

SALEM COUNCIL ON AGING
Minutes of Regular Meeting

Date and Time: May 15, 2019 at 5:20 P.M.

Meeting Location: Board Room, 401 Bridge Street

Members Present: Lynda Coffill (LC, Chairperson) via phone, John Russell (JR), Julie Carver (JC), Elaine Heredeen (EH), Abigail Butt (AB), Alice Williams (AW), George Barbuzzi (GB)

Also Present: Teresa Arnold, (TA, Director of the COA), Kathleen Fitzgerald, Clerk

Absent: Donna Clifford (DC)

Meeting Called to Order

LC calls the meeting to order at 5:20 P.M.

Motion made by JR to approve the April Minutes, seconded by EH and passes unanimously.

Old Business:

Senior Housing – LC stated there was no ordinance for minimum senior housing units so we should advocate for one. JR said it depended on the size of the project. AB stated that is all good, but the best bet for getting an ordinance passed is to look at surrounding communities and see what their ordinance is. She stated Cambridge gets 15% and Somerville 12%-13%. LC suggested doing some research with Lynn, Beverly, Danvers and Peabody but AB thought we should go bigger than those communities. She suggested making an Excel spreadsheet and calling other housing authorities and asking them to email us information. AB advised that is what she does in her job so she knows exactly what needs to be done and would take care of it and asked what the timeframe was. LC stated before the Fall.

LC advised that Councilman Sargent wanted 20% of units for affordable housing but AB said 20% was high and LC stated that we needed to have a city councilor on our side.

JR asked if he could make a point and stated that the ordinance for affordable units was something they were looking at. The problem is affordable housing is not senior friendly. He advised that we also needed to look at subsidized housing for seniors. AB stated that

the problem is that you must go and get federal and state vouchers which requires a ton of paperwork.

LC then advised that a conversation was started with the Salem Housing Authority and Amanda Chiancola participated regarding what we could do to get more senior housing, but the issue is land. We don't have much public land and places like Lee Ft. Terrace can be expanded upward, but the issue is the residents would be displaced while the expansion was taking place.

AB stated that she thought it was time to work with Harbor Light Community Partners in Beverly who look for dilapidated properties and transform them into senior housing; i.e. Medicaid assisted living or rooming houses.

JR said it is hard to push for senior housing right now when there is no appetite to build more housing units in Salem, but if we had the opportunity to go after just senior housing, he thought there would be interest.

LC suggested exploring a partnership with Harbor Light and figuring what we could do. AB stated that Harbor Light is a stakeholder and Andrew was a personal friend and a Beverly resident. She stated that he does not have a lot of time but said he would send someone else and we could ask for a Salem resident.

LC suggested working on the ordinance over the summer and seeing about people actually interested in affordable housing asking to participate. JR stated that at the last forum most people were for affordable housing and that is was something that should pass without a lot of trouble.

Board Member: LC then asked AW if her friend had done anything about getting on the COA Board. AW advised that she had texted her with no response. LC then stated that a full Board was needed. AB suggested that the Board should make sure what it was looking for and where it should start asking. GB suggested contacting Domingo Dominquez for a nomination. TA said she would reach out to him and AB suggested asking him for 2-3 people who would be a good fit and would be easy to work with.

Salem.com Update: GB advised that his email still did not work and that he had been in touch with Eric Bergengren from IT. He told Eric most of the Board members were still having trouble and suggested he come to a Board Meeting, but Eric advised that he finished work at 3:00 P.M. TA said she would reach out to Eric or Ollie to get it resolved.

New Business:

Friends Update: JR advised that the last meeting consisted of ironing out some issues regarding a cookbook fundraiser and a discussion on keeping meetings to an hour.

Pasta dinner coming up and tickets have been printed and looking for people to buy/sell and generate sales. Moose Club pays for everything and there will be a live auction and raffle prizes. AB asked if the Friends could do a 50/50 raffle at the event and JR said yes.

JR then discussed the possibility of a comedy night and spoke with the YMCA and the Friends could use Ames Hall for the event. He thinks they could get a comedian for around \$450.00. AB mentioned that there was someone in New Hampshire who performs for free. JR asked AB to get him the name and he would contact him. JR also said the Friends should talk to a few local restaurants to donate hors d'oeuvres. AB suggested contacting the Cultural Council to see about paying for the comedian.

Director's Report:

North Shore Community Health Network -- We received a grant in the amount of \$20,000.00 over two years to offer behavior health services at the COA. This results in a stipend to be determined for the social work team for their role. We are a partner and NSCH Center is the lead, having to pay a part time clinician and incorporate other expenses. This is an excellent achievement as we can provide the access to services and identify those in need.

Social Services: Joe Ericksberg achieved his LSW license and is studying to become a SHINE counselor (Serving Health Information Needs for Everyone). Joe has done well here and pushes himself to learn all the time. He has been managing the Greater Boston Food Bank which occurs once a month.

TA advised the Board that a woman came in to the COA with bad health issues and she was referred to Sharon Felton. The woman made a point to speak with TA after her meeting to tell TA what a great experience she had and how much she appreciated Sharon's help.

Farmers' Market coupon distribution will be promoted in our June newsletter. Approximately 100 seniors receive \$25.00 worth of coupons to purchase fresh produce at local farmers' markets.

Greater Boston Food Bank monthly distribution continues to grow. Currently, 79 eligible seniors are signed up.

Fuel assistance – 54 seniors received assistance this past heating season.

There has been an increase in email inquiries. Last fiscal year 80 seniors emailed social services 301 times. This fiscal year (with still 1.5 months remaining), 132 seniors emailed 363 times.

Events and Activities: Multicultural event was a huge success. There will be a pizza party later this month. Exercise classes continue to grow.

North Shore Elder Services: Gave a lecture on malnutrition awareness which was an eye opener and distributed a lot of handouts.

North Shore Physicians Group: Lecture was cancelled due to lack of enrollment.

Transportation: In April there was a total of 1,659 rides – 401 to medical appointments, 683 to the COA, 81 to employment, 427 for shopping/errands and 67 miscellaneous rides.

LC wanted to share that she has been reappointed by the City Council.

Next Board Meeting: June 19, 2019.

A motion to adjourn is made by JR, seconded by JC, and passes unanimously.

The meeting adjourns at 5:50 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Fitzgerald, Clerk