

## **Age-Friendly Chelmsford Implementation Committee Meeting Minutes**

Date of Meeting: 25 August 2021

Attendees:

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

Associate members: Regina Jackson, Louise Myers, Kelly Kirby

Also present: David Guydan

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m.

### **New Business:**

Progress reports from sub-committees:

Lisa Marrone shared that we would be moving forward with the Chelmsford Discovery Center. The working group is meeting on Friday with David Guydan to outline action items and next steps to begin.

Lisa Marrone also mentioned that the perennial garden has been planted at the Pocket Park and the benches with dedicated plaques are also there. Currently signage is being worked on, which will go on North Road and on Worthen Street to designate it as an Age-Friendly Public Park. The goal is to create an awareness and identity of Age-Friendly Chelmsford.

Lisa Marrone shared that the Job Fair with partnership of Mass Hire was very successful. There were 11 Chelmsford employers that participated. Chelmsford had a large number of employers participating in the job fair, which Lisa partly attributes to the Town's connection with our businesses, displaying a value from partnership with the Town. The Discovery Center will help us use our volunteers to amplify the goals of the different domains. Lisa looks forward to the work of the next year.

Connie Donahue said that they have met with the Housing Advisory Board and with the Community Preservation Committee and continue to look for sites for affordable housing. One site is the UMass West Campus. David Hedison did a presentation to the Community Preservation Committee and they awarded 1.2 million dollars of support if the current plan with the current developer gets approved. Fred Brusseau spoke about Housing Navigator Mass which is a new tool that potential Chelmsford residents can use to find all affordable housing in Chelmsford. Chelmsford was one of the first communities to upload their information to it. Here is the link: <https://www.housingnavigatoroma.org/>

John Bowles held a committee meeting at the Senior Center yesterday, 8/24/2021. The goal of the meeting was to define and agree upon the approach for expanding or supplementing services at the Senior Center and elsewhere in Town. John felt that the committee made enough progress that he would be able to begin modifying some initial plans from 2-3 months ago and shape them into something that could be presented to the Age-Friendly Committee and the Select Board within 1-2 months. John is reviewing all of the comments from yesterday's meeting and will summarize and share the information. John is awaiting guidelines from the Select Board for applying for ARPA funds and is preparing a proposal for the Select Board. John also wants to help promote the current transportation offerings already in place at the Senior Center. He is working on marketing pieces for that.

Fred Brusseau also attended the Transportation Committee meeting and said that the committee was all agreed that transportation is a high priority and an unmet need in Chelmsford. Fred has some concerns about the current proposal and will send an email.

Jen Melanson wanted to acknowledge John Bowles for his efforts in helping to increase the access to healthy foods for seniors and all residents of Chelmsford. Jen's office has been working on the Gardens for Good project. John organized the Chelmsford Grow a Row initiative, which involves local residents, who have gardens, using a portion of their gardens to grow food to donate to residents in Chelmsford. John has also helped coordinate a large community garden effort, which is a combined effort between Grow a Row and Gardens for Good. Every Tuesday, Table of Plenty receives produce and every Thursday produce is given to senior housing.

Connie also acknowledged John for doing a superb job putting together a great group of people for the Housing Authority. Debi Siriani mentioned that she has seen photos on Facebook and that it has been a nice way to have people volunteer within the community.

Jen Melanson also acknowledged all of the hard work done administratively by Kelly Kirby to coordinate the volunteer schedule and keep everything organized.

David Guydan thanked the Age-Friendly committee members for voting in favor of implementing the Discovery program and is looking forward to working with the group. David is excited to see how all the Age-friendly initiatives will dovetail with his work. David added that this is the first time that the Discovery Center has become involved with a community through an Age-friendly initiative. He is excited to use what he learns in Chelmsford as a model for working with other Age-friendly communities.

Steve Callaghan shared progress photos of the Roberts Field/Friendship Park project. Steve estimated that people will not be able to use the area until the spring as it needs to be hydro seeded, which should occur within the next 2-3 weeks and then it has to rest and allow time for the new grass to grow. Debi Siriani commented that the walking path would be great for seniors. Steve also shared that there were currently 2 benches that have been ordered to put along the walking path, but added that the committee could take a look at the area and make suggestions for additional seating if necessary in the future. The dugout is fenced in for protection of the players and spectators. The walking path is around 1/3 of a mile. The path is connected to the trail in the woods. The surface of the walking/jogging path is going to be Roma, which is 3/8 inch sized stone. There are 2 porta-potties, one of which is handicap accessible. Steve does not anticipate adding any additional bathrooms since the experience has been that the upkeep of restrooms, such as at Varney Park is a lot of work. The area should be pet friendly, as it was, prior to the updates.

Debi Siriani mentioned that the committee could possibly ask AARP for funding to make the park more Age-friendly if we needed more benches or a roof over the handicap bathroom.

Fred Brusseau stated that at the beginning of the implementation committee meetings, we all agreed it was necessary to document progress. Fred prepared an implementation table and sent it to all sub-committee leads as a vehicle to use to document their progress. The sub-committee leads were asked to submit the information to Debi Siriani so that she could consolidate the information and make it available for all committee members or anyone else that might be interested in the committee's

progress. Fred reminded sub-committee leads to prepare their implementation tables or put the information into whatever format works for them and to give that information to Debi. This information is useful in providing periodic progress reports to the Town, to Virginia, the Committee's Select Board liaison, and for reporting our progress to AARP.

### **Unfinished Business**

Format of future meetings (in-person and/or remote):

Fred Brusseau explained that the State has approved an extension of the suspension of the Open Meeting Law until April 22, 2022. This means that the committee is permitted but not required to meet remotely. Fred said that there are pros and cons for meeting in-person and meeting remotely and asked the committee for input about their preferences. Debi Siriani commented that zoom was helpful for her especially with space limitations during construction at the Senior Center. Lisa, Jen, and Fred all agreed that the committee has been very productive during the Zoom meetings. The committee decided to continue to have meetings on Zoom.

### **Approval of minutes of the 28 July 2021 Meeting and the 26 May 2021 Meeting**

Jen Melanson motioned and Lisa Marrone seconded the motion to approve the 26 May 2021 Meeting Minutes. The motion carried 8-0.

Debi Siriani motioned and Jen Melanson seconded the motion to approve the 28 July 2021 Meeting Minutes. The motion carried 8-0.

Fred Brusseau watched the Joint Session with the Town Manager and the Select Board to discuss goals for FY2022. One of the topics discussed was that several committees are not conforming to the obligation to produce the minutes from their meetings. Fred acknowledged Lisa Marrone and Becky Herrmann for their work taking the minutes during the planning and implementation phases.

### **Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 29, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. remotely on Zoom.

### **Adjournment**

Lisa Marrone motioned to adjourn. Jen Melanson seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:46 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Becky Herrmann, Secretary