

WESTON COUNCIL ON AGING
COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS COMMITTEE
Minutes – June 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, Frank Hillery, Peter Mitsakos, Prather Palmer, John McCahan, Shirley Small-Rougeau, Susan Wagner.

Absent: Mignonette 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 May 3, 2021 were approved as written including the change in date and time of the Social Justice Working Group to June 8 at 2:00 pm.

3. There were no residents’ comments.

4. Old Business

4a. Programming for common health issues. Susan said that she had contacted the speakers’ bureau at Newton Wellesley Hospital. To recommend a speaker, they require a minimum of 20 attendees. Since a significant number of our constituents watch programs that have been recorded, the discussion centered on how we may conduct programs in the future: in person vs Zoom vs a hybrid system; also recording them in a way that protected the privacy of those asking questions about sensitive topics. Kristen noted that it would be very tricky to protect identities on recorded Zoom sessions. Peter endorsed the creation and maintenance of a library of recorded materials to which constituents would have access on demand. Susan also thought we might allow viewers who wanted to remain anonymous to ask questions in advance by email. Identifying information could then be removed by COA staff before the question was submitted to the speaker.

Discussion moved to programming for a newly approved drug for Alzheimer’s disease being offered by Biogen. Prather will contact the Cure Alzheimer’s group to see if they can provide a knowledgeable speaker.

John noted that he had contacted two podiatrists, Dr Boudreau and Dr. Tarr, from the list that Susan had developed earlier this year. One did not call back and the other declined due to lack of time. Programming for common issues of the feet remains unfilled. Susan, when she re-contacts the NWH speakers’ bureau, will inquire about podiatry.

Peter continues to pursue a urologic source for a program on common male issues.

John has not yet contacted a geriatrician to talk about the common issues that concern geriatricians when they see any older adult. He will follow up with that.

Shirley was in touch with the Massachusetts Gastroenterologic Association but has not received a response. She is pursuing two local practices that are connected to NWH.

4b. Social Justice follow up. Shirley reported that she, Jane Donnelly, and Colm McGarry have been meeting to organize and set an agenda for the Social Justice Working Group that is scheduled to meet this afternoon at 2:00 pm. The meeting will be devoted to a discussion and discovery process among members of the WG: how we perceive ourselves in respect to understanding our own place and actions among those around us who may be different in some way. Shirley will be sending out material that is being used in Lincoln re social justice issues.

4.c. Additional programming ideas. A New England Journal article on the “No Surprises” legislation that Prather had distributed by email was acknowledged. We will re-discuss this subject in the fall when more is known about it.

Vida suggested a vendor fair for next year. It has been very successful in the past.

Shirley noted that Springwell has a number of new programs that would be valuable to present. Kristen said that such a program had been aired a year ago but would be worth doing again.

There was discussion about cataloging and publicizing the recordings of programs that are now available. Kristen said that those programs can now be accessed directly through the COA website rather than having to open the Weston Media website.

Susan suggested that a discussion of cryptocurrency might be of interest. We will discuss this further in the fall.

5. Scheduling and administrative matters. This item was passed over.

The next meeting is scheduled for 10:00 am on Tuesday September 14, 2021. The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 am.

Submitted by John McCahan