

## Age-Friendly Minutes

July 28, 2021

In attendance:

Debra Siriani, Fred Brusseau, Becky Herrmann, Kelly Kirby, Shaun McCarthy, Laura Todd, Kim Trainor, Dan Ahern, John Bowles, Lisa Marrone, Connie Donahue, Paul Cohen, Regina Jackson, Jennifer Melanson, Virginia Crocker Timmons, guest speakers Shaun McCarthy and David Guydan

-----

Lisa Marrone introduced David Guydan of Empower Service Corps who shared a slide presentation on the Discovery Center and how he could support each of the Age-Friendly domains implement our goals. Highlights of the presentation are below:

Support for three of the eight pillars of the Age-Friendly goals

- social participation – combatting isolation, providing positive purposeful activity
- respect and inclusion – intergenerational - valued
- civic participation and employment – engaged in the life of the town volunteer or paid

Life expectancy has increased some 20 years, as people are leading healthier active lives there is now a 20-year window to be engaged in meaningful work. Those 55 and older need encouragement and clarity on how to proceed and how to make the most of a projected extra seven years of life.

The mission statement for the Discovery Center is as follows: “With senior centers as conveners, reach people, age 55 and older, helping them to find purpose and motivation to engage with nonprofits, governmental agencies and others by using their skills and experience in social purpose work and reaping the benefits of living purposeful, active lives”

Outcomes include:

- Greater sense of well-being
- More social interaction,
- Council on Aging plays a bigger role, community resource
- Increase in volunteerism
- Changing people’s perceptions about older adults and their abilities to make a difference

David also spoke about educating the senior population about what is possible; what is next. What is your Encore story? He suggested that we would offer several different seminars virtually through Chelmsford COA.

Identify Transition Navigators (TNs) who will be mentors for the people coming into the center.

Navigator skills needed include:

- Communication and interpersonal skills
- Critical thinking
- Supportive and positive, yet realistic and professions
- Self-confidence
- Helping participants feel connected to the community

Training and orientation will be provided for TNs – Tool kit provided. Empower Inc has implemented this program in 11 other COAs in the state.

Triple benefits of civic engagement

- Good for you
- Good for others
- Good for society

The Discovery Centers are funded by and supported by a grant from the executive office of MA Elder Affairs, administered by the MA Council of the Aging. They receive a lump sum grant that is shared equitably among participating towns. They emphasize shared resources so they don't reinvent the wheel, and they employ evaluation tools so that they are constantly improving their resources.

Contact for further questions David Guydan [david@discoveringwhatsnext.org](mailto:david@discoveringwhatsnext.org) – 617-763-7457

Fred Brusseau asked about the process and next steps –

Typical implementation is as follows:

Work with Debi Siriani to set up an information session to invite community to learn about the Discovery Center. Education, then select people to be Transition Navigators. Go through vetting and training with local COA usually two 1.5-hour sessions. Then start to do marketing and communications – Sample press releases for use in social media, website and print resources are provided by the Discovery Center.

Then set up one or two scheduled seminars – “Discover your purpose” “Discover your encore”. Meet with Transition Navigators. Typically set up appointments/walk-ins. It is an evolutionary process – continued attention to seminars/marketing and outreach will make it happen. David recommends using the rest of summer for behind-the-scenes prep

Fred Brusseau asked how long it typically takes to get going?

David suggested that by the end of the year we should feel like we have had a launch and see the program embedded in the work we do. We would see seniors volunteering. We should use Lisa Marrone to establish a pipeline for people coming to the Discovery Center. He suggested holding a Stakeholder meeting – town government, rotary, faith-based community members etc. to help get the word out.

Debi Siriani asked “How does this coordinate with the senior tax worker program?” David suggested the Senior tax workers might be great Transition Navigators – he would be happy to meet with the manager of the tax relief program to ensure that it is coordinated with the Discovery Center work.

After some discussion, it was decided that the town would move ahead with a partnership with the Discovery Center and Becky, Debi and Lisa will meet to come up with a rollout plan to submit to the Age-friendly Committee – they will coordinate with David Guydan.

Updates from the domains followed:

- John Bowles (Transportation domain) met with Debi and Fred to define what the overall enhanced transportation program would look like. Over 3100 people over the age of 75 in town – perhaps at least 100 in senior housing that do not drive - non-drivers have been identified. One goal is to increase use of senior center vans- Another goal was to up the marketing of

transportation options to seniors needing transportation/ increase efforts to reach this targeted population via social media, websites, printed materials etc. He will have one or two more subcommittee meetings to finalize vision and marketing efforts. He will share those meeting dates with the full committee.

- Becky Herrmann reported for the Communication and information domain. She spoke of supporting the creation of a centralized digital calendar for the community. She will discuss software needs with the different stakeholders and town departments to ensure compatibility. Her domain is also working with Chelmsford Telemedia to help them remain funded and viable. She also spoke of wanting to convene the domain leaders to identify opportunities for collaboration on information sharing and the need to set up quarterly meetings. She will be reaching out to town departments and agencies. Another goal is to establish a town communication and information committee that will work together to create a town communications standards document – aiming to do that in September.
- Lisa Marrone reported on Civic Participation and Employment. She introduced Shaun McCarthy from Mass Hire who spoke about a large virtual job fair happening in August. <https://masshirelowellcc.com/massjobfair/> and all the services that Mass Hire offers including the Hot Jobs - Non-computer users can call a hotline or make an appointment to meet with a career counselor at the Lowell Career Center. Lisa spoke to the need of to connect all this Mass Hire job information with individuals needed employment – how do we get to the deeper level to get the people involved? Partnership with the Discovery Center will help engage community members versus the business and employers which is Lisa’s typical network. Lisa also mentioned the library’s over 50 job seekers group – more details are here: <https://chelmsfordlibrary.libcal.com/event/7936113> Also, the Pocket Park has been completed and she is also working on creating a business training program to address age-friendly issues. She will work to support Chelmsford small businesses in this way.
- Steve Callaghan reported for Outdoor Spaces and Buildings. One of his goals is to create more safe, accessible and welcoming open spaces in the town. There have been reports of bad behavior at Varney Park and those were recently addressed. Large trees near the playground were trimmed for better visibility and regular police details and cameras are providing added security. Heart Pond and Varney Beach were improved as Phil Stanway was able to come out with a tractor and rake and weed the beaches and secure the docks. Center School and South Row swing sets/playgrounds have been adapted for ADA use. Roberts Field/Friendship Park is being leveled and ballfields added, exercise stations, a jogging/walking path, and a sprinkler system run by a well. It likely won’t be finished till next spring.
- Jennifer Melanson– She met with Connie Donahue to bring more support to housing. She is working on Increasing enrollment among seniors for SNAP benefits, and will partner with the Library to increase this with fall Saturday walk-in enrollment days. She spoke about the expansion of Gardens for Good --- 21 mostly senior volunteers are coming in 3 times a week to keep the gardens weeded and kept up. She also spoke about partnership with Grow a Row; it is a tremendous success. They are collecting vegetables grown by residents who donate their garden produce to families in need. Produce has been donated to Table of Plenty and to Senior Housing.
- Debi Siriani spoke about the Participation and Social inclusion domain. She is working on getting the programs at the Senior Center up and running – Covid has derailed the intergenerational

component of Debi's goals and there is still lots on hold. The Parking lot renovation has closed the Senior Center down during that project.

Town manager Paul Cohen spoke about the American Rescue Act – and reminded the committee that ARA funding can support the projects and programs of the Age-Friendly initiative. Debi thanked all for their participation and hard work.

Jen Melanson motioned to adjourn, Lisa Marrone seconded. All in favor. Meeting ended at 10:09

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Becky Herrmann". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Becky Herrmann, Secretary