

Age Friendly Chelmsford Implementation Committee meeting

Wednesday, January 26, 2022

Attending: Debra Siriani, Paul Cohen, Fred Brusseau, Jen Melanson, Connie Donahue, Lisa Marrone, Steve Callaghan, Louise Meyers, Lisa Marrone, Regina Jackson, Becky Herrmann.

The meeting was called to order at 9:03.

Introductions:

It was noted that Kim Trainor was no longer the liaison for Habitat for Humanity but that instead Kim Raymond, the Critical Home Coordinator would be representing Habitat moving ahead.

New Business:

Fred Brusseau asked if all had received the email regarding conflict of interest education and encouraged members to follow up on it.

Progress reports from sub-committees:

Debi Siriani and Lisa Marrone continue to work with David Guydan from the Discovery Center on a seminar series. Transition navigators have been selected and are in the process of identifying their skillsets and coming up with a plan of action for this year. Covid has impacted the progress. Next week Debi will meet with the Transition navigators -she has set up dedicated office space for them. Information about this program is in the February Senior Center newsletter, inviting people to call in for appointments. By the end of February there should be more progress to report.

Fred spoke about the Transition navigators attempting to reach out to companies and not getting a lot of helpful feedback. He wondered if we were meeting with David Guydan to get over that hurdle. Debi said as we are the pilot program, there is no additional guidance on this. But we are getting as many resources for transition navigators as possible. Lots of companies do not currently have volunteer opportunities now, either because they are not open to the public or not bringing people in because of Covid concerns. The connections with employers will happen but will take more time than initially expected.

Housing – 54 affordable units have been created on the former UMass campus. This will go before town meeting for a vote. Connie asked for the committee's support.

Becky Herrmann shared that she and staff had gone through the overall Age-Friendly initiatives and outlined every place the library was mentioned and updated progress – she will send a written report summarizing. She and Fred also brought up the idea of making sure that the Age-Friendly Action Plan should be on the library, senior center etc. webpages and that perhaps there should be a separate Age-Friendly town webpage developed.

Paul and Lisa shared that they will be doing a town wide newsletter online and in print, disseminated to town buildings, library and senior center. The first issue will likely be in two weeks – he asked that committee members make sure to share Age-friendly progress with him to include. He is hoping that the newsletter will enhance community conversations.

Steve shared that he had asked the Community Preservation Committee for additional funding for the Varney playground. He said there were also some conservation issues that will be coordinated with the Conservation Agent. He also shared that the Center School playground will be moving to a new location due to conservation issues. Roberts Field's backstop is being installed. Bill Askenburg is raising money for benches and tables to be

placed around the perimeter of Roberts field. Improvements will require that the public stay off the grass for Roberts Field – Little League and lacrosse will be able to start in the fall. The new exercise equipment will be available for use in the spring.

The new Fitness Park is an initiative from Lisa Marrone that was promoted by former Select Board member Glenn Diggs had asked the town to pursue. It is a part of a National Fitness campaign incorporating trails with circuit training. It is a 40-foot fitness court, an outdoor exercise area that coordinates with a smart phone and is targeted to all levels of fitness. It is located at the corner of Wilson and Chelmsford, near the rail trail, walkable and visible. The town received \$50,000 from Blue Cross as part of a healthy community grant. Chelmsford is the first community to receive this grant in the state.. The CPC also voted to sponsor the remaining funds. It will need spring town meeting approval. The Fitness Park should be installed late this year.

Jen updated the group on the transportation domain. The supplemental transportation program spearheaded by John Bowles was submitted for an ARPA request. The original ask was amended from \$450,000 over 3 years to a scaled back version. This was amended with assistance from Connie Donahue and Deb Siriani. The focus is now on developing a pilot plan that would expand the existing Senior Center program to fill in the gap from 2pm to 6pm and include non-senior age riders. This amended project was presented this past Monday and there seemed to be some support but there are still questions so the transportation working group will address these questions at a follow-up meeting on February 14th.

Paul clarified that the Select Board had requested a more granular, detailed budget. Regina Jackson remarked that one Select Board member mentioned means testing as a way of determining who would be eligible for the ride service. Discussion ensued and the feeling was that the service would help anyone who needs it. Means testing would be counterproductive and a lot more work for the program; the current program at the Senior Center is not means tested. — It was noted that lots of COA's have ride/support programs - this is an expansion program. The ultimate goal is to be able to provide expanded service for full business hours through the day. The Pilot Program will see if demand is there and what changes need to be made.

Unanticipated Topics/Open Discussion

Debi suggested that if there is any Age-friendly work that members want to promote, let her know and she will include in the Senior Center newsletter.

Fred asked if the town's new newsletter could have a separate small section to show Age-friendly progress in Chelmsford.

Deputy Chief Dan Ahern has left to become the Police Chief in South Portland Maine. The Police Chief will assign a new liaison. Jen suggested that Regina be added to the official members of the Age-friendly Implementation group. Regina demurred and reinforced the idea that we should have a safety person. Paul will follow up with Chief Spinney to appoint someone. Debi and Fred will be happy to give the new member an orientation to the Age-Friendly initiatives.

Debi was asked about an interview with the Eagle Independent that was conducted. She will follow up on pending article to see when it will run.

Louise Meyers shared that there are close to 100 towns that are in the AARP Age-Friendly network now and there is lots of collaboration and networking happening. They have used Chelmsford as an example of how to do age-Friendly well. MA has more age-friendly towns than any other state- it is a movement, not just an initiative. There is also talk of a National Conference being developed.

It was announced that there was a Planning Board meeting tonight and the Master Plan for the town was being presented for initial approval. Age-friendly initiatives are included.

Fred was thanked for his participation on that Master Plan Committee as a non-voting member.

Our Age-friendly action plan was very helpful to the Master Plan -- transportation, housing and recreation domains in particular were cited.

Approval of minutes

Debi motioned to approve- the minutes of November 24th, Lisa seconded- all in favor
Minutes of the December 29 – Debi motioned to approve, Steve seconded - all in favor
Next meeting is 23rd of February via zoom

Kim Raymond from Habitat ended the meeting with an anecdote about an elderly vet who had worked with Habitat's volunteer program - a volunteer electrician had come to fix the elderly Vet's kitchen fixture. The connection was a result of the Veterans' Breakfast. Kim thanked us for the ability to sit in. Debi asked for info for a FB post on the volunteer program; Kim will send along.

Meeting adjourned at 9:40 am.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Becky Herrmann", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Becky Herrmann, Secretary