeting is going to be March 27th is the first public hearing. Everybody will be sworn in and we'll take our seats and that will be kind of cool and then to begin the process. So I'm hoping that in between now and then we'll have the opportunity to meet back once again to start to come up with an agenda for -- together for that first meeting. Because I'd like to take that opportunity in that first public of settings to go around and introduce everybody and give everybody the opportunity to go on the record and talk a little bit about your background and what you would like to see this task force accomplish and the kind of background experience you bring, and to start to throw around some ideas that we know that we want to bring to the table and, again, get all of that on the record before we start inviting speakers up. So to start thinking about the kinds of things you'd like to say as a part of the message that we want to send to Suffolk seniors.

Okay? Do we have schedules, anybody? One of the things -- because I know that there is an issue with distance and travel and it's certainly not my intention to have everybody from out east driving to the west too often. My preference, of course, would be to have everybody here, but if we can get as many people as we can here at that next meeting, if they absolutely can't make the trip, you know, then we will try and maybe get a conference call and people on speaker phone and we'll try and make it easy for everybody.

The 27th, so halfway between now and then is the middle of the month; are there days better than others in the middle of the month? I'm starting to take a look at a day, March 13th in the afternoon.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

Oh, after Senior Vets?

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Yeah.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

That's good.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Yeah, what do you think?

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

That's fine.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

How about March 13th; we are on at one?

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

Yeah.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

I'm on Public Works, but I can come in between and then after.

**MS. DeMASI:**

Is there an alternate date to the 13th, by any chance?

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

How about the following day, the 14th?

**MS. DeMASI:**

I'm on vacation, but that's okay. I mean, I'll dial in; can I dial in?

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Yeah, we're going to try -- we'll do our best to have an opportunity to dial in and we'll light up as many lines as we can.

**MS. BARONE:**

So it's still the 13th?

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Are we back to the 13th, then, in the afternoon? How about Tuesday,, March 13th, how is towards the end of the day, 3:30 for everybody?

**MR. PRITZ:**

Here?

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Here, yeah; 3:30, March 13th. And again, between now and then, we'll all do our best to start to compile a guest list of who we'd like to hear from.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

And that's for the meeting on the 27th, or you need that information prior to that?

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

What we would like to do is with your suggestions and contact information, we'd like to send a formal invitation to people that you come up with on inviting them and giving them a schedule, so they don't necessarily have to come to the one on the 27th. We're really hoping to kind of spread it all out and not have, you know, just transportation professionals on the 27th and just housing on

the one after that to kind of make it all-encompassing all the way through. So we'll give everybody the choices to which one they would like to come to.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

Yeah, one of the groups I think we really have to look into is gerontologists in the hospitals, because I think there's a need for the medical community to be also aware that this is going on because they're being impacted.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

And course we just can look to our local hospitals, right, in our towns to get that information. So sure, good suggestion. Okay? So March 13th as of right now works for just about everybody, 3:30. And between now and then, if you cannot make it, you can let Mary know and we'll try and make efforts to have a number to dial in so at least you can hear what's going on. Okay?

All right, I guess just to close, you know, I hope anyway everybody can hear in my voice, I'm pretty excited and really looking forward to working with everybody and drawing on everybody's background experience and commitment. And at the end of the process to not only doing something that feels pretty good but something that's really going to be, you know, in many ways for the first time a real legitimate start to an effort that is going to take quite some time, but one that if it doesn't start now, you know, we'll just be further in the hole in the future. So the time is now and I'm looking forward to doing some good things with everybody. So thank you for your time, I really appreciate it.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

Thank you.

*(\*The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 PM\*)*

*Legislator Steven Stern, Chairman  
Senior Citizen Task Force*

*{ } - Denotes Spelled Phonetically*