

COA Board Meeting Minutes

June 17, 2021

Attendees: Marge Ackerman, Alice Benson (associate member), Jane Donnelly, Leslye Fligor, Bob Froh, Susan Ruskin Friend, Wayne Johnson, Jean MacQuiddy, Mignonne Murray, Tom Nicholson, Carol Ott, Prather Palmer, Vida Goldstein (associate member), Teresa Young (associate member).

Absent: Betsey Boyd, Melissa Galton (associate member), Linda Johnson, Gerri Scoll.

Due to the suspension of in-person public meetings during the Covid-19 Emergency, this meeting was held via zoom and recorded.

The meeting was called to order at 8:31 a.m.

No resident concerns or comments were expressed.

The May 17th board meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: (Prather)

Our budget is in good shape and looking very strong.

Treasurer's report was reviewed and approved.

Director's Report: (Mignonne)

The Community Center was opened to the public on June 1st. Masks are still required inside all town buildings. The governor has passed legislation such that public meetings may continue to take place via Zoom until 2022. Going forward, the Weston COA board might be a combination of in person and online meetings; pros and cons for both were discussed. The town of Weston is currently exploring different technology to possibly enable a hybrid of both. Mignonne is waiting to see what they come up with before deciding.

Mignonne announced that several Weston administrators will be retiring this month: in the Health Department, Community Preservation and Fire Departments. In addition, there is a new Conservation Administrator.

Chair Reports

FCOA: (Betsey)

No updates currently. The next meeting of the FCOA will take place on June 25th.

Community Connections: (Vida)

Vida gave an update on the Community Connections Health Program.

Joanne Borg-Stein, MD, Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Harvard Medical School, will review options for non-surgical treatments for osteoarthritis.

Susan Wagner is now point person for the New Wellesley Speakers Series.

Vida suggested another Vendor Fair for Aging in Place is being planned for Spring 2022.

Prather sent an article on “No Surprises” explaining the billing of hospitals and ambulances which will go into effect next January.

Shirley Small Rougeau suggested a speaker from Springwell give a talk.

It was suggested they make a list of all the existing Community Connections programs which are on DVDs and publicize the list via an email blast for community awareness.

It was also suggested that they might have a program on Cryptocurrency.

Social Justice update: (Jane)

Fourteen people attended the first meeting of the Social Justice Committee. They watched a short video from Robin DiAngelo’s *White Fragility*, followed by individual self-evaluations about racism. Jane felt the meeting went very well.

Governance: (Sue)

Both the Awareness Group and Welcoming committees will be abolished and be replaced by an ad hoc group of volunteers recruited for specific projects and events.

They held their first joint event last week which was a Welcome Back coffee, which was very well attended.

Two candidates had applied for the open COA board positions, but one person dropped out. The Weston Select Board picks the final candidate, but they are required to interview at least two people. Since there was only one candidate, the Select Board was not able to do so. A new posting advertising the open board position will be listed in the Town Crier and online next week.

Sue asked our Board members to help recruit new board members.

The new officers slate proposed was voted on and approved.

Sue Ruskin Friend (Chair)

Linda Johnson (Vice Chair)

Prather Palmer (Treasurer)

Marge Ackerman (Secretary)

Shirley Small Rougeau will become an associate board member for one year.

Housing (Alice)

At the last Housing Committee meeting Tom Grape, Founder, Chairman and CEO of Benchmark Living, and also a Weston resident, spoke to the group. Benchmark is a leader in senior housing in the Northeast, offering independent living, assisted living, memory care-assisted living, continuing care retirement communities and respite care options in 61 communities across seven states.

Tom explained what draws developers to a community. Tom said it would be very unusual to have an active COA involved in the process. He added that Weston is a very attractive community, and if the approval process were a little less cumbersome it would be a tremendous help in attracting developers. He encouraged us to have the town planner notify and involve us as early as possible in the project. Benchmark manages the properties after they are built, mostly assisted living and memory care.

Alice mentioned Liz Valenta, who is with the Regional Housing Service Office, spends very limited time with Weston and it would be great to see how we can increase her time with us.

Carol Ott mentioned that the Brook School is at the very beginning stage of investigating the possibility of acquiring the old Sunrise facility on North Avenue. It's all very tentative, perhaps 25 to 30 units could be converted out of the existing space.

Sarah Rhatigan, Chairperson of the Weston Affordable Housing Trust, will be attending the next meeting to discuss affordable housing.

Transportation: (Jean)

Nothing to report this month.

Springwell: (Wayne)

Springwell continues to do well. They had a presentation on Development given by Beth Schulze.

Springwell, like many other organizations, is having difficulty recruiting and hiring staff to work in clients' homes.

Springwell is collaborating with BayPath Elder Services, a designated Area Agency on Aging which operates within Massachusetts. They are in discussions for a possible merger.

Needs Assessment: (Tom)

Members of the Needs Assessment team met. A new Wayland COA facility has been approved. Needs Assessment will plan another board member road trip in the fall to visit best practice COA facilities such as Duxbury and Wellesley.

Ad Hoc Volunteers/Special Events

A very successful Welcome Back coffee was held on June 15th. Due to inclement weather the event was held in the Great Room. Twenty-seven people attended and greatly enjoyed being able to see old friends in person.

Other upcoming events coordinated by the ad hoc volunteers are an ice cream social with the Bo Winiker Band, and a September Open House.

Outgoing Chair Message (Marge)

Marge gave a very moving farewell address, thanking Mignonne and the COA staff by name for the outstanding job they did this past year in navigating the COA through COVID, the vaccine challenges, and maintaining support, successfully keeping Weston's older adults safe and well informed.

Marge was thanked for her tremendous job navigating the challenges of COVID while guiding the board through the pandemic.

Marge then passed the gavel (virtually) to Sue.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:33 a.m.

Next meeting is July 15th at 8:30 am.