

Harvard Council on Aging
Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, March 16, 2021
Via Zoom Conference

Present: Beth Williams, Fran Maiore, Guy Oliva, Chet Hooper, Carl Sciple, Cathy Walker, Lynne Musto-Pesa, COA Director Debbie Thompson, Substitute recorder Kim Schwarz
FCOA members: Sharon Briggs, Barbara Cerva
Select Board Liaison: Lucy Wallace
Planning Board members: Chris Ryan, Jane Biering
Press Reporter: Joan Eliyesil
Absent: Connie Larrabee, Nancy Webber

The meeting convened at 4:06 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the February 16, 2021 board meeting were approved unanimously as written.

Senior Housing - Jane Biering and Chris Ryan

Jane reported that the Planning Board has chosen not to submit a lengthy bylaw at Town Meeting. They formed a task force with 3 steps.

1. Determine need/desire for Senior housing using surveys and focus groups
 - Took place through January 2021
 - Listened
 - Put out two surveys: one for Seniors and one for General Population
 - Put out a visual survey
 - Ran focus group
2. Review results of Step 1 (all available on Planning Board's web page)
 - Results confirmed earlier findings
 - As residents age, many think of leaving town w/in the next five years
 - 2/3 of those who are thinking of leaving would prefer to stay in town
 - Reasons largely financial, especially property taxes
 - There are few downsizing options in Harvard, meaning smaller houses and smaller lots
 - "We love our town"
 - Unexpected results
 - The support of senior housing increased as the given details and descriptions increased
 - Finding a balance between keeping the rural character while allowing senior housing would be possible
 - Few responders on each extreme of interest with most responders mid-range

- Chris and Jane reviewed the table of results which showed that there is some consensus about types of Senior Housing that would be desired in town
3. Moving forward
- Multi-phased plan taking place during multiple Town Meetings
 - Amend current Accessory Unit bylaw such that if “aging in place” features are included, the permitting process would be streamlined
 - Create new Senior Housing Bylaw
 - This would establish the requirements for all Senior Housing

There was a discussion including:

- Is the COA BoD sufficiently supportive of the bylaw changes to speak at Town Meeting microphone?
- Why is the Accessory Apartment option not used more? Could there be a change to the Title 5 requirements? Need to involve Board of Health

COA BoD agreed to invite Jane and Chris to a future meeting to continue the conversation.

Director's Report

Outreach: Deb reported that in addition to other outreach, they were able to run a Covid-19 Vaccine Clinic. In coordination with Bowers Brook apartments, Foxglove Apartments and Acton Pharmacy, on March 11, 65 seniors with some caretakers were vaccinated at Hildreth House. Some Harvard Public School teachers were also able to be vaccinated for a total of 100 doses. On March 12, there were an additional 30 seniors vaccinated at FoxGlove Apartments. Everyone who received the vaccine will receive their second dose on April 8 and April 9.

Representatives of COA called everyone that they were aware needed help getting vaccinated. Deb has submitted a letter to the Harvard Press both to thank all who helped facilitate the clinics as well as to clear up any misunderstanding about the selection process.

Phase II

The RFP was sent out and there have been two responses including the property on Lancaster County Road. Guy has continued conversations and reported that there may be some flexibility with the Lancaster County Road.

Public Comment

none

Treasurer's Report

Account balances as of March 4, 2021- per MUNIS report

| | | | |
|-----------------|----------|----------|----------------------------|
| COA Salary | \$77,085 | Budgeted | \$163,019 |
| COA Expense | 9,630 | | 10,547 |
| MART Salary | 19,418 | | 35,108 |
| MART Expense | 610 | | 610 |
| Gift account | 89,018 | | 7,000 reserved for kitchen |
| Formula Grant | 9,226 | | |
| Revolving Funds | 7,176 | | |

FCOA

Sharon reported that FCOA will partner with Ayer Rotary with the DuckyWucky Race fundraiser. A town wide newsletter with contribution envelopes has brought about \$6,000 with an expectation of continued contributions for a couple of months. There was mention of sending the COA newsletter town-wide twice/year to keep the town informed about COA.

There was mention of the possibility of FCOA purchasing tents for use by COA as the weather improves and COVID-19 precautions continue to require outdoor gatherings.

New Business

Beth reminded that she and Connie will be stepping off COA leaving two openings, a 1-year and a 3-year. All are encouraged to help fill those spots.

Barbara Cerva asked about the Devens fundraising efforts. Carl Sciple will follow-up with Heidi Siegrist.

Meeting adjourned at 5:19.

Respectfully submitted,
Kim Schwarz

Amended 4/18/2021