

## **COUNCIL ON AGING—January 25, 2022**

**Present:** Joan Belle Isle, Sandra Davidow, Beth Dugan Naomi Krasner, Maria Meyer, Julie Norstrand, John Pelletier, Joyce Picard, Sue Rasala, Nancy Scammon, Susan Schlesinger, Allison Sharma, Laura Shaw, Dan Shaw, Gordon Szerlip,

**Absent:**, Mary Glendon, Tyrone Hooks, Ena Lorant, Eric Rosenbaum, Lisa Samuelson, Tom Shoemaker

**Staff:** Jayne Colino, Norine Silton

### **Call to Order/Approval of Minutes**

The meeting was held by Zoom Videoconference and was called to order by Joan Belle Isle at 7:35 PM. Introductions of guests and staff were made.

Beth Dugan moved that the minutes of the December 2021 meeting be approved; Julie Norstrand seconded. The minutes were approved.

### **Introductions- Guests and Staff**

Guests were invited to introduce themselves when they spoke.

### **Springwell Presentation**

Trisha Smith, Springwell CEO gave a presentation on the services they provide and the various programs and resources they provide followed by Q&A. Springwell is an independent, non-profit organization designated by the Commonwealth to serve the towns of Belmont, Brookline, Needham, Newton, Waltham, Watertown, Wellesley and Weston with specific services related to aging and caregiving. Detailed information can be found on their website, [www.springwell.com](http://www.springwell.com).

### **NewCAL Update**

The next community meeting is on February 17, 2020. An email was sent out by Public Buildings Commissioner, Josh Morse, updating all those on the project email list of the current status of the project. Additionally, it was noted that an article will be written by the Boston Globe that will include these updates and an overview of the project.

The proposed Landmarking of the existing Senior Center will be heard by the Newton Historical Commission at their March meeting. If the Landmarking is approved this will delay the project and require a new design to include a renovation of the existing building instead of a new building. This could also include restrictions to the building's hardscape which could affect the size of the building.

Members are encouraged to get the word out to constituents and supporters of the current design for a new building on the site.

COA members discussed various ways to get the word out including email or mail campaigns and talking with the City Councilors in their Wards providing the facts of the project and clarifying the misinformation that has been sent out to the public.

It was motioned by Gordon Szerlip and seconded by Joyce Picard that the COA members consider creating an updated letter of support. Chair, Joan Belle Isle, said the Executive Advisory Committee will put together wording at their next meeting in February.

An abutter to the Senior Center voiced concern on the greenspace in the front of the building and available parking with the current design. Would prefer to keep the frontage the same as the current building. Also, questions on why another site was not chosen.

It was noted by Jayne Colino that more than 145 sites owned by the City were considered. That number was narrowed down to 24 but after much discussion and input at community meetings the decision to rebuild on the current site was confirmed.

Council Member, Sue Rasala, was concerned that after 4 years of work by the Working Group and numerous community meetings that the façade had become more important than the programs and activities that the designs for the new building were built around. She also commented that the ultimate goal of the new space is to make Newton an Age-Friendly City.

### **Membership**

Ellen Penso was present at the meeting, and it was noted that she has submitted her application to the Executive Office to be considered on the COA. The next step is for her to be interviewed by the COA. Robert Pierson was also present, and his application has been forwarded to the Mayor's office.

### **By-Laws Updating**

Laura Shaw will head up the By-Laws Sub-committee. Joan asked for volunteers to work on it with her and Beth Dugan volunteered.

### **Updates**

Jayne Colino commented that the Senior Center had made the decision to postpone the larger programs due to the current Covid numbers. She hoped that we could resume regular programming in early February. She also noted that the virtual programs were very popular, and our emailed Weekly Update of programs continues to grow. She will participate in a Roundtable with Representative

Auchincloss on January 26<sup>th</sup> and on January 31<sup>st</sup> a review of the Senior Transportation program and a ride with Newton in Motion (Newmo).

Sandra Davidow suggested that a Tech Sub-committee be created. John Pelletier agreed. There was concern noted by the group that with 3G towers being phased out that only 4G and 5G would be available which would affect many seniors who have not upgraded technology – especially the seniors who use the pay-as-you-go phones. It was also suggested an article be written for the next COA Newsletter.

It was noted that there is a new project proposed on Crafts Street behind Wholefoods with 208 units specifically for older adults, Assisted Living & Memory Care (Continuing Care Facility). Joan said she would let the group know about dates for future meetings.

A motion was made by Laura Shaw to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Sandra Davidow. Meeting was adjourned at 9:27 p.m.

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