

WESTON COUNCIL ON AGING
COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS COMMITTEE
Minutes – January 11, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 am on the Weston COA Zoom application.

Present: Kristen Frady, Vida Goldstein, Frank Hillery, Peter Mitsakos, John McCahan, Prather Palmer, Shirley Small-Rougeau, Susan Wagner. Gerri Scoll, member of the Board, also attended.

Absent: Marge Ackerman, Mignonne Murray, Dianne Sullivan, Teresa Young

1. John read the following statement:

“Pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor’s March 15, 2020 Order concerning imposition on strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, meetings in the Town of Weston will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. We will strive to provide access to such meetings via a link to call in, or other similar option. In the event we are unable to accommodate the same, despite best efforts, we will post recorded sessions of the meeting as soon as possible following the same. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings.”

2. The minutes of December 7, 2020 were approved with the following correction: In Item 4d, Kristen, rather than Vida, had agreed to contact Dr. Vicki Jackson.

3. There were no residents’ comments.

4. Frank Hillery was introduced as a new member of the committee.

5a. Health care and Insurance Hazards Programming. John referenced the recent federal legislation that outlaws surprise billing for out-of-network services and asked if the committee considered programming for the unexpected costs of health care to still be relevant? Ambulance charges and the cost of ‘observation’ status are still issues. Prather will contact Rep. Katherine Clark’s office to see what information she or her staff may be able to bring to the COA.

5b. Health Care Issues of the Elderly. Susan, Kristen and Vida noted the progress that had been made: Dr. Laura Fine is scheduled to talk about common eye problems, prevention and treatment, on March 5th. Melissa Mahaffey, and audiologist at the West Newton Hearing Center, has agreed to speak; no date has as yet been set. In respect to future talks, Vida suggested Dr. Joanne Borg-Stein, a physiatrist, to discuss common joint and activity issues. Susan will contact neighboring COAs to identify a podiatrist to address foot problems. (Skin changes and acid reflux will be addressed in the future. Memory changes including Alzheimer’s disease may also be added to the list especially if a new drug for Alzheimer’s is approved.)

5c. Scams and Other Such Problems were passed over. The item will be rescheduled for our next meeting.

5d. Follow up on CBD and Medical Marijuana focused on identifying someone who would be able to address the topic authoritatively and objectively. Dr. Vicki Jackson, chief of Palliative Medicine at MGH, had been considered. Vida also suggested Dr. Mihir Kamdar at MGH who is also a palliative care physician as well as pain specialist.

5e. Social Injustice. Vida agreed to distribute the links to program that her daughter Susanne organized on Race and Privilege that appeared on Facebook.

5f. Programming for the Chinese Community was passed over. The item will be rescheduled for our next meeting.

6a, Possible Membership Increase. John said that Marge Ackerman, Chair of Board, had contacted him and Vida about the committees and groups of the Board and the possibility of merging committees with similar goals. The Community Connections, Awareness and Welcome committees were under discussion. There is a rationale to merging committees where goals and objectives overlap and there is also a potential concern that if a committee becomes too large, a discussion with everyone participating becomes difficult. He and Vida will be preparing a current mission statement, goals and objectives for the committee to discuss at our next meeting.

7. Administrative/Scheduling Matters. Gerri inquired about the availability of the Covid-19 vaccine and the role of the COA in administering it. Prather and Kristen have both contacted the Weston Board of Health for information and have received no response. Gerri wondered if the Regis nursing department might be of assistance. Vida supported the idea that the COA would become a center for vaccine distribution in town. Kristen noted that this was a significant issue for Mignonne.

The next meeting is scheduled for 10:00 am on Monday February 8, 2021 by Zoom.

No further business being identified, the meeting was adjourned at 11:20.

Submitted by John McCahan