

Senior Citizen Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes: May 13, 2014

Jordan Conference Room

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

Public: Mike Brown, Rite Aid, Tom Kohan, Senior to Senior

Staff: Matthew Sturgis, staff support

1. The meeting was called to order by Chair Seekins at 11:03 AM. Matthew Sturgis reported that the Commission's scheduled speaker was unable to attend due to illness, and will reschedule for a future date.
2. The minutes of the April 29, 2014 meeting were reviewed, moved by William Marshall to accept, seconded by June O'Neill, motion passed unanimously.
3. Chair Seekins reported that he has reached out to many resources for presenting to the group in its information gathering phase. He has spoken with many potential speakers, including John Hennessey, AARP, Brenda Gallant, Long Term Care Ombudsman- State of Maine, Ricker Hamilton, DHHS of Maine Deputy Director of Health Policy, Phyllis Powell, Director of Maine's Office of Aging and Developmental Services, and Mary Mayhew, Maine DHHS Commissioner

The next few weeks are well populated with speakers, with Mr. Hennessey on May 27, and with William Marshall securing Pastor Ruth from the Methodist Church on June 10th.

Elizabeth Baillie will be in contact with St. Bartholomew's. William Marshall inquired as to the status of church programming toward seniors, pastoral ministry, and other services. Elizabeth Baillie responded that St. Bart's is trying to create programming, book clubs, programs for seniors and care givers, like Communion services, outreach at senior facilities, hosting luncheons and games.

The question was raised as to if there is any known collaboration between churches in Cape Elizabeth. The answer was not known.

June O'Neill mentioned that the discussion consistently returns to an access to services issue, and recommended that once the report is completed by the Commission it should be provided to all of the churches.

Transportation to / for accessing services was identified again as a legitimate concern / limitation for seniors. There was some discussion that Community Services should be employed to a greater extent as a service provider and information provider. In many ways senior services could be an add on to what

Community Services currently do. William Marshall pointed out that Community Services is a school department function and not a Town operation. Bruce Nelson inquired if liability was a significant obstacle in providing transportation by volunteers to seniors. Matt Sturgis will explore this with the Maine Municipal Association.

Barbara Page mentioned a segment on a recent “60 Minutes” episode regarding Leisure World. The people who lived there were studied, and their physical and mental health was monitored. One conclusion was isolation is an obstacle for seniors, and the interaction element at Leisure World was a great positive impact on senior health.

4. As the planned speaker was excused due to illness, Chair Seekins recognized Mike Brown from Rite Aid delivery services, and asked for his observations regarding senior issues. Mr. Brown introduced himself and provided his background experience and interest in Cape Elizabeth and seniors. Mr. Brown was very encouraged by the Commission’s work. Mr. Brown described the service that Rite Aid provides and how one accesses that service. He reported that often the seniors he encounters are really looking for someone to talk with, and isolation is a big issue. A challenge he faces is outreach is difficult for the service, and soliciting is not an acceptable approach. He reported that it is a mutual benefit, as Rite Aid benefits by good will and the clients benefit from service and company.

Chair Seekins thanked Mr. Brown for providing his information.

5. Elizabeth Baillie reported that Paula Banks from Living Innovations would like to come and speak this summer on geriatric care management. Also Tom Kohan would like to speak on the Senior to Senior program, which is not accessed as much as the potential provides, as many of the involved students would love to do more than the time commitment asks for. June O’Neill stated that she will be speaking with that program in the fall to ask for a longer commitment from the students.
6. Chair Seekins introduced the AARP survey and introduced having a public information session, maybe a mid-way report, maybe a survey of the community that may provide the Commission with some answers regarding the determination of need.
7. Chair Seekins introduced a strategic planning format for the Commission to consider.

Bruce Nelson commented that he supports planning the work out, as he read the Bowdoinham report and found it a bit confusing as there was a substantial volume of information and it was also repetitive.

Chair Seekins agreed that the Commission's findings need to be more concise, focusing on sustainable practices, livable options, and identifying realistic opportunities.

Bruce Nelson stated the report should identify what services are needed not how they are provided.

8. There was consensus among the group that the Commission needs to think about what format the public info session should have. It also needs to have deliverable dates, and by June 10th the Commission needs to choose a date and format for a public session.
9. Tom Kohan of Senior to Senior described their program. Senior to Senior is a program at the Cape Elizabeth High School that originated in 2007 after a vandalism issue at the High School. Several of the students involved decided to make amends by doing some free community service by raking yards and yard work for senior citizens. Since 2007 the program has grown into a larger group that volunteers to help senior citizens around their homes. Mr. Kohan is their advisor and works at the High School. Some examples of the initiatives started are a "Senior Citizen Prom" at Village Crossings, where volunteers do nails, put on the event, and play music. This year there was a jazz concert performance which was reported back as a tremendous success.

Mr. Kohan reported the program is funded by a gift by Living Innovations, and that he receives a stipend. Mr. Kohan did report there are a couple of challenges, one is having those who sign up to show up, and the other is getting seniors to access the program. However, the entire program is voluntary, there is no requirement to do this volunteering, but it is encouraged of the students.

There are organized events, but often it is a senior helping out a senior citizen by going to the transfer station, sweeping a driveway, or helping out known senior citizens who have challenges.

The Commission members thanked Mr. Kohan for his impromptu presentation that was greatly appreciated. They encouraged his efforts.

Chair Seekins identified the next meeting date and time, May 27, 2014, 11 am to 1 pm, Jordan Conference Room.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 pm.