

Salem Council on Aging
Minutes
Regular Meeting
Salem Council on Aging
Wednesday, March 15th, 2017 6:00 p.m.

The Regular Meeting of the Salem Council on Aging held Wednesday, March 15th, 2017 6:00 p.m., at the Senior Center, 5 Broad Street, Salem, Massachusetts.

Roll Call

Board of Directors Present: Elaine Heredeen (EH, Vice Chair), John Russell, (JR), Julie Carver (JC, Secretary), Donna Clifford (DC), Alison Thibodeau (AT).

Absent: Lynda Coffill (LCf, Chairperson), Alice Williams (AW, Treasurer), Abigail Butt, (AB), Anthony “Tony” Schettino (TS)

Also Present: Meredith McDonald, (MM), Director of the COA, Elaine Milo (EM, City Councilor advocate to the COA), Sharon Kearney, (SK, Secretary of Minutes).

I. Call to Order

Open the regular meeting Wednesday, March 15th, 2017 6:00 p.m.

II. Approval of February 15th, 2017 Regular Meeting minutes

EH: Anybody have any problems with the minutes from the last meeting?

MM: I submitted a few changes to Sharon but did not get any other corrections from anyone else.

Note: Changes were:

Page 3: MM – Last sentence should read: Is there collaboration?

MM – (second reference) – first sentence read: These are all very viable questions.

Page 6: MM – (second reference) – First sentence should read: The Lynn COA hosted a presentation on “co-housing”. A program where young people (college??) can share a house with a senior. This is often done rent free – in exchange for rent; the young person helps the senior with house work, yard work, cleaning, grocery shopping, etc. It provides the young person with a place to live, and the senior the ability to continue to live safely in their own home.

- The changes were completed before meeting.

JR: Make a motion to accept the minutes with changes.

JC: Second the motion.

Vote unanimously approved.

III: Report/Update from the Board Vice - Chairperson Elaine Heredeen.

I don't have a report. Let's go to the Director's report.

IV: Report from the Director

1. New Building Update - Meredith McDonald, (MM), Director of the COA

MM: There was a discussion at the meeting that I missed in February. People brought up concern that there were no windows in the great room. There still will not be windows in the great room because that would push everything back to square one of having to back to the design review board and zoning board. What they are going to do, hopefully, which does not require permission from the design review and zoning boards, is a type of ceiling, where there are ducts in the roof, some form of sensors which helps funnel the outside natural light into the ceiling of the room. It is used in schools, at times, for interior rooms where they can't get natural light. The duct work is set up like a HVAC system with duct work with dampers. So, if you want dim some of the natural light coming in, you can shut the dampers and it dims the light a little. This is the best compromise to get some more natural light. Where it has been used it could make a space on a dark dreary day look lighter and brighter. That is the direction they are going in to overcome the obstacle of not having windows.

JR: How did that get missed?

JC : At one of the meetings, about a year ago, it was one of the neighborhood committees, they were saying it looked like a grammar school and they wanted some of the windows taken out.

MM: Then they all were taken out. But then it came down too, at one point in the design plan, there was going to be a big stage, so they couldn't on that wall because of how the building was going to be. Then there needed another wall which could be projected on, if you were doing presentations, so you couldn't have windows on that wall. That left the entry wall, in which you are coming in from the lobby, which doesn't work because it is an interior wall. Then the other exterior wall is going to have the French doors going out to the outside patio, there is the natural light on that wall. So, between the neighborhood group and other configurations, that is how the windows got nixed. Now there is no stage because building codes you lose so much floor space because of ramps and handicap accessibility that it was said it is not worth having a stage, for the number of times it would be used, you really don't need a stage. They were thinking about skylights but then you would have to have motorized horizontal blinds which add a huge cost because you have to be able to darken a room if you want to do daytime presentations.

2. Salem For All Ages Update

MM: The Friends of the COA, are cosponsoring this application that has been put through to Tufts to receive a grant, to have feasibility study conducted of intra city shuttle for all Salem Residents, not just for seniors. The letter of intent asking permission to fill out a grant application was accepted. So, now we can move forward and actually fill out the grant application. So, hopefully that can move forward. My transportation subcommittee, is working on trying to find other communities, in Massachusetts or other states, that currently have intra city shuttles and evaluating: 1) What is their shuttle system? 2) Who is it open to resident wise? 3) Is it just of seniors or all residents? 4) Is it free? 5) Does it have a per ride fee? So, we can get examples of other models that are being used. And, what do those models cost? An interesting model in Mountain View California that uses all solar powered, it is a 12 seater, handicapped accessible vans that are funded by Google; it is an awesome shuttle system. They did this major expense because they are trying to reduce the number of cars on the road and the amount of emissions in that community. Traffic is constantly at a bottleneck; air quality was not good because so many people were driving. So Google underwrote the shuttle system to get the cars off the road. It gives us food for thought, who are the big players in this community that we could maybe collaborate with for the betterment of this community to get more cars off the road? Do we reach out to the hospital? Is it Salem State? Salem State is trying to become more civically engaged and minded in terms of the community. They have daytime and weekend vans, new buses. Do we reach out to them and ask them do you want to become a better civic partner? You are a big commuting school, let's get some of those cars off the road. It's thinking outside the box. How do we get people into this? And, how do we underwrite it? So, ideally we could offer it free or at a very low cost to make people want to use it. So, that is what we are working on.

MM: There were two questions that come out of last month's meeting:

- 1) First, about the volunteer button on My Senior Center. It has been fixed. You can all check it. It should be working fine. If not let me know. Everybody's button should be working properly so you can accurately track your volunteer hours for being on the board.
- 2) Questions about North Shore Elder Services and Meals on Wheels, what happens when there's a snow day and they are closed, and they don't deliver? What if the senior eats their shelf stable items? At the beginning of every fiscal year for them they deliver shelf stable meals. The first time, that there is snow day that they don't deliver; their assumption is that is the day the shelf stable meal will be eaten. So then after that storm, North Shore Elder Services/Meals on Wheels, redeliver another supply of shelf stable meals, whether immediately the next day or a few days later I'm not sure. So, theoretically the seniors are keeping them as

they are supposed to be for those emergency purposes. They should always have one at the ready if there is another storm. What came about in this storm, that I question, and I'm waiting answer from North Shore Elder Services was we got the email that North Shore Elder Services was going to be closed as were we. But, later in the day, there was another email from North Shore Elder Services indicating that congregate and supportive housing would not be getting a dinner delivery. I sent a reply email expressing concern that these are folks that are not home delivered meal recipients; they don't get shelf stable meals. So, many of them, who live next door, come to the COA for lunch. If we are closed for lunch and they are not getting their dinner delivered, do they get delivered a supply of shelf stable meals for those residents for cases like this? There was no response. So, I don't know what happens to our seniors when they are here or in supportive living. The folks in supportive living on Charter St. a lot of them are home delivered meal recipients. So, they may have shelf stable meals but not the folks next door.

AT: Question: Doesn't the Ruane have somebody who does the cooking over there? Do they not have a cook over there anymore?

MM: They do, but if they are cooking food from the supplies that are being delivered to them, and they are not getting them. I don't know if they have anything to cook. The case manager splits her time between that building and Peabody so she is only there a couple of hours a week in the morning.

Questions: Do they have a kitchen? Each resident has their own kitchen? Do they have a refrigerator too?

Response: They have a kitchen. Each resident has a little kitchenette. A stove top so they could heat something up if they have something. They have a refrigerator and may have a microwave.

Discussion: The refrigerators having to be locked. So, if their case manager wasn't going in because they were closed because North Shore was closed presumably the cook wouldn't be coming in because they were closed. So now the residents have food in the main refrigerator but they can get at it because it is locked.

MM: I will be following up to see what the reply is. I'm hoping they would be delivered those shelf stables as well. It may mean that a senior goes without a meal for a day.

JR: For clarification, they do, in their own apartment, have a refrigerator and a stove so they can prepare their own meals? The thing is they are use to having lunch at the COA and dinner there. So they do have the ability to prepare their own meals.

Response: Yes, if they have food to prepare. They might have breakfast things so in a pinch hopefully they might have something.

MM: But if it was a bigger storm and we were closed for two or more days; it is a concern. I'm hoping to get better follow up on that.

MM: I was at a meeting at North Shore Elder Services last week. A few things which came out of the meeting are as follows:

North Shore Elder Services on March 22, 2017, are having their social workers recognition brunch. Hopefully, Lynn Barrett and Sharon Felton can attend and be able to be recognized for the work that they do.

March 24, 2017 is the day of North Shore Elder Services Annual meeting. So, if any of the COA board members are interested in attending, their annual meeting to hear what their strategic plan is, you are all welcome and invited. Just let me, Meredith McDonald, know if you would like to go. And, I can get you the time, details, location and RSVP for you.

MM: The other good thing that came out of the meeting at North Shore Elder Services is:

Changes in the regulations around protective services - There have been some changes in the regulations around protective services. Changes in the regulations which benefit COA in our role in working with the seniors, the biggest change is an elder can no longer refuse a

protective services investigation. Whether we are filing, a family member is filing against a senior protective services has to investigate. It use to be when there was a filing, protective services would go out to investigate, the senior would say they were fine and safe, protective services would have to drop the case. This is a good thing because many times when a senior is living at home with an adult child with a substance abuse problem or the adult child or another family member is overly controlling the senior's money and not giving them their money. This way it could come to light and get all the people involved in the services that they need. So, it doesn't put the senior in a place where they have to choose between family and themselves. It will also free up the communication that flows between protective services and COA. There was for awhile a big hang up about, are we violating HIPAA? To talk about what is happening, the answer is no this does not violate HIPAA we are all working to try and protect that person. In essence, we will be able to provide them more information then they can in reality they provide us. But they are going to be able to provide more then what they were providing.

JR: Relative to your mention of HIPAA, there was a meeting at the sheriff's department with all the TRIAD groups throughout the county and one of the things that has come to light in many places including the PD's and fire departments is sharing of information and the inability to share information because of HIPAA regulations. I think the HIPAA regulation for a lot of people is just an easy way out and that they are not violating HIPAA. So, we did find an attorney that is willing to do a training of what actually is HIPAA. So, we can better provide services. For example, there are police departments that know somebody is on oxygen, and there's an issue, and they are afraid to share that information with the fire department because they think it violates the HIPAA regulation. That is public safety. There are two reasons people don't do it: 1) Afraid of liability, that isn't there or 2) its the easy way out. So, we hope to put a training together to have all the COAs invited as well as all the local police departments, fire departments and ambulance companies to attend so we can get clarification of what HIPAA is.

EH: Beverly has the resource, The Task Force, which was created a couple of years ago. The police, fire everybody is there and they all share what's going on. They are supposed to be sharing.

JR Question: Are they concerned about the regulations?

EH Response: No, but they do share everything, most of the time.

JR: That is the issue in a lot of towns. Some towns don't need it, some towns do. It is something, I think, is necessary in order to provide the services for the seniors.

MM: Linda asked, at the last meeting, if North Shore Elder Services ever has any events to let you all know:

1) Beer and Cheer Life Made Easier - They are having their second annual Beer and Cheer Life made easier beer and wine tasting on May 13th at the Topsfield Fair grounds from 2 to 5. If you would like a VIP ticket you could go in privately from 1 to 2 for special tasting before the general public comes in. \$35.00 for general admission, \$55.00 for VIP ticket. If anyone is interested in more information I can make copies of the invite and send them off to you.

2) Essex COA is hosting a conflict of interest training. They are hosting it for their board but they are extending the invitation to other COAs and their boards throughout the North Shore. If anyone would like to attend, the training is going to run by the state ethics department on March 28th, 2017 at 6:00pm at the Essex COA. If anyone in interested please let me know and I can RSVP.

MM: Lastly, there are two board members who the Mayor has reappointed to your service, Julie Carver and Abigail Butt.

JC Question: You have a copy of that letter? Because at one point somebody lost mine and there was a question was whether I was a valid board member or not.

MM: This letter says it was confirmed on February 23rd, 2017. I can get you a copy of this if you like? If you don't get a letter let me know.

JR Question: Can we go back to the new CLC?

MM Response: Yes.

JR: We had the meeting, two meetings ago I couldn't make the last one.

JC: Unfortunately, I didn't see the email and when I did the meeting was on Wednesday at 1:00.

MM: The meetings are all going to be Wednesday at 1:00.

JR: We asked for Mondays because Julie couldn't make it. One thing I think we need to reaffirm is the board is very important to this process. And, the board will be responsible for making sure things go the right way with the new building. It got to the point where we got to this meeting they are all new people and it is like everything started all over again. And, I think it was said that it will be a shame if we have a shell of a building to bring the seniors into. Things that we agreed upon, that we actually gone back and forth with and we made concessions and those were taken out. We made it a point to say that some of think a kitchen is very important. But not to the point to say that the kitchen is we can't afford it we can't afford it. We need to have it set up. We need to have the gas run. We need to have the right wiring in. We talked about the dividers and they are expensive and we may need more than one divider. We understand we can't afford the dividers right now, quite possibly, but we need to put the

MM: The dividers are being done.

JR: Yes, the one but we talked about more than one.

JC: I thought there were two?

MM: Because of some changes that needed to happen with some office space upstairs there is really only a place where you can put two. So, where the dividers can be placed they will be placed. The dividers are going in.

JR: There is a concern every time somebody new comes in everything changes so just to be noted that we had asked and it was agreed upon that the meetings would be Mondays because the board is important aspect to the whole process.

MM: I will tell you this update; please don't shoot the messenger because I didn't make this decision. Michael Lutzykowski is the city employee from the building department who is representing this project. He has asked that all questions go to him. He has informed the Mayor, this is what he said, that going forward in the meetings it will be Trish, myself, Elaine Bello and Darlene Melis. Darlene Melis was brought in; she became involved at the first meeting that I had missed which was school vacation week in February. I don't know who asked her to become involved it could have been the Mayor or Mike. Somebody asked her to become involved because of her involvement in the redesign of many of the schools here in Salem. So they wanted her input where she has been involved in some of the construction projects. Elaine Bello said she has since this project since she started she has all the notes and the concerns and the suggestions of the board. And, that they have been factored into the plans as they stand. Mike wants all questions to go to him.

JR Question: How would we know if there is a question if we are not at the meeting?

MM: I can tell you the last plans for the basic structure of the inside that is set. That is firm. That is not changing. So the two dividers we saw in that meeting those are going forward. But, what we had to do with the other rooms you can't subdivide them. One room is in the corner and that is going to be the fitness room which has to have special flooring with the equipment. It can't have an open wall in between two rooms. They had to put the activities offices upstairs so what was going to be a program room is now going to be shared office for COA activity and Park and Recreation activity coordinator when they fill that position.

JR: There is more than just the interior of the building. There are things, because I brought up the concern, that we are way behind the curve on fund raising and we are looking to see what we have to put into this building. We haven't had a capital campaign yet. We don't know if we can't raise \$100,000 for a kitchen. We don't know if we can't raise this money. Now, we don't

have a say in this and we are the people that will take the flack if we had the community a shell of a building.

MM: I know the kitchen is a hot button. We are going to have a working kitchen. We are. I hear what you are saying and I absolutely understand it and I agree with it.

JR: The point is, Meredith, is it is not what it came down to. It is what was agreed upon. If it was agreed upon from the beginning that this was going to happen I would have a problem. But, it was agreed upon that we would at least have a set up for a full functioning kitchen if 4 or 5 years down the road we feel there is a need for that.

MM: I don't know and here is the question. I don't know the answer to it. I don't know if that would cause the plans to go back to the design board.

JR: It would not.

EM: Could you tell me again who is on that?

MM: Michael Lutrzykowski, Trish, Myself, Elaine Bello, interior designer, and Darlene Melis.

Discussion about the interior planning meetings for the CLC:

Expressions of dissatisfaction –

- There was expression of dissatisfaction about the only two original people who were participating in the interior planning meetings, for the last eight to nine months, John Russell and Julie Carver, have been closed out from the meetings. There's a feeling that their time and progress made from their previous meetings were wasted and tossed out.
- Julie Carver was invited and participated at the last meeting, in which the Mayor also attended and asked Darlene Melis to participate in the meeting as well. As stated by Julie, Darlene has good knowledge about the materials and safe material. She is definitely an asset to the team.
- It was mentioned there was an observation about the lack of communication regarding the meetings that had been going on for months.
- The COA director, Meredith, expressed the concern and asked for Mondays to hold the meetings. But, due to scheduling conflicts, Michael Lutrzykowski, said the meetings would be Wednesdays at 1:00.

Expressions continued -

It is definitely disappointing that the COA board member's input is not valued.

It seems it is making the board not affective.

It can reflect the attitude towards the older people in this community.

We don't know who is driving the bus.

There is only one chance for the build out even if it isn't used for four years. It has to be there or it will never be done otherwise. We are loosing that voice.

Opinions: John Russell and Julie Carver have been so involved that this should not just be accepted that they can not participate in the meetings.

Suggestions:

- COA Director, Meredith, strongly encouraged the board to reach out to Michael Lutrzykowski and express their concerns.
- Ask Michael Lutrzykowski to meet with us as a board.

Action:

- Invite Michael Lutrzykowski to the April board meeting.

Real concern: The real concern behind this is we only have one chance to do it right and you can't cheap out.

Another concern: You walk into this warm welcoming building and there will be nothing to do and no space to do it in.

Other comments:

MM: The materials they are putting in from a finisher's perspective look really nice. There is a lot of thought being put into the colors and how they flow, how they reflect, and transition. There is a lot of thought to make it a warm welcoming perspective.

JR: The CLC has to be durable and clean. There is only one chance for the build out even if it isn't used for four years. It has to be there or it will never be done otherwise. We are losing that voice. I think we can all agree that if you don't spend a few thousand dollars now to have this retrofitted so that you can put it in later, nothing is going to be available to be done later on.

JR Question: How do we know how much money we have for these areas when we haven't even done a capital campaign yet?

JC: They don't even know how much money they have for the building right now.

MM: They know how much they have to build the shell of the building and that is what the list was. When Elaine went to price out some of the materials evidently some of them were discontinued which cause a ripple affect and a lot of other things had to change. We have the list for the floorings for: bathroom, great room, program places, and offices. All of that has been done. There have been a few small changes since then. This is all being plugged in to get the cost estimate to go to city council to see if they will grant us the cost needed to finish the inside of the building. The list does not include office furniture; lighting still needs to be addressed in which a sample light is on its way here. There is a lot of thought being put into the whole process to make sure the surfaces have the highest rating in terms of longevity and warranty on them. There was a question on what type of paint to use on the banister, because if you use the wrong paint the oils from everyone's hands transfers onto the banister and it will always look dirty. We are trying to make sure this is part of the thought process, how are these spaces going to be used and will it look new for as long as possible.

JR: Concern, walk into this warm welcoming building with nothing to do and no space to do it.

Question: When are they breaking ground?

Response: Hopefully, in June, still waiting to hear that they get the final permit approved. Not sure if that has come through yet. But, everything is moving forward.

EH: I say we have Michael Lutzykowski to the next board meeting in April. Will you send him a letter?

MM: Yes, I will send him an email.

Question: How many people is the great room going to hold? Do you know, couple hundred, maybe?

Response: I don't know. I haven't seen the maximum occupancy for it but more than the current room at the COA.

EM: One of the issues we had at the meeting was SATV being able to live stream. They only have the capability of doing that from Salem High. When you talk about putting your infrastructure in for the future I don't know what you have to do to have that capability but can you bring that forward? If we want this to be a community center

MM: Absolutely, the experience I have for the YMCA when they built the new Marblehead Y, they were coming from a building serving 1500 members. They guessed their membership would grow to 8000. They wired the new building with bandwidth for internet, wi-fi, and all that to serve 8000 people including staff working on desk. The membership is 15,000. Everyday in the building at 3:30 all the computers go down because all the kids come in use the wifi so they are not using their own data and minutes and all the computers come to a screeching halt. This topic is near and dear to me and to John's point you have to have the proper wiring in place to support more than you need the day you open. You have to have the technology, Ethernet jacks, wifi, phone jacks, and outlets everywhere because you never know when you need to reconfigure a space and your limited because there is only one outlet in the wrong area. That has not even come on the table as a discussion yet. It is something we started to talk about – computer needs and all of those things because we don't have wifi in the current COA building the staff do because we are hardwired into the city. But, we can't hold computer classes because we don't have wifi. It will be addressed.

3. In-law apartment ordinance update from Elaine Milo

EM: We are waiting for feedback from the planning board. The Topsfield ordinance seems to be something we are going to use as a model.

JR: It has good penalties to satisfy the building inspector.

EM: Hopefully, at the next meeting we may have something to look at and get some feedback on from the COA board.

4. Program Updates

MM: We had to cancel a number of things this week because of the snow storm.

Question: Is there something going on Friday for Lynn Barrett and Sharon Felton?

Answer: Yes.

-Thursday, COA, is having the St. Patrick's Day Luncheon it is a special meal provided by North Shore Elder Services. It's not the travel chef, the caterers are cooking it and they will deliver it. We have 88 people attending.

-Friday, COA, is having a special luncheon for Lynn Barrett and Sharon Felton, in their honor, for all the work that they do on a daily bases. March is national social workers month and we are saying thank you to them.

-We are getting ready for our first pizza party in April.

- We found out in February that we did in fact get a CDBG grant last year that we finally found out now to spend on a new art program. Kathy wrote the proposal for the grant. So, to stimulate people traffic on Monday which is normally a quite day we have a different art class every Monday form 1:00 to 2:00. The first week they made beaded necklaces. The second week they did some sort of rice design. This past Monday they made rain sticks. It's fun. It's something different every week to get some new people in that have some arts and crafts talent or to get people to try something new that they haven't done before.

Question: Is it free?

Response: Yes, it is free.

EM: Anything else?

V: Old/New Business:

JR: Yes, Friends to the COA, the pasta dinner is coming up in June. Also, there is a very large Philippine population who come to the senior center and Frank came up with the idea to reach out and find a good candidate from the Philippine community to come on board with us.

MM: We are hosting the Mayor on the March 22, 2017. She is giving a talk about Salem becoming a sanctuary city and to answer questions. Rosanna and I have said to the seniors if they have questions and they feel uncomfortable asking them they can write them down on a piece of paper. If they would like an answer they would have to put their name on the paper but Rosanna or I will ask the question anomalously and we can get the answer back to the individual. If they don't want to leave a name they don't have to we will still ask the question and hopefully they will still be at attendance in the group to hear the answer.

EM: Anything else?

VI: VISITOR COMMENTS: No Visitors.

VII: NEXT BOARD MEETING:

Next Regular board meeting scheduled for Wednesday, April 19th, 2017 at time 6:00 p.m.

VIII: VOTE TO ADJOURN:

EH: Requests to make a motion to adjourn the meeting.

JR: Makes a motion to adjourn the meeting.

JC: Seconds motion.

Vote unanimously approved.

Regular meeting adjourns at 6:48 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Sharon Kearney