

Senior Citizens Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes: October 28, 2014

Jordan Conference Room, 11:00 am

Attendees: Brett Seekins, William Marshall, Bruce Nelson, Barbara Page, Patricia Bredenberg

Liason: Jim Walsh, present.

Excused: Elizabeth Baillie, June O'Neill

Visitor: Jane Eberle, Mary Giftos, Mary Volin

Staff: Matthew Sturgis

1. The meeting was called to order at 11:05 am.
2. The minutes of the prior meeting were reviewed, and no changes were made.
Motion to accept minutes by William Marshall, Second by Patricia Bredenberg, motion approved 5-0.
3. Chair Seekins introduced the meeting concept for today as a public input session. He gave a background on the work of the Commission thus far, explaining that they have worked on information gathering on services provided, needs, services not needed, and who provides services in Cape Elizabeth. He welcomed the visitors and welcomed their input.
 - a. Jane Eberle spoke first, explaining she was there for an older friend, and she is interested in the Keep Me Home legislation brought forward by Mark Eves in the Legislature.
 - b. Mary Giftos asked how the public is informed of what is offered in Cape Elizabeth for seniors, who is the commission trying to reach, and how is the information disseminated?
 - c. Mary Giftos also stated that Southern Maine Area Agency on Aging (SMAAA) has great resources. One of them is a film called "Alive Inside" which is amazing. They also offer three courses; "Living Well for Better Health", "A Matter of Balance", and "Living with Chronic Pain". She also mentioned the book "The Winter House", a book by Joan McCracken on aging in place.
 - d. Chair Seekins stated that John Hennessey came to visit the Commission to speak on the issue of housing, and that SMAAA is a future speaker.
 - e. Mary Volin asked if there was any demographic data for Cape that the Commission is considering? The answer to her question was yes, that was among the very first items reviewed.
 - f. Chair Seekins also stated the Commission is looking at "no wrong door" programs, which aim to keep folks in their homes for care. An interesting statistic is that 18% of GDP is being spent on health care, which is unsustainable.

- g. Jane Eberle stated the Senior Farm Share program is easy to apply for and seniors need to be informed on it, with many Cape Elizabeth farms participating.
- h. Mary Giftos asked of how information is publicized? The Community Services bulletin is useful, but there are limited offerings. Isolation is also an issue.
- i. Mary Volin stated transportation is an issue, and the largest one in overcoming isolation. People need drivers, they need that form of support.
- j. Chair Seekins explained that Community Services is investigating a small bust for their programming.
- k. Mary Giftos thought maybe Community Services could have a senior services information person, knowledgeable in what is available for services.
- l. William Marshall asked if either visitor would mind seeing taxes increase to provide the needed services?
- m. Mary Giftos stated she would like to see a reallocation of taxes, not an increase to address seniors. Maybe a more equitable distribution.
- n. Mary Volin stated that as demographics shift, with an increase in elder population, schools may not have the pressure on enrollments, but shift to seniors to benefit the people that live here. Based on population, with seniors getting more funding allocated to their needs.
- o. Jim Walsh stated the budget works to provide for the whole community. Social work, Rescue services, etc all benefit the Town residents. Need recommendations on what is needed and can be placed in budget. Not as easy as just re-allocating the funding. Has had extensive conversations with Community Services and the School Board to place this in the conversation. The reapportionment question is a difficult one. Need top 4 to 5 issues identified and any recommendations for the upcoming budget.
- p. Jane Eberle asked if there are funds available for heating assistance?
- q. Matthew Sturgis replied there are many social services available through the Town via the Opportunity Alliance. Programs like LIHEAP (low income heating assistance program).
- r. Jim Walsh stated there are opportunities in the budget to fund the needs, need to improve communication, need to improve the communication strategy. Very important to not have a them vs. us issue on funding, as that will not help find a solution.
- s. Barbara Page stated that it is not easy to find answers or information in the short term, what kind of publicity happens to let folks know about public meetings?
- t. Jim Walsh stated the internet and other public notice areas are used. In special circumstances there are specific notices mailed out, like zoning issues. Also can subscribe to the RSS feed, but need to be online for that.
- u. Barbara Page asked if a sandwich board could display information up by Lion's Field?
- v. Jim Walsh stated perhaps, maybe an electronic sign advertising meetings would be successful.

- w. Jane Eberle thought Senior to Senior program could be a good resource to make sure the programs and info for seniors could be publicized. Employ the students.
- x. Mary Volin stated that technology use by youth could be very helpful in crossing the gap between elders getting the online info and not getting it.
- y. Bruce Nelson asked if there were areas of cooperation between Cape Elizabeth and South Portland?
- z. Jane Eberle stated there are areas of collaboration that could be successfully cultivated. The Chamber of Commerce could promote such a collaboration. Business would love to partner up, but don't know how to make it happen.
- aa. Chair Seekins asked if Ms. Eberle was aware of the TRIAD program?
- bb. Jane Eberle was, thought it could be improved, and also thought the Senior to Senior program was great.
- cc. Jane Eberle asked what do seniors have for housing options? Assisted living, senior housing, etc? it is limited in Cape Elizabeth.
- dd. Mary Volin thought that a senior day care would be great.
- ee. Mary Giftos added that SMAAA also has info on these resources and for the cognitively disabled.
- ff. Chair Seekins stated that the funding and operation costs are prohibitive to provide such.
- gg. Mary Giftos added that there need to be partnerships to make this succeed.
- hh. William Marshall stated the United Way may be a resource, although they have low visibility in Cape Elizabeth. A Medicare supported program would be difficult due to the regulations, a non Medicare program would be easier, but would need funding support.
- ii. Mary Volin asked if a Senior Center is something that Cape and South Portland could do together?
- jj. William Marshall stated that it needs to be accessible and close by. Availability of space is an issue, need consistent care givers, and transportation is an issue.
- kk. Chair Seekins added that the PACE program is being explored by the State, and the qualifiers are age 55 and up, nursing home eligible. Trying to have a delivery model with one stop / one location providers. Demonstration programs are being created in population centers.
- ll. Mary Volin stated that coordination and communication is paramount. Need a better way of publicizing the offerings.
- mm. Pat Bredenberg stated communication challenges are also found by use of cell phones. 911 for instance has challenges not faced by land lines.
- nn. Chaplain Eileen Cushman arrived and stated that she is concerned for seniors. They have transportation and income challenges. Seniors are selling their homes and they have other challenges.
- oo. Patricia Bredenberg stated that the Commission has reached out to learn needs of the community and have spoken to providers of services, social service providers, churches, and others.

- pp. William Marshall stated the aging of this community and its associated costs have influenced people to review what we are providing for services, and to whom. Real estate is expensive and young families are challenged to buy here.
- qq. Pastor Eileen asked if there are any conclusions yet?
- rr. Patricia Bredenberg stated that this is a public input session and we are searching for additional public input like she just provided.

Chairman Seekins thanked all of the people who came out to the input session.

The meeting adjourned at 1:05