

**SALEM COUNCIL ON AGING
Minutes of Regular Meeting**

Date and Time: April 21, 2021 at 5:15 P.M.

Meeting Location: Via Zoom

Members Present: Lynda Coffill (LC, Chair), John Russell (JR, Vice-Chair), George Barbuzzi (GB), Alice Williams (AW), Kristin Macek (KM), Abigail Butt (AB), Julie Carver (JC) and Patricia Small (PS)

Member Absent: Donna Clifford (DC)

Also Present: Teresa Arnold, (TA, Director of the COA), and Councilman Domingo Dominguez

Clerk: Kathleen Fitzgerald

Meeting Called to Order

LC called the meeting to order at 5:15 P.M.

LC stated that pursuant to Governor Baker's directive on 3/12/20 which supported certain provisions of Chapter 30A, Section 20, there are strict limitations regarding gatherings, so this meeting is being conducted via Zoom. The public and persons who would like to listen may do so by dialing in. All votes taken shall be by roll call.

Roll call was then taken.

A motion was made by AB to approve the March 2021 minutes and seconded by AW. Roll call was taken, and passed unanimously.

Old Business:

Senior and Homebound Vaccines: TA advised that she had spoken with David Greenbaum at the Health Department who stated that J&J was to be given to homebound seniors, but then paused. Moderna was ordered and expected this week or next. Cataldo would then start to schedule appointments for individuals.

TA further advised that in terms of ongoing vaccines, Social Services booked 122 appointments, but they also helped hundreds navigate the vaccine websites. There were approximately 1,200-1,300 calls to the COA regarding vaccines. As of today, there were only five individuals who needed appointments booked.

AB asked if Salem had a social worker for people under 60. TA advised that they did not but the COA Social Services team have served people under 60 who have come into the Center.

AB further stated that now that the vaccine was open to everyone, she assumed people without computers would be looking for help.

LC said she would come into the Center to help with those calls.

Senior Housing Update: LC advised that the CDC was partnering with North Shore Community Health to do a project on the River Walk which will open up the community health center in terms of spaces and services. 50 units will be senior housing that will be affordable. TA stated that Mickey Northcutt from the CDC has asked to come before the Board. He will speak at our May 19th meeting.

AB asked for confirmation that affordable means low income and not moderate income. LC said yes. She stated that the CDC was an incredible partner on the North Shore for housing and that their philosophy was everyone deserves a roof over their head. They work very hard to make sure that happens with all their properties.

KM stated that there was a presentation on March 24th to the Sustainability, Energy & Resiliency Committee (SERC) by Chair John Hayes, Vice Chair Jeff Cohen and Councilwoman Meg Riccardi. It was stated that financing does not allow for renovations. It was originally proposed that the 224 units would be on five acres of land - Lee Fort Terrace is currently on three acres and it was proposed to use the two acres next door. It was determined that the additional two acres could not be used for easements. This brought down the expectation about how many units could be built. The property would be three-four stories with parking underneath which would back off of Collins Cove closer to the soccer field and the Bentley School.

KM advised that the most surprising fact was that this would be a joint venture between Beacon Properties and the Salem Housing Authority. She stated that they could be held accountable for outside and inside spaces.

AB asked if this would be like some other properties where the Housing Authority would be phased out and asked if this would be a permanent co-ownership.

KM stated that Michelle Pagian had done a number of these properties in different communities where it is mixed income. She advised that it is still not clear about the number of units and that the logistics was being worked out before going into the site development plan.

JR asked if with the number of units changing, were they still looking at 51 with 15 additional senior housing units. KM advised it was not clear yet as a new feasibility study needed to be done. She stated that they seem to think more funding will become available, but not yet sure.

JR stated that he would hate to see us losing housing units. He further stated that depending on where funding comes from, it is imperative that we push to make that number higher.

KM stated that if funding came through, we may be able to get more units. She further stated that we needed to hold the developers to the balance of senior housing and disabled housing to the working income piece.

LC stated she also questioned their statement that their funding did not allow for rehabilitation. GB stated that sometimes it is less costly to tear down and rebuild than to renovate. KM said they needed to go back to the drawing board and tap into other financing.

The Board had a request from the Mayor for support of the ADU vote coming before the City Council tomorrow night. AB said that she thought the Board decided not to do that.

JR asked if there was a benefit for seniors with the ADU ordinance. AB stated that if seniors are struggling financially, how could they afford to rehabilitate? She then asked if our seniors really wanted ADU's since there was no data.

JR advised that in most cases people have not gone through the Building Department for permits and there may need to be another amnesty. PS said ADUs might be a place to live if someone wanted to downsize.

LC stated that she had not kept up with various iterations of the ordinance and could not support this without further data. AB agreed that more data was needed.

Councilman Dominguez stated that he had his own concerns with the ADU ordinance. He said what he is hearing from a lot of people is that there are a lot of things to be considered. He stated that this was the third time the City Council was trying to pass the ordinance and every time there are changes. He said he thought it was being controlled by one side and that that the voices of the people were not being heard. He said he thought it was being pushed through by developers and politicians. He said we needed more senior housing and affordable housing. He stated he was not in favor of the ADU's as presented.

AB thanked Councilman Dominguez for giving the Board more information. LC said that at this point in time, until the Board finds out what is being asked of it, the Board would not make any comment. LC said it was fair to say that the consensus of the Board at this time, without adequate information, is that they could not support or oppose the ordinance as it stands. AB suggested having someone come before the Board so questions could be asked.

Friends Update: JR stated that due to scheduling conflicts, there was no meeting so far this month. He advised that the Friends supported the Easter dinner and allocated \$2,200.00 for that, but the cost came in well below that. It cost the Friends \$1,575.00. The balance will be used to fund the Mother's Day and Father's Day breakfasts.

JR advised that the Friends were working on revising their Mission Statement and Bylaws and looking to bring John Boris on. TA stated that John Boris has been incredibly supportive of the COA.

Director's Report:

Programs: For the months of May and June, we are taking advantage of the nice weather and moving our programs outdoors.

We will be using Winter Island Pavilion for Chair Yoga, Zumba, Meditation, Tap Dancing and Balance. The Muscle and Strength class will be held in the parking lot. We are planning an outdoor Bingo Day for both May and June. These will be held in our parking lot.

In addition to the Tuesday Drive-thru lunches, we will be offering two other Drive-thru Events; - The Salem Rotary is sponsoring a Cinco De Mayo lunch on May 5th and the COA is holding a Mother's Day Breakfast on May 7th sponsored by the Friends.

Social Services: Since March 18, 2020 when the CLC was closed to the public, Social Services has accomplished the following just to mention a few categories:

- Booked 122 vaccine appts and as of today, there are only five more people on our list who need assistance.
- Discussed Covid related issues to 670 seniors 1278 times
- Assisted 500 seniors with their health insurance needs 936 times
- Completed 35 new Salem Housing Authority senior housing applications
- Provided General Information to 874 seniors 2471 times

Intern Alyssa Flynn's last day was April 19th and we are in the process of talking with field placement staff at Massachusetts colleges with BSW programs. We do have a few resumes for the Kay Walsh internship starting September of this year. TA is also accepting resumes for the position to be vacated by Joe Ericksberg. Joe's last day is June 9th.

Transportation:

We are adding trips to the North Shore Mall and Trader Joe's starting in May. This is in addition to Walmart, Market Basket, Crosby's, medical appointments and general errand/hair salon appointments. We are still seeing about 12-15 rides a day with three part-time drivers working compared to 35-40 a day pre-COVID.

Nutrition Education and Outreach:

We are working with Backyard Growers of Cape Ann to build three raised vegetable beds to be tended by some volunteers with staff oversight. Gardening education as well as recipe ideas will be provided to enhance this new program.

Other:

John and Anne Boris – Anne Boris has donated two weighted blankets to the COA for the social workers to give to individuals suffering from severe anxiety. This is a project that the Boris' have been working on, mainly donating to the Police Department for domestic cases and North Shore ARC. Weighted blankets have been known to reduce anxiety.

JR asked if there was any chance the next Board meeting could be in the Great Room. LC stated there was hope that the June Board Meeting could be in person and that the Board could hold their year-end celebration.

Next Board Meeting: May 19, 2021 via zoom.

There being no further business:

A motion to adjourn was made by JR, AB seconded, roll call was taken and passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Fitzgerald, Clerk