

COUNCIL ON AGING—FEB. 25, 2020

Present: Jayne Colino, Donna Murphy (Chair), Beth Dugan, Mary Glendon, Jo Edith Heffron, Tyrone Hooks, Jessica Johnson, Marian Knapp, Naomi Krasner (notetaker), Ena Lorant, Maria Meyer, Julie Norstrand, Joyce Picard, Sue Rasala, Eric Rosenbaum, Lisa Samelson, Nancy Scammon, Allison Sharma, Laura Shaw, Tom Shoemaker, Gordon Szerlip.

Absent: Norm Meltz, Sue Schlesinger, Dov Bard Ernest Picard, Adele Hoffman, John Pelletier, Emma Watkins

Guests: Joan Belle Isle, Dan Shaw, Molly Johnson

Meeting called to order at 7:35 PM.

Minutes approved from Jan. 28, 2020 meeting

NewCAL

Sue Rasala reported from the NewCAL Working Group. The two mostly likely sites for the new Senior Center are the Newton Centre Triangle and the current Senior Center location (recognizing that the current site would need major renovations). The Ed Center was rejected as the cost of renovation would be high, and the site is poorly located. Some COA members raised non-City owned sites as potential locations, but the City is looking to build on city-owned land to keep project costs down.

It is expected that any site that is selected will encounter some community opposition. There are concerns over the amount of construction already underway in Newtonville (e.g. Austin St and the Washington St developments). The Newton Centre Businesses Group has expressed concern over the Newton Centre Triangle as a potential site for NewCAL. The owner of Johnny's, for example, feels that any change to available parking would be very disruptive to her business. She is not necessarily representative of all the businesses. Regardless of site, there will be long-term and short-term disruptions, and every effort would be made to minimize impacts on the neighborhoods. (Members discussed the potential of the many churches in the area helping provide for temporary parking.)

The next Community Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 2/27 at the Senior Center. Comments from the last community meeting will be reviewed. Attendance and participation in this meeting will be appreciated.

NewCAL Advocacy -The NewCAL Advocacy Group has been reaching out to City Councillors and others to promote the visibility and importance of NewCAL. Relationship building is extremely important as we move toward the construction of a new building. The group has met with four councilors so far, and will continue to reach out to the remaining councilors to reiterate COA's support for a new center. The key talking points are:

- We need a senior center
- It must be big
- It must meet current and future needs

Beth indicated the City Councilors' responses have been positive. Regarding community concerns, she emphasized that seniors are the solution, and that we must continue to emphasize this as we move forward. Different opportunities for working together will open up.

Beth circulated a sign-up sheet for those interested in participating in the NewCAL Advocacy Group.

The NewCAL Advocacy Group meets every 2 weeks at the Senior Center and all are welcome.

Health Care Working Group - Lisa Samelson

- On *March 11, 7 pm*, the Council on Aging/Health Care Group is hosting a talk at Newton Library featuring Dr. Kevin Bernard, a back/spine specialist from NEBH.
- NWH Community Benefit – Lisa is working with the Newton Wellesley Hospital on their community benefit program.

Lisa discussed the impact of falls and fractures in older adult populations; the biggest risk factor is having had a previous fall. Lisa indicated that some experts claim falls needed to be seen as “bone attacks” and receive the same level of attention as heart attacks. She is working with the NWH Community Benefit

Program to encourage the formation of a Falls Liaison Service, which would ensure that fall victims receive follow-up care after injury

Jayne pointed out that NWH funds “A Matter of Balance” and provides funding and staffing for seated strength and balance/preventative programs. They also provide community health workers who will meet with patients. Under MA Health ACO, anyone on MassHealth who goes to the doctor for a fall will receive follow up care.

Social Isolation and Loneliness Working Group - Julie Norstrand

There will be Forum at the Library on June 8, 2020 with 3 Speakers:

- DA Marian T. Ryan
- Janet Seckel-Cerrotti, FriendshipWorks Executive Director
- Val Walker, MS, author of *400 Friends and No One to Call: Breaking Through Isolation and Building Community*

The program will appeal to community members, academia and practitioners. Donna asked that Marian Ryan discuss scams and suggested that the forum contain simple tips on how to approach potentially isolated neighbors. Jane said that Elizabeth Lund will help with media preparation, i.e. New TV. Ilana Seidmann will add this program to the list-serve, contact neighborhood councils, and have them put this event on their list-serve.

Discussion of FriendshipWorks program in Newton. We have 20 people receiving services and 20 volunteers.

Housing Working Group - Allison Sharma

Golda Meir House (2Life Community) and Howard Haywood House both have received funding.

General Updates

We have elections in Newton on March 3. Included on the ballot will be the vote on Northland. The COA did not endorse pro or con. There was an article in the Newton Tab last week.

Sue Rasala said that at the Newton Library, there is a Senior Center ceramics display called "Class Act".

Jayne gave a brief overview of budget issues. The formal budget meeting will be in May. In the State budget, MCOA requested \$17 million as a line-item formula grant--\$12 per elder to be level funded at \$17 million. S 1692 died in committee.

With increasing demand for meeting space in the Senior Center, we now have a 'swing space' in the Dining Room (with a noise-cancelling machine) that is being used as meeting space (NewCAL Advocacy Group meets here.)

2Life Communities, which is proposing a new form of housing for seniors ineligible for affordable housing, will have a program at the Library on April 6 at 3:30. They are invited to our March 24 meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9PM.