

Newton Council on Aging & Advisory Board Meeting

February 28, 2017

Present: N. Brown, H. Haywood, J Heffron, A. Hoffman, M. Knapp, N Krasner, E. Lorant, D. Murphy, j. Nordstrand, E Picard, J. Picard, CA. Shea, T. Shoemaker, E. Watkins,

Notified: A, Cooper, B.Dugan , C. Gibson, S. Paley

Staff: J. Colino, E. Rosenbaum, N.Scammon

Guests: Joan Bell Isle, Sue Rasala, Jini Fairley

1. Welcome, introductions, approval of January minutes.

2. Jini Fairley, Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator, provides an overview of her role and the role of Commission on Disabilities (COD) in the city of Newton.

- The COD's mission is to foster equal access to community life and activities for people with disabilities.
- COD advises the Mayor and other city officials on areas of concern and improvement.
- The committee to address the issues of access was established in Newton in 1975. It has had many name changes over time but in 2012 COD was organized under a state statute and as a result was able to start directing HP parking violation funds to improve access.
- COD advises around CDBG funds for accessibility improvements
- COD holds the city accountable for compliance and for consistent assessment and improvement.
- COD can also hold non-governmental organizations accountable as well.
- COD has a role in approving requests for HP parking spaces prior to being heard at Traffic Council.
- Any building project requesting a variance needs approval by the COD.
- Jini was previously a member of the COD before becoming the staff person.
- ADA Adherence and disability discrimination is directed by many laws: ADA 1990 civil rights legislation, accessibility and building codes, etc
- COD was instrumental in advocating for the installation of the elevator at city hall, for the funding of a full time ADA Coordinator.
- ADA Coord. and COD are responsible for: inventorying over 6000 curb cuts in the city and accessible pedestrian signals (talking, auditory, and vibrating) , updating and implementing the ADA transition plan from 1991.
- The senior center was part of an accessibility audit in 2011, the center is very accessible.
- Jini's awareness of the issues comes from many places; phone calls, 311 requests, interdepartmental communications.
- Jini can be reached at 617-796-1253.

3. Chair/Director's report: M. Knapp & J. Colino

- A retreat with Executive Committee members has been scheduled to begin the work of developing an age-friendly platform. Mary O'Neil, the consultant from SOAR who lead our strategic planning process will be facilitating the retreat. Next steps will include Advisory Board members and staff at the May 23rd COA meeting.
- Updates on listening session process: a meeting with President of Newton Needham Chamber of Commerce, YMCA senior group, Newton Wellesley Hospital practitioners are scheduled. Recently two listening sessions were held in coordination with the Newton Housing Authority with Russian and Mandarin speaking tenants. Volunteers were recruited by Julie Joy to interpret.
- We expect to wrap up listening sessions by the end of April. Collation of the data from the listening sessions will inform the retreat process and the age-friendly platform.

4. Membership: No report

5. Springwell Report: Naomi Krasner

- Naomi reports that at the last board meeting they were informed about a senior legal helpline available M-F 9-12 as an effort to expand legal options statewide.
- The most utilized services are home delivered meals, transportation and Information and referral (which has no income eligibility)

6. Senior Fund Report: Nancy Brown

- No new information

7. Housing Group Report: Donna Murphy

- Proofreading of housing guide has slowed a bit due to an issue that came up for volunteer proofreader.
- There will be safety check list included to self-evaluate and how to documents will be included.
- A discussion occurred about the Crescent St. proposed housing. The city intends to develop, manage and subsidize an 8 unit development. In general, there were concerns raised about the process that lead to this type of development and a missed opportunity to address the articulated priorities of a larger senior housing development. There is a Crescent St. working group, the information about this process can be seen on line in the planning department. The CPC agendas need to be followed to be aware of these types of processes.

8. Legislative Report:

- FY 18 budget process has progressed to where the COA Executive Committee was provided with the proposed budget changes put forward by the administration.
- COA perceives these proposed changes as cuts to senior services and erosion to social services specifically.
- At this point NDSS requests for funds for building improvement and an new Assistant Program Coordinator was denied.
- Exec. Comm has written a letter to the Mayor sharing their concerns and asking for reconsideration.
- NDSS' budget will be heard in front of the Programs and Services Committee of the City Council on May 3rd.

9. Old/New Business:

- Tom announces a new mobile food bank sponsored by the Post 440 with the Boston Food Bank. The program provides close to \$100 worth of food. People need to pre-register.
- Springwell is now administering the Home delivered meals program out of Post 440.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:35 p.m.

Next Meeting: April 25th, 2017, 7:30