

Minutes of Creative Aging on January 20, 2017'

Clara Farah, Ph.D. Chair

Present—23—Clayton Alred, Holly Braden, Kathi Conner, Jean Coulton, Barbara Deck, Jeane Dobry, Wayne Dobry, Clara Farah, Andrea Fernandez, Luddy Leong, Avis Light, Jim Miller, Mary Lou Moore, Jess Randle, Gary Restivo, Jessica Sheldon, Larry Skelley, Ralph Simmans, Sharon Stewart, Pearl Tippen, Paula Tipton, Jake Valentin, Gail Wallace.

Opportunity--Jim Miller represents the South Central Mountain Economic Development Association. He also gives grant workshops and a class on water conservation at ENMU. He said the county population is decreasing and that impacts schools, the university, businesses, and even volunteers. Also the county will probably be getting less money from the state. In addition, the various government entities within our county don't always get along well with each other.

He used the term "come and go" to describe the kind of many of our residents that populate parts of our county. Perhaps that could change for the good with the improvement of changes based on economic development that hold promise for our county. The communities could take the opportunity to make improvements as soon as infrastructure money becomes available. The communities could be ready with incentives for small industries and then provide housing for low-income workers and recreational opportunities for their children. Fiber optics companies could improve their service.

Jim handed out several copies of a 61-page summary of strategies for building new economic opportunities and then guided us through some of the pages. This document included four topics—1) tourism and cultural heritage, 2) agriculture and forestry, 3) light industry and workforce, 4) health care and wellness.

He explained how to use those materials so CAAC participants could find their own personal goal to work toward. He mentioned Ray Dean's work for Carrizozo and Barbara Deck's work for veterans as good examples. He spoke about the electric transmission lines near Corona

that could reap advantages for Capitan and Carrizozo, in addition to Corona. Good employment opportunities may be available for high school graduates. In addition, a growing interest in solar projects could result in local benefits and jobs.

Involvement—Clayton Alred reported on the Roundhouse deliberations in Santa Fe. Three finance bills were approved by the house but didn't completely achieve solvency, so the governor might veto them. Higher education would probably have to cut further than the 6% deduction already in the budget.

Clara Farah offered papers on the accomplishments of Aging and Long-Term Services, a list of state legislatures, a list of corruption in the state's government, and a copy of an article about a NM community that successfully accessed USDA funding. (Dixon, NM)

Health—Holly Braden informed us of a new partnership between Gerald Champion Hospital and Providence Hospital out of El Paso which would include the sharing of specialists.

Barbara Deck said that it appears Lincoln County Hospital may be available for veterans and their insurance.

Housing—Larry Skelley told of their plans to expand to a second assisted living facility, but mentioned very slow service from the village's building department for building permits.

Jess Randle agreed with Larry's assessment and also said that local bankers had not been open to the Piney Pods project or the refitting of Swiss Chalet into condos.

Resource Center News—Clara Farah said that the domain name for our non-profit organization will be creativeagingnm.net. Peter Brandt Renich will help with the web design and Frank Thompson is working as a graphic artist. CAAC will hold an outreach meeting with Presbyterian at the Capitan Library on January 30, 3 p.m.

The next meeting will be Friday, February 17 at ENMU, with Chief Hooker of Ruidoso Police Force speaking on fraud and scams.