



Arlington Council on Aging

Minutes

Date: Thursday May 20, 2021 Time: 6:00 pm

Location: Due to COVID-19 Pandemic, this meeting will be conducted virtually via Zoom, following the rules set forth by the Governor's Executive Order on Remote Participation. These meetings are open to the public and all are welcome. Please call 781-316-3401 or e-mail KShah@town.arlington.ma.us for the link to join the virtual meeting which can be accessed by computer with internet access or by telephone for audio access only.

Attendance: Michael Quinn, Chair, Kristine Shah, Executive Director, Mary Hung, Paul Raia, Laura Liscio, Rick Fenton, Sheila Connerney, Anne Brown, Nancy, Pat Baillieul, Karen Nichols

Also in attendance: Mara Collins, Bob Tosi, Steve DeCoursey, Diane Connor

Notes taken by Jill Greenlee

The Council's primary responsibilities are to design, promote, and implement programs and services to address the needs of the community's elder population, and to coordinate existing services in the community.

1. Call to order

a. Welcome Steve DeCoursey, COA Select Board Liaison

2. Citizen's Open Forum

a. Diane Connor is on the Minute Man Services Advisory Board representing Arlington, and she came to the meeting to introduce herself and make the connection to the COA board.

3. Minutes of the April, 2021 meeting for approval - Nancy motioned and Anne brown seconded. The minutes were approved.

4. Executive Director's Report

I. COVID-19 Vaccine Updates

- a. The COA staff has been working hard on vaccination outreach for age 75+. Outreach includes reverse calls to MSC database (2,500), reverse 911 call town wide (19,000), flyers posted in local apartment complexes, AHA Buildings, Assisted Living Communities; communications through local barber shops, religious groups. As of May 13, 660 residents age 75+ remain unvaccinated. Over 95% of residents age 65+ have been vaccinated. When we receive a call from a resident who needs their vaccine, we immediately schedule them an appointment (with our nurse if homebound, at our collaborative clinic in Medford with transportation or at a local pharmacy). If you know of anyone who needs a vaccination, please send them to the COA.
- b. Thanks to a grant from MAPC, we have been scheduling taxi rides for Arlington residents who secure a vaccine appointment outside of Arlington.

II. Updates on Programs/Services

- a. All 55 Chromebooks and 21 hot spots have been distributed to older adults in town as a part of our Technology Lending Library program. We have a waiting list established so residents can borrow the items once they have been returned. There will be a new cabinet in the renovated center to house the lending library.
- b. All though we are slowly beginning outdoor, in person programming in June, we are still going strong with our virtual programs and anticipate continuing them for the foreseeable future. Virtual programming in May and June includes nutrition seminars, Brains & Balance class, Elder Law information session, Virtual campfire with Boy Scouts, Expressive Arts, Memorial Day Music with John Clark, Stroke Awareness Talk with Mt. Auburn Hospital RN, Wang Theater virtual tour, Caregiver support group, low vision support group, LGBTQIA+ group (Pride month is June so there will be events, and these are historically very intergenerational!), Intergenerational Book Club, Yarn & Yarn group, virtual SHINE appointments, virtual legal assistance appointments, Fitness classes, Singing group, Virtual Cooking class with Lahey Hospital and Decluttering group.
- c. Our podiatry clinic continues to be extremely popular and fills up monthly. Since October it has been taking place at the office of Dr. Dan Selligman in Medford (free transportation provided). Beginning in June and through the summer, it will be located outdoors, by the Whittmore Robbins House. A second podiatrist will also start helping to increase the available appointments.
- d. June begins our in-person, outdoor program opportunities. We have reserved the Robbins Gardens daily, 10am-noon to host these activities. We will be starting slowly by offering yoga/chair yoga, Yarn & Yarn group, LGBTQIA+, and a weekly walking club. Attendees will need to preregister, wear their masks and social distance. Attendance will be capped at 10 people per program. If outdoor programming is successful, we will add on additional opportunities through the summer and into the fall. The vans will help folks get to events. There can be 4 passengers at a time (the van seats 12).
- e. Our Senior Property Tax Work off program and Harry Barber program are full with 25 participants and all have been accumulating their volunteer hours. Many volunteers have been helping us with vaccine outreach/scheduling and are lined up to help with our Lahey Farm share program which will start up again this summer (this serves 70 seniors with produce). In the fall when our center reopens, we will have many new volunteer opportunities as greeters.

III. Age Friendly/Dementia Friendly

- a. Kristine is moving forward with having Arlington get certified as Dementia Friendly as well. This plan will be developed in tandem with the Age Friendly work.
- b. We received a \$7,000 grant from I'm Still Here Foundation to begin offering virtual fitness classes for residents living with dementia and their caregivers. We have begun interviewing trained instructors who are a part of the Ageless Grace program.
- c. As one of our Dementia Friendly initiatives we are exploring the opportunity for a grant through AFD to provide Caregiver Support bags to caregivers of people living with dementia.
- d. Caitlyn Coyle from UMass Boston is providing us with a proposal for assisting us in writing our Age Friendly/Dementia Friendly combined action plan. We are looking for funding to cover this expense should we decide it is the best avenue to go. Additional listening sessions will be scheduled to cover topics that have become relevant since our

2019/2020 Age Friendly survey (COVID-19 impact, technology). Caitlyn will likely serve as a paid consultant for this work.

IV. Financial Updates

- a. COA Social Workers continue to see increased financial needs from residents. Many more individuals have been experiencing financial hardship. Many of the requests that are between \$300-\$1000 (to cover expenses like mattresses or to replace a broken refrigerator). (As an aside: We have a number of programs that can help seniors with finances that will go in the Age Friendly plan, but these programs are things like the Senior Property Tax Workoff.)
- b. Our Sussman grant, COVID-19 relief fund, Sevoyan Personal Needs and our gift account have assisted residents throughout this difficult year. I will be presenting a request from the Sevoyan Fund in new business.
- c. Grant Updates
 - a. We've received and are applying for several grants:
 - b. CDBG FY22: Transportation Program (\$31,540), Volunteer Coordinator Position (\$52,922) and Adult Day Health scholarships (\$6,000). – *approved by Department of Planning & Community Development* This is a very large part of the COA budget, so this is a relief to have this approved!
 - c. FY21 Grants received: \$7K ISHF, \$22K Sussman, \$11,860 LHMC, \$28,880 from MAPC, \$3,400 Mass Service Alliance, \$5,000 Mt. Auburn Hospital,
 - d. Applying for annual Symmes grant (\$15K for transportation) in June

V. Capital Campaign/Renovation

- a. 15,000 piece mailing is currently being printed and will be mailed this month. This mailing highlights the COA's work during the pandemic and explains the need to finish our Capital Campaign strong.
- b. We are still planning for construction to be finished in September. As soon as the building is ready for tours, the board will be the first to have one scheduled
- c. The COA staff team met last month to specifically discuss racial equity and goals for the residents we serve. We are putting together a plan to have Cultural Humility onboarding training for all of our staff and volunteers. We also plan to begin translating our monthly newsletter in Mandarin, Spanish and Russian. Jill Harvey (the Arlington Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion officer) met with the COA staff meeting to discuss how to ensure the center is welcoming and inclusive. This includes translating the COA newsletter to Mandarin (and eventually other languages that are prevalent among Arlington seniors). Jill will attend the June COA Board meeting.

VI. Other

- a. Fall Fundraising: After speaking with the Board of Health, we plan to offer our 5K Race virtually again this year for those who would like to continue the tradition. In addition, we are exploring a fall event that would be more in line with COVID safety measures, such as a memorial rock garden established in memory of those we have lost since March 2020. This would be a very participatory garden, allowing people to honor those they lost during the

pandemic as they return to the new senior center. A volunteer who passed away made a donation to the COA to fund a party when the center is open. This will happen once it's ok to have a big indoor in person gathering.

- b. ACMI continues to record our monthly show. Our June episode will feature an interview with outgoing ASA president, Malcolm Hamilton and an introduction of his successors, Claire Foley and Joanne Morel. ACMI continues to air senior fitness classes, cooking shows and relevant talks/programs.
- c. COA and ASA will meet over the summer to put a plan together for greeters/hosts/hostesses in the new Community Center, and calendar of programs and events that the ASA will be responsible for.

- b. There were no questions for Kristine.

5. Report of the Chair – ADU article (Article 43) – Accessory Dwelling Unit – there was a discussion as to whether this is something that the COA would take a position on. The approval of ADUs might benefit seniors who seek more affordable housing in town. Town Meeting seems to support this in general, so writing a letter might not be particularly effective.

6. Minuteman Senior Services Report - there was no report.

7. ASA Liaison Report – there was not report.

8. Old Business

9. New Business

a. Vote: Sevoyan Funds Request – there was no increase in the requests for the dental program; but for the personal needs program, the demand has been high. The approved \$6,000 from last year has been nearly depleted. The request for this year is \$10,000, with the hope that the funds will be granted before the board breaks for the summer. Anne Brown made a motion to approve the \$10,000 request, Jill Greenlee seconded. The request was approved.

b. ZBA; Thorndike Place Complex – also know as the Mugar Property – Last week, the developers are proposing that they will develop houses and a large complex that will be senior housing (independent and assisted living) rental units. This was a sudden change of course for the developers. The Zoning Board of Appeals recently discussed this proposal. There is a tape of the meeting is available, which will disclose the details. Questions came up about who would own and/or run the building. Oak Tree Development is proposing to develop the property and they would likely sell it so that it would be operated by another company. The board will submit questions to clarify a number of issues via Steve DeCoursey. Jennie Raitt will also be available to answer questions.

c. New Board Member onboarding materials – Anne Brown did a great job putting together a packet of materials to help new members join the board. Thank you, Anne!

d. Location of June Board meeting; Nominations in June for Board Secretary and Minuteman Liaison – The state may be changing the rules for meeting on June 15th, so to ensure that we understand the rules we could move the meeting to June 24th at 6pm. Or we could move the meeting to June 10th at 6pm.

There was a motion by Pat and Anne Brown seconded. The board approved to move the meeting to June 10th at 6pm.

e. There will be an election in June for board secretary and Minute Man Liaison. We may also vote for co-president. Kristine will lobby folks to get them to take on these leadership roles.

10. Other Community Announcements

- There was a discussion on when we might have the memorial. We will likely have it for late September or October.

- normally the COA sponsors the Walk the Rink. There is another entity running a similar program.

- Marge and Jill are rolling off the board; Nancy, Mary and Michale are finishing their first term and need to tell Kristine if they choose to stay on board.

Pat made a motion to adjourn. Jill seconded. All voted to adjourn at 7:22pm

Next meeting: June 10, 2021 on Zoom

Executive Director's Report

Kristine Shah

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