

Newton Council on Aging & Advisory Board Meeting November 28, 2017

Present: J. Colino, JE. Heffron, A. Hoffman, M. Knapp, E. Lorant, J. Norstrand, S. Paley, E Picard, J. Picard, CA. Shea, N. Scammon, T. Shoemaker, E. Watkins

Visitors: J. Bell Isle, R. Grabel, S. Rasala

Notified: N. Brown, A. Cooper, B. Dugan, C. Gibson, H. Haywood, N. Krasner

- I. Meeting called to order at 7:35 p.m.; there were no minutes to approve as the last meeting was Candidate Night (all non-Mayoral candidates in competitive races were invited to attend)

II. Chair's/Director's Report

- **Mayoral Transition**

Jayne met with Transition Team and is scheduled to meet with Mayor-elect Fuller on 11/29/17. Members were encouraged to attend the "Out of Office Hours" meetings that have been scheduled throughout the city over the next two weeks.

- **New Senior Center building committee report**

The condition of the existing building continues to be of concern; not only are structural (ceilings collapsing) and operational (elevator issues) of concern to attendees, they are a disincentive for new seniors to return. The Committee is looking forward to the feasibility study that has been promised, and continues to evaluate other city's senior centers.

- **Needham St Visioning Committee**

The NDSS/COA (represented by Jayne Colino and Marian Knapp) have been invited by the Planning Department to participate in a "Visioning Program" for the parcel on Needham Street that is scheduled for redevelopment.

- **COA Structure moving forward**

The COA needs to organize groups around key areas identified by the PLAAN initiative focused on Home, Community and Infrastructure (new housing development/modifications to current home, expanded transportation, Social Isolation and the Senior Center Building). Members were asked to step up to lead/play active roles in various initiatives.

III. Membership Report

- We have about ten vacancies in the group and one pending application; we look forward to active involvement by members and supporters of the new administration.

IV. Senior Citizens Fund Report

- Annual fundraising letter was distributed; members were encouraged to raise awareness of the Senior Citizen Fund and everything it does.

V. Springwell Report

- The advent of services like Uber and Lyft are creating an increasingly challenging environment for companies that traditionally contract to provide transportation services to municipalities. Springwell offered funds to local communities rather than provide Regional Medical Transportation (as contractually required), but Newton and others turned the funds down. Springwell is now providing the services using two cab companies but this is expected to continue to be a challenging area.

VI. Working Group Reports

- Housing: AARP Grant- So You Want to Stay in Your Home

The AARP Grant Project was very successful. Although the timelines were tight, the project was completed on time and Marian will be submitting the final report to AARP on Dec. 1. The project identified several areas of improvement for our Housing Tools, which the Housing Group will pick up in their next meeting. Several practical outcomes were reported, including expanding the Safety Checklist to include multiple stairways, address basement laundries, and multiple bathrooms.

We believe that this project is helping to position us to organize a formal program that could be eligible for CDBG funding.

Joyce Picard segued to another Housing issue – the future use of the site of the Newton Centre Public Library. The Planning Board will be holding a session at the Lutheran Church in Newton Centre on Thurs, Nov 30 to discuss the proposed usage; Joyce recommended that COA members show up and advocate to use the space for senior housing.

- Engagement: last PLAAN goal setting meeting 11/30 at the Library at 7:00 p.m.
- Yellow Voucher Program – as stated above regarding Springwell’s provision of transportation services, Uber and Lyft are making it hard for transportation companies to retain drivers. Demand for transportation is growing. Newton’s transportation contract will be put out for bid this spring for a July 1 start.

VII. Legislative Report

- There has been a reduction in State Formula Grant to \$9.70/elder from \$10.00/elder, which means a loss in revenue to Newton of \$5500.

VIII. Meeting Adjourned at 9:10 pm