

COA Board Meeting Minutes, October 21, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 8:33 a.m. by Chair, Susan Ruskin Friend. She read Governor Baker's Order, Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, which includes an extension of the March 12, 2020, Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law. This meeting is being conducted via ZOOM.

Present: Mignonne Murray(Director), Susan Ruskin Friend(Chair), Linda Johnson(Vice Chair), Marge Ackerman, Bob Froh, Vida Goldstein(Associate Member), Joan Heilbronner, Wayne Johnson, Jean MacQuiddy, Tom Nicholson(Associate Member), Carol Ott, Prather Palmer, Gerri Scoll and Teresa Young(Associate Member).

Absent: Alice Benson(Associate Member), Betsey Boyd, Jane Donnelly, Leslye Fligor and Shirley Small Rougeau (Associate Member).

There were no resident concerns or comments.

The September 23rd minutes were reviewed and approved unanimously.

Director's Report: Mignonne reported that masking is still required when entering the COA and they continue to restrict the number of people indoors. The van provides shopping service but riders are limited to one person per seat. This is a problem because more people want to go shopping, but space is unavailable, and it also diminishes socialization. She has ordered new tables for the gathering room because the current ones don't fold, making it difficult to repurpose that room. The Rotary group asked Mignonne to speak at their meeting this evening. She said she'd like to see them support "ageless" activities, like barbecues, that would appeal to more intergenerational participants. Linda requested that she mention our need for new COA board members next year. Tom wondered if that group could take an active role in assisting older adults with reasonably priced home repairs. The Formula Grant, from the state, is currently \$12 per person for everyone over age 60, in town. The new census figures could change our numbers, but tallying those is so far behind we won't see any results until next year.

Transportation: Gerri expressed concern about the reconfiguration of the MWRTA bus routes. She said former committee member, Melissa Galton, will remain available as needed, but the Transportation Committee is looking for more new members.

Treasurer's Report: Prather announced the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) for Transportation has approved a grant of \$25,000 for us. So far, we have received the first installment of \$12,500. Mignonne said we are currently offering unlimited rides to medical appointments, but are thinking about reducing those rides to 4 per month. Teresa asked if we have transportation data. Mignonne said she would pull up those stats for her.

Issues: Sue told the group she and Linda meet with Mignonne every 2 weeks, including the week before the COA Board meeting. They agreed to continue holding the board meetings on ZOOM rather than meeting in person where masks would be required. Mignonne will open the meeting 15 minutes before the start of the board meeting, so members can have some social interaction. Sue would like to have

more time to discuss specific topics, like Needs Assessment, and to invite guests like the new Health Director and members of the Select Board. To make more time available for this, she will begin dividing the committee reports in half. Next month, Community Connections, Governance, Housing and Needs Assessment will speak. The week before the board meeting she will reach out to the other groups to see if there is anything they want to discuss.

Community Connections: Vida stated that their programs on health issues are continuing. Kristen is looking for someone to speak about intimacy and older adults. Vida contacted Kevin Wagner, a physical therapist/trainer, from Train Boston in Wellesley. He will present a program on arthritis and exercise which is scheduled for February. Prather has been following the “No Surprises” legislation. It was voted into law by the legislature in January, 2021 and will be enacted in January, 2222. Crypto Currency was suggested as a future topic. Kristen scheduled two programs, Essential Estates and Planning Ahead: Preparing for Long Term Care. Jane and Shirley have been actively working on the Social Justice program. Their next meeting is November 1, at 2 p.m. and everyone is invited to attend.

Governance: Linda said that Governance reviewed the committee lineup and didn’t feel that any changes needed to be made. They are more concerned about a good succession plan for the chairs and that the committees have enough members to do the work. If anyone wants to join a committee or withdraw from one, please contact the chair. Governance will be updating the committees list within the next month. Linda is updating the COA Board contact list. They are reviewing the board materials in the old binder to determine what should be included in a new binder, and updating documents. The next Governance meeting is Nov. 9.

Housing: Alice is not present today. Vida reported that the last meeting was cancelled.

Needs Assessment: Tom thanked Linda for recruiting board members to join the “walk around” with Town Manager, Leon Gaumond. He said he asked Leon about the waste treatment plan for the Case Estates. Leon told him that the Select Board had decided to put that on the back burner. They are thinking about selling 2 houses on the Case Estates, which they think would alleviate some of the pressure on the current septic system. Currently, none of it is in compliance so no new expansion can occur in the library, the schools and the recreation building. Jean mentioned that the sale would need to be approved at the next Town Meeting in May, 2022. Linda said there would be historic restrictions on the exterior of the buildings and that the scenic views from the Legacy Trail would also be protected. Signage was also discussed, and Leon seemed very supportive. He was reminded that Carol would be our representative on the signage team.

Springwell: Jean attended their last meeting and said it was generally perfunctory and they discussed something confidential which she could not share. Wayne reported that Springwell has a budget of over \$40,000,000 funded mostly by the state. The dilemma is how do we connect what Springwell does to what Weston needs? Carol asked if it would be helpful to have the head of Springwell come to one of our board meetings to share information. Jean said she came a couple of years ago but did not present well. Wayne will provide a more in depth report about Springwell next month.

Board Recruitment for 2022-2023: Linda responded to a question raised last month about board members needing to be town residents. She said there is a town by-law that requires board members to live in Weston. The other question was if the size of the board affects quorum. She said, as long as the size of the board is agreed upon by the COA Board and the Select Board then quorum is just a simple majority.

There will be 3 vacancies on the COA Board at the end of June, 2022. If we want to fill all 3 vacancies we will need more than 3 candidates. Governance discussed some areas of expertise and experience to look for in board candidates. They included: Housing for older adults, Town building projects and public relations and marketing. Qualities we are looking for include: people with a deep interest in the mission of the COA, an eagerness to serve as COA ambassadors in the community, the enthusiasm and time to fully participate in board activities including meetings, committee work and events, team players, the ability to clearly communicate information and ideas, and a recognition and an appreciation of the broad range of generations we serve and the diversity of their interests and needs. Carol said one-on-one recruitment might be more effective than waiting for someone to respond to a notice from the town. Sue suggested focusing on recently retired individuals or empty nesters. Linda mentioned that the board of the Friends of the Council on Aging also needs new members. This group meets quarterly, which might appeal to those looking for a smaller time commitment.

Update Current Interests of Board Members: Linda read a list of current interests of the COA board which is posted on the town website.

- Enhancement of transportation options for older adults.
- Further development of supports for care givers.
- Improvement in public awareness of COA programs and resources.
- Affordable housing opportunities for seniors.
- Increase in opportunities for social interactions.
- Intergenerational programming with the schools and other organizations in town.

Carol suggested adding the ability to interact with other town departments. Linda asked Carol to send her a draft of this addition. Jean said housing should include more diversity in housing options.

Other Updates: Linda said she asked Leon about Sunrise. It has not gone on the market yet, but he said there is work going on behind the scenes. Carol spoke to Laurie Bent, and she said it's a very complicated legal issue having to do with zoning and it's confidential. Jean talked to Leon about our relationship with the MWRTA and he said he would research this. She suggested that we invite Leon to a COA Board meeting. Betsey attended the MCOA Board Training meeting but is not here to report today. Mignonne also attended and said they have received approval to use their funding to move forward with the project. Linda reported on special events volunteers. The second "Coffee and Conversation" event was held last Monday with great attendance. Several board members were there, as well as a lot of new people. They are working on the Turkey Trail Walk, scheduled November 20th. Joan has taken on a

holiday, tabletop wreath project co-hosted with the Weston Garden Club, which will take place, December 9, at 10 a.m. People can participate in person or via ZOOM. The December Coffee will be a special holiday celebration.

Next Meeting: 8:30 a.m. Thursday, November 18, 2021

The meeting was adjourned at 9:56 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Marge Ackerman