

WESTON COUNCIL ON AGING
COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS COMMITTEE
Minutes – March 8, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 am on the Weston COA Zoom application.

Present: Marge Ackerman, Kristen Frady, Vida Goldstein, Peter Mitsakos, John McCahan, Mignonne Murray, Shirley Small-Rougeau, Dianne Sullivan, Susan Wagner, and Teresa Young. Patricia McGann also attended.

Absent: Frank Hillery, Prather Palmer

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 February 8, 2021 were approved as written.

3. There were no residents’ comments.

4. Old Business

4a. Teresa discussed the programming for the Chinese community. She noted that attention was being paid to explaining local culture to the Chinese community and also to bringing elements of Chinese culture to the Weston population. Discussion groups in the native language have been formed. Topics that are being considered include reading and writing Chinese (calligraphy); cooking (pancakes); calendar interpretation (lunar basis).

4b. Shirley, Vida and John discussed plans for a plenary session of the Board and staff of the COA along with members of this committee to better understand the issues of social justice especially as they appear in Weston. The session, by Zoom, is scheduled for 2:30 pm on Wednesday March 24th. Five panelists – Cathy Nicholson, Joyce Pastor, Jeff Barz-Snell, Colm McGarry and Shirley Small-Rougeau will present their experiences and understanding of social justice in Weston. Open discussion will follow. It is expected that the session will generate ideas and suggestions for constructive programming. Vida noted that others in town have been involved in promoting social justice. The potential advantages in working with these other people and groups were recognized. Shirley noted that the issues were broader than those attributed solely to skin color. Marge referenced a talk sponsored by the Weston Public Library (3/9) on race amity. Peter suggested a conversation with business owners in town to obtain a broader picture of the issues. Susan described the recent “Our Wayland” Zoom-cast that featured reflections by a long standing black member of the community and a young black police officer.

(Subsequent to this meeting, the subcommittee included the members of the Friends of the COA in the list of invitees to the 3/24 session.)

4c. Prather had received a response from Rep. Clark’s office about recent legislation entitled the “No Surprises Act” that is aimed at holding “patients harmless from surprise medical bills”. Since Prather was unable to attend this meeting, John summarized the material sent from Rep. Clark’s office. In essence, patients are required to pay only the in-network cost-sharing amount for out-of-network emergency care. Disputed charges

are to be settled between the providers and insurance company without involving the patient. While the bill is seen to be a step in patient protection, it isn't clear that it is as comprehensive as it could be. Discussion followed in respect to transportation services and the way in which the emergency services work, and bill, in this community. There was consensus that a presentation on these issues by the Fire Chief would be useful. Mignonne will be in contact with him.

4d. Programming for common ailments of the elderly has proceeded apace: eyes – 3/24; ears – 4/21; pain – 5/18. Kristen is hoping to schedule a physiatrist for June. Peter is continuing to pursue the possibility of a urologist to talk about common urinary problems. John and Susan had narrowed the recommendations of podiatrists to two whom John will contact. Kristen noted that the COA aims to record these sessions in order to develop an online library.

4e. Discussion of the draft mission statement was passed over until next meeting.

5a. Issues of personal finance were discussed as no programming specific to this topic had been done for some time. Dianne had sent around in advance a list of the events that had been generated by the personal finance group in the past. Kristen noted that she is still pursuing the Funeral Alliance for an objective discussion of funeral costs. Estate planning and tax obligations were noted to be subjects of perennial interest. Some larger events including a housing fair and a panel on housing alternatives had been very successful and could bear repetition. Susan suggested scheduling such an event for a year from now when venues are expected to be back to normal. Writing of wills and obituaries were also popular programs.

The next meeting is scheduled for 10:00 am on Monday April 5, 2021 by Zoom.

No further business being identified, the meeting was adjourned at 11:45.

Submitted by John McCahan