

Newton Council on Aging Meeting Minutes
March 22, 2016
Newton Senior Center, 345 Walnut Street, Newtonville, MA
7:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

Present: COA/AB Members: Nancy Brown, Audrey Cooper, Elizabeth Dugan, Chryse Gibson, Holly Gunner, Howard Haywood, Jo-Edith Heffron, Adele Hoffman, ,Marian Knapp, Naomi Krasner, Julie Norstrand, Donna Murphy, Susan Paley, Ernest Picard, Eric Rosenbaum, Carol Ann Shea, Thomas Shoemaker , Diane Sostek

Notified: Ena Lorant, Joyce Picard, Nancy Scammon, Ellen Wade,

Staff: Jayne Colino, Emily Kuhl, Sandy Lopes

Guests and Organizations: See attached detailed list

- City of Newton: Council on Aging & COA Advisory Board
- City of Newton: City Council and Programs and Services Committee
- City of Newton: Department of Senior Services
- City of Newton: Planning Department
- Livable Newton (formerly Friends of Austin Street and Engine 6)
- Lasell College/Lasell Village
- Newton at Home

I. Goals for the Meeting:

- Introduce individuals and groups that are working on “Livability” concepts.
- Share accomplishments to date on multiple dimensions of “Livability”
- Identify potential areas of collaboration and coordination
- Select one or more small projects to help move “Livable Newton” (& Age-friendly) into the future

II. Welcome: M. Knapp, welcomed everyone, reviewed the meeting goals, described the organizations that were present, and encouraged everyone to share, and participate.

III. Information Sharing

A. City of Newton Council on Aging and Advisory Board (NCOA/AB) & Newton Department of Senior Services (NDSS) – Marian Knapp, Jayne Colino, and other COA/AB members

- i. The COA/AB and the NDSS have been working for a number of years towards the goal of an Age-friendly/Livable Newton.
- ii. 2013 Strategic Plan based on Age-friendly/Livable concepts

Vision: Provide sustained leadership that helps Newton be a Livable and Age Friendly Community for all who choose to age here.

Mission: Optimize quality of life for seniors and their families through welcoming, respectful, and meaningful opportunities that engage, and value older people, and empower them to remain independent and to be important assets in our community.

iii. Commissioned UMASS Boston Gerontology Institute to complete a survey “Living and Aging in Newton: Now and in the Future” of residents age 50 and over to help assess future needs.

iv. The Age-Friendly/Livable Strategy Group – *M. Knapp & C. Lappin*. NCOA and NDSS convened the Age-friendly Strategy Group comprised of individuals with expertise in the WHO defined domains for age-friendly cities. This group met for a limited time to discuss the viability of applying to the AARP/WHO Age-friendly/Livable Network. The group decided to move ahead. The AARP/WHO application was submitted by the City of Newton and we were accepted into Network in March 2016.

v. The NCOA voted to support the Austin Street Project as a project that served all ages.

vi. The NCOA Housing Subgroup created Age-friendly/Livable Housing Criteria for use by Decision-makers, Developers and Individuals. This is available on the City and DSS web-sites.

vii. The NCOA Housing Subgroup compiled a list of elevator buildings in Newton. Data from the NDSS/NCOA “Living and Aging in Newton shows that currently the city is conservatively estimated to be 1000 units short for seniors who might want to down-size to one-floor living.

viii. The NCOA and NDSS documented the difference between housing for seniors (house, condo, apartment), and senior housing (independent living with services, assisted living, over 55 complexes, nursing homes).

B. City of Newton Planning Department - James Freas

Housing

i. A new housing strategy will lay out what is the current housing market, what's needed, what's available, and will recommend regulatory changes and sites for future housing development.

ii. Planning Department is studying demographic changes and financial diversity. They are considering how current zoning impacts housing and what zoning needs to change to meet objectives.

iii. Special permits/projects- Orr Building, Turtle Lane, Housing Authority

Transportation

i. Transportation is one of the AARP domains and is the other Planning Department's primary focuses. A new Transportation Strategy Project (Newton in Motion) includes all forms of transportation including local transportation working with bordering towns, to serve our residents, businesses, etc. The plan will also address parking and general mobility issues as well.

- ii. There will be a demonstration project in Newtonville of totally inclusive transportation using a Complete Streets plan to redo intersection of Washington Street and Walnut Street. Volunteers have been enlisted through TAG or volunteer through James Freas. Comment: left turns at large intersections are problematic. J. Freas said this issue would be incorporated into the strategy plan.
- iii. They are discussions on regional transportation options? The audience is both employees who work in Newton as well as residents for working, shopping and other transportation needs.

Zoning:

- i. They are working on legalizing existing accessory apartments as well as establishing new ones.

C. Livable Newton (formerly Friends of Austin Street) - Kathleen Hobson; Engine 6 – Fran Godine

- i. They are focusing on sustainable mixed-use development with the ideas of prioritizing people over parking; biking over cars; and for a better planet.
- ii. They support affordable and fair housing. Multi- family development is one way how to make this happen. They study housing proposals and advocates for ones that meet their criteria of contributing to livability. They have been very successful at keeping people very well informed.
- iii. Austin Street. (Note: M. Knapp shared a thank you letter to the NCOA from Livable Newton for their support of Austin Street). Multiple groups worked together to get something extraordinary done. These groups have been synthesizing information to help people act.
- iv. Alison Leary spoke about how housing and transportation are key dimensions, and how villages need to be livable, walkable, and affordable. She spoke about wayfaring signs like "City Hall is .5 miles away" that encourage walking. Sidewalks and lighting should be improved and there should be resting places.

D. Lasell Village – Joann Montepare & Anne Doyle

- i. Convened the Talk of Ages Summit last June. This year the Talk of Ages Summit is addressing veterans, particularly the "baby boomer" veterans.
- ii. Currently discussing what an age-friendly campus would look like?
- iii. Ireland is an age-friendly country, was identifying age-friendly principles which Lasell has recently endorsed. The list of age- friendly University principles was distributed.
- iv. They have recently partnered with Bridges Together in a reading/activity program which includes NCOA.

- v. They also house/host the Mass. Gerontology Association Symposium in the fall.
- vi. Lasell Village has reached out to the community to take classes and use facilities. They have applied for a CDBG grant with Newton at Home to help pilot a specific program that will invite the community onto the campus.

E. Newton at Home – Dave Chosiad

- i. This year NAH can include some residents who can't afford the membership fee, they are also offering special membership rates (6 mos. Memberships, subsidized, etc)
- ii. NAH collaborates with the NSC and Lasell Village on programming opportunities.

IV. Updates, Observations and Areas of Potential Collaboration: Discussion

- There is already a lot of collaboration going on, including a joint housing collaborative.
- Lessons to be learned from age-friendly Ireland. Efforts to educate the business community on how they can be age friendly and to spotlight them. Driving movement to lower levels is good way to begin. Possible use of Lasell Village as a meeting space.
- Celebrate and educate.
- Have one large encompassing calendar. Maybe a Newton Celebration calendar can be added on to Cultural Affairs calendar.
- Different groups need to communicate what's going on all over. One way to get the word out is through the elementary schools and asking children what they think age-friendly means.
- City holds "Cluster" meetings of department that serve residents, e.g., NSC, Parks and Rec, etc.
- Health Aging Collaborative – Elizabeth Dugan, UMass Boston Gerontology Institute & COA member
The Healthy Aging Collaborative has a data base of health statistics by community. This information can be used to address needs. Jayne used this information in a grant application recently. Data supported a case for improving transportation to keep seniors independent and impact social isolation.
- Different groups may have different focuses and goals which come together at points. Communication cuts across all differences.

V. Ideas for Projects: What can we do tonight to bring what we've discussed together?

- Follow the eight WHO domains. Help to connect the dots among organizations working on like goals.
- Get a communication clearing house/calendar established. Learn how to input into city website calendar portal.
- Need a list of web-sites
- Hold a bimonthly or quarterly meeting to collaborate and just to talk about age friendly livable efforts being made.
- Include religious organizations, the library, and others.
- Figure out a way to let people know what is going on – maybe a 311 type number. Look at process used for youth services. Define problem then find solutions.
- Presence at Village Days by Livable Newton and partners to highlight livable efforts and to recruit more members of the community to get involved/
- Find out how age-friendly Dublin is helping businesses to be age-friendly.
- Have someone from the TAB at the next meeting
- Check BCAN.org website for ideas.
- How to create views. (?)

Notes will be sent out to everybody (Communication!) and initial ideas for projects.

Next meeting April 26 from 7:30-9:30.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30.

Submitted by Carol Rose