

Senior Citizens Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes: September 30, 2014

Jordan Conference Room, 11:00 am

Attendees: Brett Seekins, William Marshall, Bruce Nelson, Elizabeth Baillie, Barbara Page, Patricia Bredenberg, June O'Neill.

Visitor: Jennifer DeRice, Cape Elizabeth Community Services

Staff: Matthew Sturgis

1. The meeting was called to order at 11:00 am.
2. The minutes of the prior meeting were reviewed, and no changes were made.
Motion to accept minutes by William Marshall, Second by Barbara Page, motion approved 7-0.
3. Chair Seekins introduced Jennifer DeRice of Community Services (C Svcs) thanked her for visiting.
 - a. Ms. DeRice explained what her role at C Svcs is, planning activities and trips for seniors, as well as exercise and general involvement. Her prior employer also had transportation options available which made programming easier.
 - b. Historically the planned trips have been successful, the current planning is going well, and there are occasional waiting lists for programs.
 - c. June O'Neill asked if transportation was an obstacle.
 - d. Ms. DeRice responded that she was unsure, but C Svcs used to have a van, but when it was retired from service it was not replaced.
 - e. William Marshall asked if there was access to the vans the school has. Ms. DeRice responded there is access but it is limited to availability due to school needs. There are also some obstacles due to transport laws, where it is illegal to travel with more than 8 people in a van. The better option to have is a mini bus, which can seat 14 or so. Other towns have them and they are well used.
 - f. One use in the past was to use the C Svcs. Van to transport seniors to Millcreek Plaza and the Maine Mall that ran on a specific basis. Possible programming that could be supported with a mini bus is a mystery lunch trip to a mystery location. Other departments have also used their vans for daytrips to Acadia National Park.
 - g. C Svcs also co-sponsors trips with Gorham and Falmouth for large motor coach excursions. But they are large productions and require more planning and are not at a scale that can be spontaneous.
 - h. C Svcs has a programming guide to promote their offerings, and it is sent to every household in Cape Elizabeth.
 - i. Bruce Nelson asked what other forms of advertising does C Svcs. Do?

- j. Ms. DeRice responded they also use the Cape Courier, but they find people really use the programming guide. However, getting the word out is a challenge, with much of it happening by word of mouth.
- k. June O'Neill asked if C Svcs. has reached out to the churches. Ms. DeRice said no, but thought that was a great idea for marketing
- l. Ms. DeRice indicated that right now they are looking forward to hosting the health expo, now named the Cape Senior Health Fair. They have 18 vendors at present, with a goal of 25 total. Entertainment is planned, and the event will be October 24, 2014 from 9 am to Noon.
- m. June O'Neill asked why C Svcs. Does not have a mini bus?
- n. Ms. DeRice thought it may be a matter of the towns that do have them have larger populations and programs, which may also allow the Town to subsidize that expense. The demand is also there for senior programs and the funding is there to support senior programming.
- o. Barbara Page asked what the obstacles to getting a bus are. Ms. DeRice responded it is mostly funding for acquisition and maintenance expense.
- p. Elizabeth Baillie asked if in comparison to other towns is the demand here low for seniors.
- q. Ms. DeRice responded the demographic is changing, seniors before used to look for someone to plan their trips and events, now the newer seniors are more self planning. This may negatively impact the motor coach trips planned by rec programs, while the seniors link up with private vendors. The mini bus approach though, with shorter trips has proven a more successful model.
- r. June O'Neill asked if senior program has been running longer in the towns where it is successful.
- s. Ms. DeRice responded that yes there is demand and other town's longevity in programming may be why they have sustained success. Some ideas that have happened in the past were senior luncheons, but they are not economically successful. Last year there was a concert for seniors by high school seniors, and that was a great success. One way to offset the financial burden is to pursue sponsorship opportunities for local businesses.
- t. William Marshall added that the luncheon idea was a lot of work and high cost, with staff being over stretched, and the cost was along the lines of \$10 per meal, while charging \$2, and that simply did not work or make sense.
- u. Ms. DeRice added that C Svcs. Di try to do some lunch and learns, but they were met with limited success. William Marshall added that often the attendees who came were not the target audience. Ms. DeRice stated that small trips to restaurants may be a better approach, where the seniors can order their own meals and pay accordingly.
- v. Elizabeth Baillie asked if the lack of transportation was the #1 obstacle to providing programming. Ms. DeRice answered that there are really two obstacles, transportation and communication. With the guide being the primary manner of publicizing the events there is not enough publicity.

This needs to be compounded with word of mouth, networking, and possibly even the church bulletins. She would also like to see the C Svcs. pursue and expand sponsorship opportunities. William Marshall thought this may be improved with an improved link through the Town's website or an improved individual web presence. Ms. DeRice responded that the website (of C Svcs.) is an item of discussion and could use some improvement.

- w. Elizabeth Baillie asked if Adult Education and senior programming are things that could be recommended to be separate from child / youth programming. Ms. DeRice said that is an idea, Falmouth for example is converting the former Plummer / Motz School into a senior center.
 - x. Chair Seekins asked if a senior guide with service providers and programming be a good asset. Ms. DeRice responded that yes it would, and three times a year would be a good amount of distribution. Elizabeth Baillie asked if the guide would have only Cape Elizabeth based services, or service providers that residents may need, but the business may be located out of town. Chair Seekins added that maybe the publication could have providers buy advertising for their business in the guide.
 - y. Chair Seekins thanked Ms. DeRice for coming and meeting with the group, and that her visit was well received.
4. Chairman Seekins handed out the proposed survey for the members to weigh in on and review.
- a. June O'Neill commented that the font needs to be larger.
 - b. Bruce Nelson stated that there is a shortage of businesses in Cape Elizabeth, with the tax base being made up of residential homes. That makes Cape unique in comparison to Falmouth, Scarborough, Yarmouth, etc. where most services are available in their towns while Cape residents need to go to other towns for most medical, shopping, and other needs.
 - c. Elizabeth Baillie added that Cape is a rural town in comparison, and other towns and counties are trying to find isolated people and serve them. The question is if there is enough demand to support desired services or businesses.
 - d. Bruce Nelson thought that maybe pursuing partnership opportunities with South Portland could be an option.
 - e. William Marshall added that people can't complain about a lack of tax base diversity, while not supporting any attempt at developing commercially. It is a case of wanting to have your cake and eating it too.
 - f. June O'Neill stated that the expanded lifetime is changing how the issue of aging is approached. We need to work on expanding our perspective. Also the smaller population in Cape Elizabeth limits what can be offered. Elizabeth Baillie offered that the history of living in a rural area may also be a challenge, as the residents are very self reliant, keep to themselves, and are self maintaining.

- g. William Marshall added that Cape also has many challenges for pedestrians, as there are limited sidewalks and like Florida, people in Maine have to drive everywhere.

5. The meeting adjourned at 1:02 pm.