

Age-Friendly Agenda Minutes
May 26, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 9:02. In attendance were committee members

John Bowles
Fred Brusseau
Steve Callaghan
Connie Donahue
Becky Herrmann
Lisa Marrone
Jennifer Melanson
Debra Siriani

Also in attendance: Paul Cohen

Also Associate Members:

Louise Myers
Regina Jackson
Diana Boisvert
Kim Trainor

Agenda

Introductions: As the members in attendance were all known to each other, introductions were not needed.

Unfinished Business

“Rules of Operation” – Fred Brusseau asked for suggested changes or comments to the document he shared with the committee. There were none, so Fred will disseminate the final version of the “Rules of Operation” to members and associates.

Implementation Phase Approach (IPA) - Fred discussed his desire to standardize the implementation approach in order to get a handle on where we are in the implementation phase. He also reviewed the IPA with the group. He asked for comments or changes. Hearing none, he will also send that final version of the IPA to the committee and associate members. He reminded committee members that if as part of your report you have documents that you want to screen share during a remote meeting that you should send the documents to Deb Siriani so that she can screen share during the meeting.

New Business

Progress reports from sub-committees

Transportation update: John Bowles reported that his committee had 4 goals or areas that they are focusing on. His goal time frames have now been shortened by six months. Deb will work with Fred on the status of the Senior Center vans. John highlighted a major accomplishment: the procurement of live data for non-drivers. Working with the Chelmsford Housing Authority and two of their social workers, forty complete surveys

were conducted. The information compiled showed that many stay-at-home residents were not aware of the Senior Center transportation options. Most are relying on relatives, then friends and neighbors. Just 20% of those surveyed used the Senior Center transport. The data also include the kinds of trips that people needed transportation for. John will put together a summary of the data to share with the committee at a later date.

Fred asked about possible grant applications to implement a volunteer transportation service. Committee will meet with Deb to explore funding avenues. Jon asked town manager Paul Cohen if Covid-19 money might be able to be applied for this purpose. Paul shared the good news that COVID-19 (American Rescue Plan) expenses will potentially cover this project as it falls under social equity purposes. The Select Board will be the decision-making agency – grant monies have to be allocated by Dec 2024, but can be spent through 2026 – Paul suggested that the Age-Friendly Sub-Committees that have time-sensitive goals go ahead and develop their proposals and submit to the Select Board. The Age-Friendly Committee, in general should be thinking of applying for these funds for long-term solutions, addressing long-standing disparities.

Housing – This Subcommittee has not met since the last meeting. Connie Donahue and Jen Melanson will work together to prepare an Implementation Table for the Habitat for Humanity projects available for seniors.

Communications- Becky Herrmann reported that her subcommittee had not met since the last meeting but that the Pop-up Mobile Library has been visiting the Senior Center and other senior housing all around town. The “On the Road to Healthy Senior Living” state grant that the library received to bring programs and services to seniors has been underway for about 7 months. As Covid restrictions are lifted, the library looks forward to visiting seniors and offering programs and trainings at senior facilities and housing.

Outdoor spaces and buildings – Steve Callaghan spoke about projects at Varney playground, Southwell playground, Center School playground and a 10 x 16 shade structure, possibly with ADA surfacing that will be built at Harrington Elementary. Steve also updated us on construction work that will soon begin on Roberts Field- two ball fields and athletic field in the front, and 4 athletic areas ideally suited for seniors.

Fred explained the IPA process again and encouraged all Committee members to complete the Implementation Tables for each of their projects, emphasizing the value of seeing the totality of the projects to review.

Civic Engagement and Employment- Lisa met with Empower and Success Corps- a non-profit group focused on age-friendly initiatives across the state. The town is considering partnership with them at no cost to the community. Empower and Success Corps finds their own funding and have worked with many Council on the Aging groups. Their Discover Center program would help us with outreach to the community, civic participation and volunteerism. They would help us identify resources that could use more volunteers and help us fill in gaps where needed. All of the Age-Friendly Domains would be addressed. They would help market and promote the idea of what age-friendly

means in a community. Some of their services include mentorship, providing information sessions and enabling volunteers to connect with each other and with their community. In the long run, this kind of coordination will help with our evaluation on how we are doing, what we can do better and where the gaps are.

Empower can also help with career changes and supplemental work. Lisa is also working with MASS Hire in Lowell on the idea of hosting a job fair. Advocacy and promotion for this event would focus on mature workers.

Jen Melanson suggested that Lisa and she connect regarding “Gardens for Good” Jen is in need of volunteers and she is looking to give priority to seniors in the senior tax rebate program. Paul reiterated the American Rescue Plan funding could also be applied to this kind of thing.

The Discovery Centers are spin-offs of the Empower Success Corps. David Guydan spoke with Lisa and Fred about the ideas, resources, and peer support system in place to help seniors find purpose in their work, engage in their communities, and create balance in their lives. Transition Navigators, who are local peer coaches, help those who visit the Discovery Center navigate the transition from full time employment into finding a volunteer opportunity that matches the individual’s skills and interests. The Discovery Center could also help train senior center staff or volunteers to become Transition Navigators too and to DWN – “Discover What’s Next.”

Fred suggested that we extend an invitation to David Guydan to give us a 20 minute overview at the next Age-Friendly Committee meeting, presuming it will still be remote. Lisa will invite him to the Zoom meeting to discuss. Debi suggested that a senior tax worker partnership with this program would be great. Becky offered the library to help with the job fair idea

Social Participation, Respect and Inclusion – Debi shared that they had added eight more gardens to the Senior Center project and that as of next Tuesday morning the Senior Center will be open with no mask or space limitations. They are receiving lots of calls every day and will be happily welcoming people back. They reopened the Companion Program for in-house visits. Debi also met with the Diversity and Inclusion Committee to communicate the needs of people over 60, to highlight our Age-Friendly shared goals, and to give the committee another lens through which they can frame their discussion.

Action items:

- Fred asked that members please submit Implementation Tables to Debi prior to the next meeting.
- If you have an immediate need for funding, please put your proposal together in draft form for presentation to the Select Board and share with the Age-Friendly Committee

- Continue to work on long-term requests for project funding and submit those to the Age-Friendly Committee who will then put together a joint proposal that combines the different domain funding requests under one umbrella.
- Fred will take draft status labeling off of documents and send out to committee and associate members.
- Lisa will contact David Guydan and invite him to the next meeting.

Unanticipated Topics/open discussion

Debi shared the two upcoming events:

Thursday, May 27 10:30-11:30

Celebrating Community Strength-flyer attached

Registration required-

https://jsi.zoom.us/webinar/register/6216206643698/WN_DgZr7HMwRbqVRx-VV-cUtQ

In recognition of Older American's Month, please the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, to hear from community leaders in the age- and dementia friendly movement and see highlights from the Massachusetts Age-Friendly Year Two progress report.

September 27-28, 2021

2021 Massachusetts Age- and Dementia Friendly Summit

The summit this year will be held virtually September 27-28. We plan to have a variety of sessions across the two days. As the committee of statewide stakeholders begins the planning process we would love to hear from you. If you could, please complete the survey located at the link below it would be helpful to ensure we are meeting the needs of our communities. The survey will be available until June 11.

Survey - <https://forms.office.com/r/PagHsBqvV1>

Approval of minutes: The minutes from the April 28, 2021 Meeting were reviewed. Debi moved to accept, Jen seconded. Unanimous vote – Becky will get the minutes out to entire committee and post them.

Lisa also announced that the Age-friendly park bench was in along with a tree, and post and rails were up. The AARP grant for perennial garden awards that she applied for will be announced in June.

Next Meeting Date – June 30, 2021 – still held via Zoom unless we are updated differently.

Jen moved to adjourn the meeting, Lisa seconded it.

Adjourn at 9:54

