

Age-Friendly Chelmsford Implementation Committee Meeting

Date of Meeting: 28 April 2021

Attendees:

Committee members: Debi Siriani, Fred Brusseau, John Bowles, Jen Melanson, Lisa Marrone, Connie Donahue, Dan Ahearn, Becky Herrmann, Steve Callaghan

Associate members: Regina Jackson, Louise Myers, Diana Boisvert, Kim Trainor (from Habitat for Humanity)

Also present: Paul Cohen

The meeting was called to order at 9:03.

Members introduced themselves and their affiliations. Fred welcomed everyone and explained the difference between an informal interest group (i.e., the Age-Friendly Chelmsford Core Team) and an official committee of the town. Nine members were appointed by the town manager and approved by the Select Board – he explained the open meeting law guidelines that govern the Age Friendly Chelmsford Implementation Committee

He referred to a Rules of Operation that he would draft and share with the committee for review and discussion at the next meeting.

New Business:

Nomination of the officers: Fred Brusseau was nominated by Debi Siriani to be the chair of the committee. It was seconded by Diana Boisvert. All unanimously voted in favor. Fred Brusseau suggested that Debi Siriani share the responsibilities as a co-chair, it was seconded by Connie Donahue. All unanimously voted in favor. Becky Herrmann was nominated as secretary by Connie Donahue. It was seconded by Lisa Marrone. All unanimously voted in favor.

Purpose Statement: Fred Brusseau suggested a sample purpose statement as follows “The purpose of the committee is to determine and undertake strategies to implement the goals and actions identified in the Chelmsford Age-friendly action plan” – Debi Siriani suggested including something about the development of future goals and Fred said he would share the draft purpose as part of the Rules of Operation.

Structure of the Committee:

Fred Brusseau suggested a structure that would include a sub-committee for each of the domains in the age-friendly action plan. Paul Cohen shared that people who are not part of the core group could also join the subcommittees to increase our diversity and share more skills. The subcommittee structure was voted on and approved unanimously.

Schedule: The meeting schedule was discussed and the last Wednesday of the month was suggested as the regular meeting day. All in favor, unanimously

Business Topics: Action Plan was noted and will be the reference document. It was suggested that the domain leads convene a meeting and report back to the committee. Fred Brusseau shared a 4-step implementation plan that included:

1. Take an inventory of what age-friendly implementations have ~~has~~ been accomplished to date – garden plots, age-friendly pocket park, transportation volunteer service, pop-up mobile library-completed and ongoing

Fred shared a template for an implementation table with an example from the Transportation Domain.

He suggested that we all use this standard table and he will share the document for all the sub-committee leads to fill in their updates. The uniformity will be useful in reporting and documentation.

Debi suggested that we all prepare a draft update using this template for the next meeting

2. Prepare an implementation table for each action item slated for accomplishment in that year. Begin with those actions that are within a 2021 timeframe.
3. Identify an estimated time frame for all the TBD items in the Action Plan- add month and year if possible
4. Prepare an implementation table for all actions with “On-going,” “In progress, on-going,” and “Long term, on-going” timeframes
5. Fred will also share these 4 steps in an email to the committee.

Habitat for Humanity: Kim Trainor explained Habitat for Humanity’s initiative to help seniors and veterans remain in place at home as they age – this includes helping with repairs, handicapped ramps, ensuring senior safety, adherences to code regulations and coordination with the Council on Aging, church groups and organizations. It is not a “hand-out but a hand-up” This is a volunteer-based group but the fees raised help pay for the administrative staff. This is an income-based program and Kim will share the specific guidelines with the committee at a later date. Applications are required – supervisors assess the work that needs to be done, and share what they are able to help with – do referrals to other helpful non-profits as warranted.

Connie Donahue, Kim Trainor, Jen Melanson and Regina Jackson will connect to learn more details – as an action item for next month’s meeting; they will update the committee on the conversations.

Transportation: John Bowles updated the committee on the volunteer transportation services initiative. A YouTube webinar to explain the service was developed and shared with the subcommittee members. The transportation subcommittee has met once, they are still in the process of determining feasibility and openness from community to embrace. The subcommittee is also exploring grant opportunities.

It was noted that the most difficult thing to accomplish is determining the need, how to identify the non-drivers in the community, how to survey renters and homeowners in need, how to coordinate with the housing authority. They only collected a small sample size so far so it is difficult to extrapolate.

If need is established how does the committee move ahead. The two biggest obstacles are:

- Determining the number of rides needed in a given week or month

- Need for an agency in town to formally agree to enfold this service under its auspices – could be volunteer run but it needs an administrative manager supported by the town. There is a need for consistency in attending meetings, receiving reports, and monitoring use and finances

Council on Aging, Select Board, Housing Authority, Jen Melanson, Veteran's agent –will all connect moving ahead to help determine viability of this volunteer transportation service.

Other issues to explore include: CORI checks, insurance liabilities etc.

Dan Ahearn spoke to the concern of how to schedule and dispatch these rides – there is a desire not to add more work for the COA and the Senior Center's plate

It was suggested that the Transportation subcommittee:

- Develop a concept of operations on how this service might operate to present to the relative boards
- Identify what equipment/office needs are – Laptop? Phone? Physical office space? What software required
- Determine how seniors would access the service - mobile phone, landline, app

John Bowles will provide a hard copy of the status of proposal for the next meeting with information about the options of using a paid dispatcher/scheduler through potential grant money or paid by the town. Other items that need to be addressed are:

- How to market the service needs– The Communications and Transportation subcommittees should work together on ways to market, promote and seek information from other communities offering similar services.

Lisa Marrone is pursuing a grant opportunity to help with the pocket park – DPW did excellent prep work but the perennial garden is still being worked on. Lisa applied for an AARP Community challenge grant in the amount of \$20,000 to help establish the perennial garden and complete the park project – A Dogwood Tree will be planted for Arbor Day – benches have also been ordered.

Action items: Share the Implementation table and the 4 step plan. Share the rules for subcommittee meetings and minutes

Fred thanked the committee and appreciated all the support. Fred expressed excitement about the upcoming committee work.

John Bowles motioned to adjourn and Jen Melanson seconded it. The meeting ended at 10 AM.

Respectfully submitted,



Becky Herrmann, Secretary