

**SALEM COUNCIL ON AGING
Minutes of Regular Meeting**

Date and Time: April 17, 2019 at 5:10 P.M.

Meeting Location: Board Room, 401 Bridge Street

Members Present: John Russell (JR), Julie Carver (JC), Elaine Heredeen (EH), Abigail Butt (AB) via telephone, Alice Williams (AW), George Barbuzzi (GB) and Elaine Milo (EM)

Members Absent: Lynda Coffill (LC, Chairperson),

Also Absent: Teresa Arnold, (TA, Director of the COA)

Clerk: Kathleen Fitzgerald

Meeting Called to Order

EH calls the meeting to order at 5:10 P.M.

Motion made by JC to approve the March Minutes, seconded by JR and passes unanimously.

Old Business:

Senior Housing – JR stated that he attended the meeting of the Subcommittee on Housing and one question asked was what we are doing and what can we do as members of the Board of the COA. There was talk about somebody going to the Salem Housing Authority meetings which were on the second Wednesday of each month and suggested that on occasion someone from the Board could get to those meetings. He suggested including things in the newsletter. JR said they talked about in-law apartments and what they want to do now is to try to open this up to include everybody and not just in-laws. He stated that he and AB thought there would be a push back, but people are very supportive and there is a lot of support from the City Council. JR stated that the Board will continue to do what they could do and will keep bringing forth senior housing issues.

AW asked what if someone already had people in their homes who were not relatives, what happens to them. JR stated that there was a one-year grandfather clause. AB said that nobody knows about the accessory units and that we need to find a way of getting that information out to our clientele so it can be used as nobody knows it's there. She suggested having a housing fair to talk about different kinds of housing available and stated that the Board should make sure a housing fair happens by getting some outreach going, etc. JR said it may not be easy, but definitely doable.

There was a discussion about a newspaper article stating that the Community Life Center was already overgrown. JR stated that any building that was a success would be too small. The worst story you could see is that the building is too big, but JR thinks the article says the Center is very successful. It was stated that people taking exercise classes were upset because the classes were full and they could not participate. GB mentioned other COAs had the same issues regarding exercise classes. JR suggested that at some point we could add another class. He advised that the Friends fund one class. AW said a friend in Marblehead told her that they switched rooms to accommodate more people.

There was a discussion about problems with the salem.com emails. GB suggested having Eric Bergengren from IT come to a Board meeting here since all Board members would be present and many were having a problem.

New Business:

Friends Update -- JR advised that they were still working on ideas for fundraising and looking at a comedy night and talking about using Ames Hall which he stated was absolutely beautiful and could accommodate many. He said he thought we could get a comedian for \$400.00 and was looking at local restaurants to help with food.

He advised that there was some tension over a cookbook fundraiser and someone stepped down from the Friends Board.

Director's Report:

North Shore Community Health Center: A grant application went in last Friday. This is to offer behavioral health counseling at the COA. A clinical social worker from North Shore Community Health would have office hours here a few times each week if we received the grant funds. Our social workers would play a role in referring people in need of behavior health.

JR said behavioral health might be good to bring to children and grandchildren of seniors to help deal with changes. GB said he thought TA was trying to identify people in need.

North Shore Physicians Group – Last week we had a daytime talk on Advanced Directives with Dr. Larissa Lucas. TA advised that the lecture series was going very well.

Nutrition Program – Working on nutrition grant application to North Shore Elder Services. This pays for Dan Cote's salary and some other expenses associated with the lunch program.

Are U Ok? –Wellness check program almost in place. There have been a lot of delays as IT is trying to figure out the best setup for the Police Department to access reports of elders who do not pick up their wellness check calls. This is an opt-in program that we won't publicize until the kinks are worked out.

Memory Café – The next one is scheduled for Monday, May 6th at 12:00 P.M.

Greater Boston Food Bank – 76 people are being served monthly which includes our social worker, Joe Ericksberg delivering some of the food to Charter Street residents.

Transportation -- Going well. TA advised that there always seems to be a van in the shop and so we monitor expenses and useful life of the older vans. Fully staffed at the moment. The new driver, Diane White, was out on medical leave for a few weeks, but is back this week.

Volunteer Program – There is a dinner on April 18th to recognize the volunteers.

Housing Forum – There is a meeting on Tuesday, April 23rd from 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M at the Community Life Center sponsored by the City/Planning Department.

EH welcomed back Elaine Milo.

EM said nothing was before the council in terms of legislation.

JR said there was a discussion with groups of people at tables about what we can give regarding density for the contractors and what we can do to expedite the process. He stated that if going to build ten units, 10% won't make money, but if we can have more units it might be doable.

EM said there was a lot of polling of people at the Housing Forum to figure out where priorities were. There are different members of the housing trust now which has required a quorum and can now vote, but they don't have much money. JR asked what the money would be for and EM said it is to permit more affordable housing in Salem. JR stated that people in Salem think 10% should be affordable but this had been as a "gentlemen's agreement" and we need something in writing.

EM said developers would not get permits if they did not make affordable units.

EH asked what was happening with the shuttle services and EM said she would find out. She said part of the goal is to take cars off the road and the shuttle was a perfect way to do it.

There was a short discussion about the new valet parking and EM said they talked about parking cars near Riley Plaza.

EH asked if there was any new business. AB said she had nothing to add.

Next Board Meeting: May 15, 2019.

A motion to adjourn is made by JR, seconded by JC, and passes unanimously.

The meeting adjourns at 5:40 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Fitzgerald, Clerk