

Salem Council on Aging
Minutes
Regular Meeting
Salem Council on Aging
Monday, October 19, 2015 6:00 p.m.

The Regular Meeting of the Salem Council on Aging held Monday October 19th, 2015, 6:00 p.m., at the Senior Center, 5 Broad Street, Salem, Massachusetts.

ROLL CALL

Board of Directors Present: Lynda Coffill (LCf, Chairperson), Alice Williams (AW, Treasurer), John Russell, (JR), Elaine Milo, (EM, City Councilor advocate to the COA), Julie Carver (JC, Secretary), Abigail Butt, (AB), Donna Clifford (DC), Anthony “Tony” Schettino (TS)

Absent: Elaine Heredeem (EH, Vice Chair)

Also Present: Karen Partanen, (KP, Director of Parks and Recreation), Elaine Milo, (EM, City Councilor advocate to the COA), Sharon Kearney, (Secretary of Minutes).

I. CALL TO ORDER

LCf: Open the regular meeting Monday, October 19th, 2015, 6:07p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 14, 2015 MINUTES

Any questions? Any Concerns? Any Changes? On the regular meeting minutes from September 14, 2015.

There is one change on page 5 after ward 4 change Chuck Martin to Chuck Barton.

LCf: If no other changes, motion to approve the minutes as amended.

JC & AW motion to approve the minutes as amended.

LCf: All in favor. None opposed. **VOTE:** Unanimously approved.

III: Chairperson, Lynda Coffill Comments

1. Vote to change monthly meeting to Mondays rather than Wednesdays.

This is a temporary change for another month for November. Hopefully, by December there will be a new COA Director and we can continue the Wednesday meetings.

Is Monday, November 16, ok for everyone?

Monday, November 16 is good.

2. Review of past years goals:

- 1) Reviewed some policies –

a) Reviewed, revised and approved the Standards of Behavior policy

b) Reviewed, revised and approved the Transportation policy.

Still have activity fees and vendor memorandum of understanding to develop.

- 2) Clarity and meaning of the Community Life Center – this goal has been accomplished.
- 3) Spruce up the current COA building – which has been accomplished – Great job!
- 4) Participation in the design and advocate for the new Community Life Center.
- 5) Needs assessment which needs to be started.

3. Setting goals for upcoming years. – Suggested Goals for 2015 – 2016
(Sheet passed out by (LCf))

A) Continue advocacy for the building of the Community Life Center

Plan of Action:

- Attendance at Planning Board Meetings and City Council
- Protests to any appeals
- Educate the public, especially seniors
- Letter writing campaign

B) Needs Assessment

C) Review and update Vendor MOU

D) Review and Update Activity Fees and Collection Process.

LCf: Reviewed the Planning board meeting minutes and there are some points that have been raised:

- 1) Parking - the September Planning Board Meeting minutes there were only 3 designated handicap spots which may not be sufficient. The October Planning minutes were not out there may have been some changes since the September minutes
- 2) Bridge Street entering and exiting is an issue.

Suggestions for the Bridge Street entering and exiting is an issue:

- 1) There is a vacant lot owned by St. James next to the CLC site. Would it be possible for the city to take that lot away by eminent domain to have egress further down Bridge Street?
Or, Would it be possible to get an easement of the lot?
- 2) Put in a rotary at the intersection. There are several streets arriving at that intersection on strange angles.
- 3) Change the no right turn on red from Boston St. to Bridge St. to right turn on red. There would be a right turn lane.

In September meeting drafts, the planning board raised the elevation of the CLC to two floors. It might be back to one floor. Also, there was concern about not enough green space.

John Russell was at the September planning board meeting. There were good issues that may have been addressed at the COA design planning meeting. The concerns were - where are the vans going to park and about how the seniors were going to walk through the parking lot. The green space that was available would be for seniors to walk through. There were other thing that were addressed at the design committee. There hasn't been a design committee meeting for a while.

LCf: Suggested to write to Jason to find out the status of the design committee for it has not met for awhile.

KP & JR: Will email him to find out an update.

JR: A lot of this was discussed at the last meeting, September 17th, Design Committee. It was a frustrating meeting.

LCf: Had an informal conversation with the Mayor - The City Planner, Lynn Duncan, spoke at the design planning meeting that the CLC project falls within the North River Canal Corridor Neighborhood Mixed Use District Guidelines.

LCf: The flood plans looking to mitigate against a 100 year storm. The drainage coming off of Gallow's Hill causes the Walgreen parking lot to flood. That is not the North River.

The Market Basket parking lot floods and it is not near the North River. They are examples of poor designing which is an issue for the city not the developer. The drainage issue was in the September Planning board minutes. We want the CLC but we also want to be sure that our constituency is protected as well.

Discussion about the Parking at the new CLC: The seniors are all concerned about the parking. The second floor of the new CLC was added to allow for more parking. There was going to be approximately 60 parking spaces plus the green space because of the addition of the second floor. The COA was losing a small amount approximately 23 spaces. There was a thought that residential parking spaces would be available during certain times of the day as well. There would be just COA & Park and Rec. parking. It will all depend on how the parking spots are defined for residential parking whether there are assigned spots. The residential parking has to be at least one and half parking spots per unit.

Needed – What is needed is confirmation on any changes from the October planning board minutes about the parking and the flooding issues. If these are answered the Design Committee needs get back together and back to work.

There is a November 5th planning board meeting and they are usually at the old Salem Hall. Linda Coffill mentioned she could go to the November 5th meeting John Russell will join as well.

November 7th. Saturday at 9:00am the planning board is having a site visit. Linda Coffill will be there to be sure they realize the COA has presence. They may have the plans. It would be good to have as many people as possible.

Kay Walsh spoke in favor of the project at the last planning board meeting. Kay Walsh is also on the North Shore Elders Services.

Than protest any appeals not sure if that can be done.

EM: The issue with the project is the neighbors not necessarily the direct abutters but the Federal St. people and other folks have not one single voice for these people so you can not have a meaningful conversation to say is 117 apartments too much? What do you think is reasonable? This can be done for parking or that for parking. Part of the issue is finding out who is speaking for whom? And, who is the person who the small group of people is going to negotiate with to come to some consensus and some compromise. Also, there are ten direct abutters. Eight of whom are satisfied and a few others that could be satisfied. There are two groups of people that have a vested interest in this and it is difficult to figuring out what everyone wants. The Mayor is working diligently to resolve this.

John Russell had an informal conversation with the Mayor asked at what point do we stop asking the neighbors what they want? They will appeal but if this does not happen in the next couple of months it will not happen.

EM: To have a meaningful appeal there has to be a direct abutter to signing on the complaint. Who wants to be the person stopping the Senior Center?

Suggestion: to try to educate the seniors about the CLC.

LCf: The list of people that spoke at the planning board meeting. None of the people are direct abutters.

The next COA meeting is after the election. Neither one of the Ward 2 Councilors candidates have come out strongly in favor of the project.

A couple of the Candidates have concerns. They want the breakdown if unit bedrooms, utility needs, recycling capability, parking, bike racks and sidewalk improvement. There is another candidate concerned about traffic.

There are 3 wards that come into the area Ward 6 is Goodhue, Ward 4 is Gallows Hill, and Ward 2. There are some Councilor at large races as well. The elections will be over before the next COA meeting and at that point there will be a better political landscape in which there will be some advocacy of people in control of city developments.

COA Suggestions:

- 1) To educate the public with at writing campaign but waiting until after the election than come up with some dates. Yes, we should do this.
- 2) Write a letter to the editor. – Yes, we should do this but wait until after November 5th. LCF: sent a letter in on the 15th for the September meeting. It was mentioned at the meeting that she had sent a letter in but it was not read at the meeting.
- 3) Make a face book page for the COA and invite people. – Want to look at ethics and someone to monitor it.

Question: Who would look at it? Anybody who is concerned with traffic, anybody who is concerned with development, anybody that is concerned with anything related to this project and are on social media. Might not want to do it as a COA board, but as a group.

Suggestions: Possibly, have the Friend of the COA develop it. Or, the COA board could have a facebook page just have information put out by the COA.

Suggestion: May not want to mix the COA and the project.

Just have information of what the COA discussed and what the COA backs. Have what the Council is doing – the general public information and activities.

Would this be interesting to other people.

Question: How would people know there is a face book page if there are concerns about traffic?

It would be the COA board members job to invite friends to like the page.

May want to coordinate with the Mayor's office.

Question: Do you have to go through any legalities with this, face book? We would want to look at ethics and would need someone to monitor it.

TS: If you keep it informational and try to avoid opinions of people that created the page. There will be people that will right in with their opinions. Group face book pages have different rules than individual pages. Someone can post on an individual page but they can not post directly on a group page. It comes up as a side bar.

The Chair, (LCF), suggested to have Tony Schettino to look into the face book page. Tony agreed to look into as to what the rules are and then there can be a discussion.

Need to remember with information posted there will be a lot of negative information as well.

Needs Assessment – Abby Butt will send a copy to the board to take a look at and there will be a discussion as to if it should be put on the next agenda or not.

Review and update Vendor Moran dam of Understanding - Is it possible to get a copy to the COA board?

KP – there is one in general for the department and she can show the board what is being used. It is very general and for the department as a whole.

Review and Update of Activity Fees and Collection Process – The previous Director Rosalia Valazquez was concerned about was the activities fees collections process. Is that a concern?

KP – No, there has been improvement on this and all the fees are being run through the MyRec software program that is in use. It is protection for the instructors and the department.

Question: How do people pay for the programs?

KP – Anybody taking the drop in programs they stop at the front desk. The receptionist puts in a tally and all the participants are all entered into the roster. The participants pay at the front desk. The instructor takes attendance of the class. At the conclusion of the class the instructor compares the list to how much money was collected and to confirm the number of attendants in the class.

Question: Is that information going into My Senior Center?

KP – No, The My Senior Center is cumbersome. It is being used for the meals. My Senior Center needs to be used more for North Shore Elder Services. We can use the participation report from the Department of Parks and Recreation record. This alleviates having the participant checking in twice. People don't want to check in once never mind checking in a second time.

AB - Problem is the entire population count for the day is not being captured. If someone is only coming in for meals and not a class and vice versa the information is not all in one location.

KP – It is not all in one location anyway. It is to alleviate staff time. The people that are checking in for meals or programs are not checking into My Senior Center. The staff is going around and checking into the My Senior Center. But if the participants have to stop and pay it gives a better count than in the past.

Question: Could this be one of the goals for the year to capture information in the My Senior Center?

There have been some important steps taken having the money collection under control. Staff time doing head count, there is no time to do that. There has to be a senior education initiative where the seniors learn how important it is to sign in so they are not burdened or annoyed and the seniors see the purpose and why as to signing into the senior center.

Suggestion: Can the My Senior Center be moved closer to the door?

It has to have a network connection. If you have wifi connection it will connect. Maybe move the My Senior Center to the secretaries or administration desk may make check in easier.

Everything needs to be captured to be paid. The more numbers the better the funding.

It is an educational thing, when the new COA Director comes on board hopefully things will go in the right direction.

Question: If the participant is not on the list does the instructor have the participant go and sign up before class begins?

Answer: Yes.

The point is to have every single person sign in automatically so they are on the attendance lists.

Suggestion: to put the question up on the bulletin board – Did you sign in?

Question: What is the percentage of monies goes to the YMCA for the classes? Does it all go to the YMCA?

Answer: It depends on the class. Some classes the instructor is a volunteer so there is no monies, Some classes are 50/50 splits. It depends on the class. (KP) - can find out about the agreement with the YMCA.

IV: Report of the Director - Karen Partanen, Direct of Parks and Recreation

1) Program Updates

Update on the activities:

- **Haunted Happenings Parade** – The trolley was full everyone enjoyed the parade.
- **Hepatitis & Flu Clinic** had over 20 seniors participate - sponsored by Walgreens.
- **Black Cat Café** at the Salem High School had 20 participants
- **Dinner Club** 10 seniors participated and they went Victoria Station.
- **Bingo at Winter Island** there are 30 seniors signed up for October 21st. This may continue through the winter.

Save the Dates:

- **Pneumonia & Flu Clinic** will be November 10th at 9:00am
- **Thanksgiving Dinner** at Knight of Columbus – Time 4 to 7 pm – Cost \$2.00per person. The COA will provide the transportation.
- **Culinary Art Program** Thursday, November 19, Salem High School Free at 11:00 am (100 seniors hosted by the kids of Culinary Art Program).
- **Thanksgiving Dinner** Thursdays, November 26th at the Salem Moose Lodge, FREE doors open at 12:00pm. They will also deliver dinner to any senior homebound. The COA will provide the transportation.

- **Coffee with Mayor Kimberly Driscoll** Thursday, November 5th – 9:00 am to 9:45 am at the Senior Center, 5 Broad Street.
- **Jim McAllister, local historian presents Broad Street and Roast Meat Hill** Friday November 5th

2) **Community Life Center Update** – There is not an update at this time.

3) **Hiring of the COA Director** - has been reposted with a higher salary. It is open to the end of October 23, 2015.

Question: Have there been anymore applications.

Answer: As of October 16th, No.

Question: Is it possible to change the title of the job to COA Coordinator?

Answer: No, it is a council order.

There was a discussion of the change of the salary amount for the COA Director position.

Question: During the Mayor's Coffee will the discussion be the new community life center?

Answer: The discussions could be about anything.

Question: Would it be possible for a couple people from the COA board be at the coffee with the Mayor?

Answer: The seniors of the board can go.

V: OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Thank you for the banner and the volunteers for the Halloween parade.

Question: Did thank you letters go out to the Sheriff Cousins and Waters and Brown?

Answer: Rosalia sent out the thank you letter to the Sheriff's Department.

Waters and Brown we paid them a significant amount of money. They gave us a significant discount and Laurie at Waters and Brown was very helpful with the measurements.

Question: Is there an art class instructor?

Answer: Yes. If anyone has more names, art seems to be the thing currently and there can be more than one art instructor.

Question: Has there been a sip and paint?

Answer: Yes, there was one at the golf course which was very successful. We will try to do another one at the golf course before the golf course closes. We are trying to figure out how to do one at the function halls.

LCf: Confirmed acknowledgement in the previous minutes if anyone wanted to be on emails for city committees to let Elaine Milo know.

Update on the Friends

They are doing well. Looking at new ways to have more fund raisers. We are exploring a dinner theater at Ames Hall, when the kids have a play going on, possibly get tables and chairs from Winter Island. It is a matter of the cost tickets; possibly have a hundred people at \$50.00 a piece.

Question: Is Ames Hall handicap accessible?

Answer: Yes.

Suggestion: Have an interactive murder mystery dinner theatre.

Also, they are planning on how to raise \$30,000 over the next three years for new exercise equipment for the new Senior Center (CLC). The Friends raise about \$11,000 in their annual membership guide. They are looking to expand the membership guide. They use about \$3,000 + in mailing.

Suggestions: Send the guide threw email with the seniors, have it on line. Need to find away to cut down on the postage. Also, the guides only go to the seniors, they can go to businesses, and younger people in the community. The Friends are getting more active and would like to raise \$20,000 per year.

Question: Do they have a bulk mail permit?

Answer: Unknown.

Question: Is it possible to have a bulk mailing done by Salem State? The mailing list would have to be clean.

NEW BUSINESS

There is no new business.

Question: On the COA position, what happens if you don't get any applicants?

Answer: There are candidate from the first round that are still active.

VI: VISITOR COMMENTS:

No visitors

VII: NEXT BOARD MEETING:

Next Regular board meeting scheduled for Monday, November 16, 2015 at time 6:00 p.m.

VIII. VOTE TO ADJOURN:

Requests to make a motion to adjourn the meeting.

LCf: Makes a motion to adjourn the meeting.

JR & AW: Seconds motion.

Vote unanimously approved.

Regular meeting adjourns at 7:15 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Sharon Kearney