

WESTON COUNCIL ON AGING
COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS COMMITTEE
Minutes – March 28, 2023

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

Present: Paul Foley, Kristen Frady, Vida Goldstein, Joan Ingersoll, John McCahan, Peter Mitsakos, Susan Pauker, Prather Palmer, Shirley Small-Rougeau, Dianne Sullivan, Susan Wagner, Teresa Young.

Absent:

The new Director of the Weston COA, Joan Ingersoll, was introduced to the committee.

1. John read the following statement:

Chapter 107 of the Acts of 2022, “An Act Relative to Extending Certain State of Emergency Accommodations”, authorizes municipal boards to hold fully remote or hybrid meetings through March of 2023. The law does not mandate or prohibit in-person meetings; instead, it allows the Town flexibility in that regard. As required, if a meeting is held fully remotely or as a hybrid meeting, adequate alternative access is provided through a video conferencing link included on the meeting agenda.

Since the law authorizing remote meetings was due to lapse in a few days, the committee discussed their preferences for in-person vs remote meetings going forward. The consensus favored hybrid meetings if remote attendance continues to be permitted. The scheduling for the room in which such meetings can occur is limited. If a hybrid meeting would be possible, John will poll the committee to find a suitable date and time.

2. The minutes of February 23, 2023 were approved as written.

3. There were no residents’ comments.

4. Old Business

4a. **Social Justice Working Group.** Shirley reminded the committee that Race Amity Day that the SJWG is sponsoring will be occurring on Sunday, June 11, at 6:00 pm in the Community Center Great Room. The emphasis will be on indigenous people. The Chief of the Chappaquiddick Wampanoag tribe, Tom Frederick, will speak. He will be accompanied by the African American Dance and Drummers. The use of the drum as a communicating instrument will be part of the message.

Susan Wagner made reference to the book “Before Brooklyn: The Unsung Heroes Who Helped Break Baseball’s Color Barrier” by Ted Reinstein. The Weston Public Library had featured a program with Mr. Reinstein that was poorly attended. Susan suggested referring the author to the SJWG as programming through the SJWG may reach a wider audience. Shirley will take up this suggestion.

4.b. **MIT AgeLab.** Paul reported on a wide ranging discussion that he had with a research scientist at the AgeLab, Dr. Chaiwoo Lee. Her specific interest is in newer technologies that can assist older adults. In part, they discussed the possibility of a formal relationship with the town but the specifics of such a relationship were not detailed as it would be a new endeavor for the AgeLab. She invited the CCC to look at the research projects on the MIT website to see if there might be a subject of particular

interest: <https://agelab.mit.edu/>. Shirley noted that there were Board members who were very interested in this subject. After further discussion, the committee asked Paul to find a time when Dr. Lee could meet with the committee as a whole, preferentially as a hybrid meeting that included the members of the CCC and interested Board members.

4.c. Programming Possibilities for Artificial Intelligence and Social Media. Vida spoke with Carol Ott who did not have any suggestions for a presenter. Paul described Ezra Klein's writing on the subject including a quote from the CEO of Google that identified AI as "probably the most important thing that humanity has ever worked on". Paul reviewed some of the very wide ranging possibilities of AI research and applications. Kristen wondered if AI might be a "Local and Global" discussion group topic. Susan Wagner suggested taking on specific aspects of AI since it's such a huge subject, e.g. its application to medicine, its use by the markets, or what kids are doing with it. Teresa emphasized approaching the subject as it affects the elderly. Further discussion ensued on the value of a broad approach to the subject as opposed to a more concentrated focus. Susan Wagner proposed taking the issue to the planning committee for the Local and Global group which the CCC endorsed. Paul will also ask Dr. Lee to discuss AI during the pending MIT Age Lab meeting.

4.d. Pet Care. Susan Wagner and Susan Pauker discussed possible topics including the value of a pet's company, the responsibilities of pet maintenance, the options for pet care should an owner die or be temporarily incapacitated, and the role of specially trained pets. Perhaps someone from a dog shelter would be able to address their expectations of dog owners. Joan noted the social restrictions that pets may impose on owners. Kristen added the notion that people who are already owners are likely to have different issues from those who are considering a pet. The use of robotic dogs was briefly discussed. No conclusion was reached.

4.f. Rheumatology presentation. Vida noted that Dr. Sara Shoenfeld would be presenting sometime this summer.

Given the hour, John proposed holding the remaining agenda items over until our next meeting.

The next meeting was scheduled for 10:00 am on Tuesday April 25, 2023 pending the state's directive on the use of Zoom for official meetings. The meeting was adjourned at 11:02 am.

Submitted by John McCahan