

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

Date and Time: February 16, 2022 at 5:22 P.M.

Meeting Location: Via Zoom

Members Present: Lynda Coffill (LC, Chair), John Russell (JR, Vice-Chair), Donna Clifford (DC), Patricia Small (PS), Abigail Butt (AB)

Members Absent: Julie Carver (JC), George Barbuzzi (GB), Kristin Macek (KM)

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

Also Present: Leveille McClain (City Council Liaison)

Clerk: Kathleen Fitzgerald

Meeting Called to Order

LC called the meeting to order at 5:22 P.M.

LC stated that pursuant to Governor Baker's directive on 3/12/20 which supports certain provisions of Chapter 30A, Section 20, there are strict limitations regarding gatherings, so this meeting is being conducted via Zoom. The public and persons who would like to listen may do so by dialing in. All votes taken shall be by roll call.

Roll call was then taken.

A motion was made by JR to approve the January 2022 Minutes, seconded by PS, roll call was taken, and passed unanimously.

Old Business:

Subsidized Senior Housing: PS spoke regarding the senior housing meeting. One of the issues which JR brought up was Section 8 housing that is by income only and he stated many seniors would be eligible and that this would be an alternative for people.

Councilor McClain stated that Section 8 has a statewide list with over 10,000 people on it.

PS stated that when Cathy Hoog was talking about senior housing, it was all one-bedroom housing which would not allow for live-in help.

LC said she attend the Lee Fort Terrace meeting last night. She said there would be 1-, 2- and 3-bedrooms going in. She advised that this winter they would start the permitting process. LC stated that the Board should make sure they know about those public hearings and to do some testifying. She said construction was to start in April 2023.

PS asked if there was a model they were going with. LC said it would be two buildings connected by a bridge with the entrance off of Fort Avenue. She said part of the buildings recessed from the Cove and would be back further. It will be 100% affordable and 60% AMI or under. She said the residents asked that they be clustered closely together, and the developer has agreed.

Councilor McClain said he thought the Housing Authority did not want to do that per Cathy Hoog.

LC stated that the developer was very sensitive to the tenants' wishes and that the plan was such that they will be close in proximity. She advised it would be all electric with solar panels using low carbon materials and native and natural landscaping. The public open space would be facing the Cove. Parking will be adequate -- .08 cars per unit. She advised that the design was very thoughtful in terms of protecting where we are. LC said they want to protect refuge, habitat, climate, people, etc. and that they see this as a way to pull the neighborhood together. LC advised that during the meeting there was a call from the neighborhood that is vehemently opposed to this project and does not want the building that big.

LC stated that she came away from the meeting with the impression that the people developing the project listen and are amenable to suggestions.

JR said he did not see anyone who is going to get their views blocked and that this project will not have any effect on traffic or views. He said people need to know that there is no money for rehab, only to rebuild.

Next:

Bylaws: LC stated that there were some things that did not make any sense and that she had reached out to Beth Renard to take a look at the Bylaws. LC said the Bylaws give the Board right of review over the budget and that these Bylaws were done at the beginning of the century. LC stated she would go through the Bylaws again. AB said she would like to take another look at them and that they needed diversity, inclusion and anti-racism language added.

LC said this would be tabled to review again.

Next:

Newsletter: LC advised that some members of Salem for All Ages suggested that the COA newsletter needs to be changed and that she was a bit taken aback since the Board never had an issue with the newsletter and this is not something Salem for All Ages has purview over. She advised that Dominick Pangallo said a plan would be developed and reviewed and that the Board would not be let out of the process. LC said there was not enough information about people who read the newsletter. She said the people who receive the newsletter by mail would get a one-page survey which will be developed by TA and LC. A second survey would go out with the water bills. LC stated she had never heard any complaints about the newsletter.

PS said she had heard complaints about it being hard to read and sometimes repetitive and could use a little help in organization. She also stated that if you went on to the City website, it was difficult to find.

LC stated more space was need for information which impacts seniors and the font might need to be changed.

AB stated that the method of getting a survey out to people with water bills was not great because renters do not get water bills. LC suggested dropping them off at Charter Street, etc. AB said if we wanted to get results from everybody, we need to do better and asked if it would be in languages other than English.

JR stated that we could always do things better, but that we should be careful of how we change things due to only a few complaints.

AB suggested going on the web and finding other senior centers and go to LPI Publications and take a look at other senior centers around the country.

Councilor McClain asked if the survey could go out with the newsletter.

TA stated that Salem for All Ages has completed five years and Co-chairs Dominick Pangallo and Patricia Zaido thought it might be time to restructure. TA is now chairing the CLC Engagement Committee consisting of Dominick Pangallo, Patricia Zaido, Lynda Coffill, Kathy McCarthy, Rod Kessler, Dr. Michelle Sweeney and Tara Mansfield.

JR said he had spoken with Councilor McClain about ways to reach more seniors. JR said that all of the Councilors have FB pages and we can utilize them to post about upcoming events, etc. He stated that this would be another way to engage people. Councilor McClain said it was a great idea and an easy idea. He further stated that there are a few Councilors who run newsletters of their own and if we could get them involved, that would be excellent. Councilor McClain also stated that there was an age split and younger people use Instagram.

TA advised that the Mayor had Matt Killen from IT look at My Senior Center and My Rec to look at the numbers from 2021 and over the years. Over 600 new people registered with the COA in 2021. IT presented a heat map which showed a map of the City and where we were drawing from. This gives us another tool to reach out to people.

Next:

55th Anniversary of the COA:

TA stated that we want to think about how to celebrate and would like the Board's input.

Councilor McClain said there would be a lot of interest from local politicians regarding this.

Friends Update: JR advised that there was a small holdup in getting the Appeal Letter out and that they were sending out 9,000 appeal letters. He said they may look to seniors at the CLC to help stuff envelopes.

JR advised they had approved funding for the Easter dinner which is about \$2,500, as well as an opening day event for the Red Sox which will include hot dogs on the grill, popcorn and crackerjacks. It will be on March 31st and will be a fun event.

He said the Friends are looking to hold an event at Winter Island, possibly a luau in June. It will be a diverse menu.

He advised that the kitchen vent was on hold and that TA is exploring the possibility of revamping and upgrading the entire kitchen and looking for funding. It would probably cost between \$150,000-\$180,000 to refit the kitchen. JR advised that the Mayor is interested in getting more residents to the CLC. TA said that attracting more people to the CLC is the goal of the CLC Engagement Committee. She said Erica Blumberg has been an asset and a great help with the possible redesign of the kitchen.

AB said a creative way to have a meal program is to partner with the schools and possibly get food at a cheaper cost. She said other COA's look at the school lunch calendars, i.e. pizza day, and have extras delivered for the COA.

Director's Report:

Social Services:

We have been surveying participants and newsletter readers with surveys created by North Shore Community Health to gauge what kind of group support seniors might like. When the results are in, NSCH will conduct "Lunch and Learn" support workshops for our seniors. In addition, about 12 individuals receive one to one mental health counseling in the Health Room of the Community Life Center on Fridays. The clinician from NSCH has been well-received and is helping to meet the demand for behavioral health services.

Through a donation to social services, we purchased 500 N95 masks to distribute to our seniors.

Last month the three social workers serviced 319 seniors 794 times.

Tax season is here and Mary Pax Lenney, the AARP Tax-Aide volunteer who schedules appointments, reports they are booked through mid-March already. This is a great service, and we are thankful to have the Tax-Aide volunteers back in the building to offer this valuable service to our seniors.

Nutrition:

With help from Kathy McCarthy, Program Director, we have begun to reach out to some of our regular luncheon guests to ask them to participate as ambassadors in our lunch program. Their tasks include greeting guests as they arrive each day for lunch, checking reservations and monitoring the coffee station.

Since reopening activities and lunches the week of January 31st, we were serving about 18 people each day and that number has doubled this week now that Bingo has returned. Nutrition now has space in the newsletter. Erica Blumberg interviewed Kerry Murphy from the Health Department.

For Thursday, February 24th we are preparing our first in-house meal; beef barley soup, a modified (untoasted) BLT and an ice cream sundae. We have over 40 reservations so far.

Programming/Activities:

In person programming returned on January 31st. Everyone was pleased to return. Bingo is returning the week of February 14th. The Annual Valentine's Day/Vow Renewal Ceremony took place Monday, Valentine's Day. This was the first party back in the building since Christmas.

Wednesday, February 16th the Mayor was scheduled to be here for coffee in the morning and members of the Salem Police were here in the afternoon for a presentation on body cameras.

There will be a Memory Café at 1:00-2:30 pm on February 24th and our first brunch and movie, "An Affair to Remember" on the 28th.

Upcoming new events in March:

- Donna Clifford's Wellness Series March 7th, 14th and 22nd
- St. Patrick's Day Party on March 17th
- Red Sox Opening Day Party on March 31st

Transportation:

The transportation department said goodbye to Tyler Hrynyszyn and Diane Brown in the last two weeks. With Omicron cases on the decline, the center will be expanding activities and transportation is anticipating an increase in ridership. Discussions around new hires for transportation have been started as we will be losing another driver, Arthur Jalbert, in early spring.

The new van is now on the road and in service. A few minor issues need to be addressed but we are pleased with the new van.

We continue to have vans state inspected and maintain upkeep. Drivers are working on updating certifications.

AB asked if another Board Member has been located. LC said she keeps trying and has reached out to the Latino community.

AB asked if there was any hybrid programming. TA said no.

There being no further business:

A motion to adjourn was made by JR, PS seconded, roll call was taken and passed unanimously.

Next Board Meeting: March 16, 2022 via Zoom.

The meeting adjourned at 6:28 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Fitzgerald, Clerk