

Newton Council on Aging

Meeting Minutes - April 26, 2016 - 7:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.

Newton Senior Center

345 Walnut Street, Newtonville MA 02460

COA/AB Members Present: N. Brown, B. Dugan, JE Heffron , A. Hoffman, M. Knapp, N. Krasner, E. Lorant, D. Murphy, S. Paley, J. Picard, E. Picard, C. Rose, N. Scammon, T. Shoemaker, D. Sostek ,

NDSS Staff: J. Colino

Invited Participants: Andreae Downs (TAG); Cheryl Lappin (City Council); Stephen Logowitz (Newton at Home), Ellen Meyers (Newton Free Library); Joann Montepare (Lasell College); Greg Reibman (Newton/Needham Chamber of Commerce); Amy Sangiolo (City Council); John Sisson (Livable Dedham); Kevin Sisson (Community Resident); Debby Weiss (Newton at Home); Deborah Youngblood (Health & Human Services).

COA/AB Members Notified: A. Cooper, C. Gibson, H. Gunner, J. Norstrand, CA Shea

I. Welcome & Information Sharing Among Individuals and Organizations

Newton leaders who are working on age-friendly and livable activities in the city gathered in March 2016 and at the April 2016 at the COA/AB meeting. Introductions: (See Participant list above and below).

City of Newton: City Council and Programs and Services Committee

City of Newton: Transportation Advisory Group

City of Newton: Council on Aging

City of Newton: Department of Senior Services

City of Newton: Department of Health and Human Services

City of Newton: Newton Free Library

Newton-Needham Chamber of Conference

Livable Dedham

II. Announcement

Joann Montpare, Director of Lasell College's RoseMary B. Fuss Center for Research on Aging and Intergenerational Studies described the Massachusetts Gerontology Association (MGA), Louis Lowy Award, which is given to someone in the greater Boston area for exceptional leadership in the aging field. This year Marian Knapp will received the Lowy Award at the MGA Annual meeting on May 11, 2016.

III. Age-friendly/Livability Overview

The World Health Organization now has defined eight "Age-friendly Eight Livable Domains of Livability." We will consider adding two more.* It was also suggested to add "Safety" as a domain.

1. Housing

2. Community Engagement and Information
3. Community Support and Health Services
4. Transportation
5. Civic Participation & Employment
6. Social Participation
7. Respect and Social Inclusion
8. Outdoor Spaces & Buildings
9. Arts & Culture*
10. Educational Opportunities *

A potential name for the Newton's Age-friendly/Livable initiative is Planning for a Livable All Age-friendly Newton (PLAAN). Other suggestions are welcomed.

IV. Reports on Accomplishments to Date and Future Planning

- A. Deborah Youngblood, Newton Commissioner of Health and Human Services explained the seven divisions under HHS, some which intersect clearly on "age-friendly." She talked about Newton Leads 2040 and economic initiative focused on what the benchmarks are to predict someone not living in poverty in retirement. Topics are broken into broad lifespan issues and working groups are beginning to contemplate these issues. These groups are:
- Health and Well-being group is identifying needs that can be planned for in advance, such as income in retirement.
 - Education group- early childhood education, out of school time for middle school, etc. predictors for success.
 - Employment for unemployed, under-employed, and encore careers. A retirement series is part of NSC FY17 Budget. NDSS is working with Riverside to run an employment workshop for older adults.

Comments/Questions:

- The library runs several employment workshops and perhaps collaboration is possible.
- Newton at Home focuses on addressing isolation.
- The city is working on enhancing what already exists and encouraging collaboration.
- Workers should aim to make 70% of their current income in retirement in order to retain their Lifestyle.
- What is the current target group for earning 70% of working income for retirement? Perhaps this should start in high school. The city is also looking at other services for seniors not earning 70% of the pre-retirement income, such as housing and food programs, and encore careers.

- B. Andrea Downs, Chair of Transportation Advisory Group

The TAG is working to envision Newton as a safe place for people 8-80. There are numerous TAG projects:

- Bicycle Network Plan, Parking Management Plan, Street Design Classifications, Crosswalk Standards, Ordinance on mid-block crossing, Tour-de-Newton, safer crossings, bike lanes, side guards on city trucks, and a Complete Streets grant (\$450K).

Other projects are in the Works:

- Street construction to be done right and completely; accessibility for the T at the Auburndale commuter rail station and Newton Highlands T stop; addressing issues for the most dangerous streets, including biking and walking paths; a Washington Street project with 2-way bike path from West Newton through Newtonville. They are considering bus stops in parking lane.
 - Newton street lights don't meet standards, lights too bright and shining in car windows but don't shine on pedestrians.
 - Many things are Fixable, such as additional bike parking; making schools more walking/biking friendly.
- Everyone needs to weigh in on the fact that we need more money to fix things. It's important to let your elected officials know how you feel. Email or speak with your Councilors and Mayor about areas of concern you are aware of.

Comments/Questions:

- There is a need for better pedestrian etiquette. Safety works two ways.
- Is Newton going to have a bike share program? The mayor is looking for a series of sponsors, but to make a good case we first need a safe infrastructure.
- Unsafe sidewalks were mentioned. DPW is prioritizing sidewalk repairs. Dialing 311 helps DPW know about unsafe locations.
- Newton in Motion demonstration will be in Newtonville on May 13-15. This is everyone's chance to witness how a smart street works.
- All TAG projects are livable, age-friendly, good for all ages. How does what they do fit with the mayor's plan? Mayor has used the information from TAG to proceed with the future planning. Timeline: Newton in Motion and Lighting memos coming out in June.
- Personal safety can be a project to encourage reflective clothing and flashing lights.

C. Ellen Myers, Director of Programs, Newton Free Library

The Library brings the community together to explore and discover. What domains do they hit?

- Communication primary- books, magazines, CDs, movies, documents etc.
- Arts and education secondary location, 17 clubs and groups, computer workshops and training.
- Respect and social inclusion, outdoor space a domain- special services department, English Language Learning program, free wifi and designated cooling center.

The NFL and NSC collaborate on several programs, particularly in communicating information to seniors.

D. Greg Reibman, President, Newton Chamber of Commerce

The Newton Needham Chamber of Commerce has 700 members, including several non-profits that are interested in economic as well as cultural life. Surrounding towns showing interest because of educational and networking programs. Regional chambers work together to get more attention and move ahead together, such as when Needham and Newton applied together for monies to fix the Newton/Needham corridor. Together they finally received state funds. Business owners need to understand aging demographics better to support aging population. They need to think about aging

populations not just as a "market", but also as employees. The Chamber does offer the Newton Buddy Group which meets every Monday at the chamber office as a support group for employment.

E. John Sisson, Livable Dedham, Director of Economic Development

John lives in Newton, works for Dedham. Dedham is thinking about using volunteers to make a town more livable. They have a small budget plus a great way to engage people.

V. Areas of Collaborations and Coordination

What is the ultimate goal of having an age-friendly city process;

The World Health Organization does not tell a community what to do. We have to say what our vision is and then show what we're going to do to reach our vision, and explain how we know when/how we're getting there. The Newton Department of Senior Services is hiring for a position of community engagement and marketing to work on this. In addition, they will hire a volunteer coordinator. The two positions will be working closely together. The two positions were going to be hired regardless, but now they are considered part of the "Planning for a Livable All-Age-friendly Newton."

VI. Ideas for Small Projects

Cheryl Lappin and Amy Sangiolo, from City Council, Programs and Services Committee:

The idea of a common calendar was raised at last meeting. City does not have comprehensive calendar so Cheryl spoke with the mayor who thought a comprehensive calendar was a great idea. The city is looking at ways to give others besides specific city employees ability to type in city calendar. (The library now uses Eventbrite for a wider audience). City website is good to use because it's so comprehensive already. It's easy to get attention there. Anybody should be able to post to the staging area. How many average citizens use the city website?

How to begin a common calendar? Develop with a computer specialist and people who are not computer savvy. Get information in one place and different groups will find it as needed. Include middle schools and high schools events/info so community calendar will reflect an age-friendly intergenerational city.

Marian sent out a data collection sheet about the organizations related to PLAAN to ask for information on what they are doing. Julie Norstrand will be setting up a data base of organizations & activities.

Meeting adjourned at 9:40.

Submitted by Carol Rose