

Senior Citizens Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes: May 27, 2014 **DRAFT**

Jordan Conference Room

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

Visitors: John Hennessy, AARP, Dr. Sheila Pinette, CDC

Staff: Matthew Sturgis

1. Chair Seekins called the meeting to order at 11:02 and introduced Mr. Hennessy of AARP.
 - a. Chair Seekins provided some edits and changes to the minutes of the May 13, 2014 meeting. Motion was made by Mr. Marshall for approval, second by Mr. Nelson, motion passed unanimously.
 - b. Elizabeth Baillie reported that Paula Banks from Living Innovations has agreed to come and speak to the Commission. A date will be determined, most likely in July or August at the latest.
 - c. Chair Seekins reported that he has spoken with Melissa Moore of Volunteers of America, and she will present with Mike O'Connor, Director on their ongoing projects. Chair Seekins also has followed up with Mary Mayhew, DHHS Director, and has also spoken with the Park Danforth.

2. John Hennessy, Advocacy Director for AARP, Maine. Mr. Hennessy introduced himself, and then began discussing the concept of "Age Friendly Communities". In preparing to speak Mr. Hennessy physically reviewed the Town. His first observation is that Cape Elizabeth is a great community to live in, but it is a very challenging place to live for senior citizens. Transportation is a significant limitation.

Mr. Hennessy introduced the package of information that he brought with him. There is a presentation packet and it shows what resources are available through AARP.

The Maine Council on Aging was discussed; it is an organization of all the service providers on the long term care continuum. The Council was created to bring the disparate groups together; nursing care, home care, etc.

Mr. Hennessy informed the group that the last of the Baby Boom generation will turn 50 this year, and that will increase the need and speed for developing effective plans for aging. And this coupled with the fact people are living longer with fewer restrictions (more active) and staying in their houses / communities, means we need to plan for them going forward.

His observations were that the biggest challenge for Cape Elizabeth seniors is transportation, followed by access to services, isolation, and physical limitations as the Town is not very pedestrian friendly.

These conversations the Commission is holding are very similar to conversations in other communities with similar elements, and the focus is shifting to “age friendly communities” as a concept.

Bill Marshall commented that in Cape Elizabeth the school population is decreasing and the senior issues have been ignored. Focus may need to shift some toward the seniors in the community. He noted that we need to invest in the community / home based care provision, and the great thing is we are not in a vacuum; we can reach out to other communities and find solutions.

Mr. Hennessy responded that overall Cape Elizabeth is not too different from the issues affecting the State, but we cannot wait for Augusta to provide a solution.

Elizabeth Baillie commented that the concept that Cape people suffer from much of the issues that affect other towns in Maine. Seniors do not get equal support in relation to children related issues. Towns need to become creative and try to convert what they have to what they want.

The Commission discussed that a survey may be a useful tool, with an anticipated useful number being 400 to 500 respondents. Also, a community needs assessment may be a very useful tool.

Implementation of the SCAC work will be challenging as it does not specifically deal with school age kids, which enjoys strong support as an issue.

Mr. Hennessy stated that senior issues are not well represented in the legislature; the seniors need to organize and engage as there are 231,000 members of AARP in Maine. To this point, Bill Marshall stated that the Commission needs to have Rebecca Millett and Kim Monaghan Derrig come in to speak.

Elizabeth Baillie asked if there are other communities doing this work right now as well. Mr. Hennessy said yes, Saco has some work going on, and they may be a little further along in the process.

3. Strategic Plan for Public Input Sessions
 - a. The Commission needs to determine the who, what, when, where, and why for the sessions.
 - b. Different members of the Commission noted there appears to be a noticeable level of apathy toward senior issues in town, possibly because folks are focused on their own lives. Those who are interested are already involved in Town. A strategy may be for the Commission to focus on what

is done now and grow from that. Part of that may develop from meeting with the local Churches, which is being planned.

- c. Patricia Bredenberg noted that getting all of this information makes is very tempting to reinvent the wheel, however that is not necessary.
 - d. Elizabeth Baillie stated that possibly the lack of interest is related to people in Town feel they can take care of themselves and keep the focus on self reliance.
 - e. The group felt the session planned will need help in creating interest in the program planned. And the full commission will plan the event.
 - f. The Commission needs to determine who to invite, what to discuss, when we want to have the forum, where to hold it (and how many), and how long the sessions should be.
4. Dr. Sheila Pinette, DO, Director of the Center for Disease Control joined the meeting.
- a. Dr. Pinette spoke to the group regarding much of her experiences from her position in relation to the aging population of Maine. She described aging as a major public health care issue facing us now and more acutely in the future. The elder population is a major focus for the CDC, and its office of Aging and Disabilities.
 - b. Dr. Pinette read an official proclamation of Governor LePage declaring May Older Americans Month, and followed that up with a discussion with the Commission that senior issues need to have an increased understanding by the Legislators of Maine.
 - c. The CDC website has a good collection of information for older Americans.
 - d. Dr. Pinette discussed that the two of the largest issues faced by older Americans are obesity and falls. Hip breaks result in a mortality rate of 80% within the first year for folks over age 70.
 - e. Alzheimer's disease was also identified as a concern, with Laurie Trenholm from Maine Alzheimer's Association being a tremendous resource. The communities need to increase education and that will include educating the younger population in understanding how to help in identifying the signs of the illness.

- f. Some additional points raised by Dr. Pinette were: The conversion to electronic record keeping help in improving awareness, isolation is a huge issue facing the elder population in Maine, and finally, health management is a huge issue and obesity is a major one.
5. Chairman Seekins thanked Dr. Pinette for her coming to speak with the Commission. Dr. Pinette thanked the Commission, first from her perspective as a Cape Elizabeth resident, and secondly from her official position as Director of CDC. She encouraged the group to keep up their great work and that they are ahead of the times in planning.
6. The meeting adjourned at 1:02 pm.