

Wellesley Council on Aging Board Meeting
Monday, April 27, 2015

Attending: Voting Members: Sandy Budson, Mary Dummer, Diane Lapon, Miguel Lessing, Sister Alice McCourt, William Murphy, Sheila Nugent, Shirley Quinn, John Schuler, Joellen Toussaint.

Associate Members: Mary Bowers, Jean Boyle, Diane Campbell, Linda Cohen, John Cross, Judy Keefe, Jerry Kelley, Joanne Kilsdonk, Penelope Lawrence, Dianne Sullivan, Frederick Wright, and Gayle Thieme, Director of Senior Services.

Absent: Lisa Heyison, Susan Kagan Lange

Guest: Catherine Johnson

The meeting was called to order by the Chair, John Schuler, at 7:00 p.m. in Henderson Hall of the Wellesley Community Center

Citizen Speak: Catherine Johnson, member of the Town Planning Board, Town Meeting member, local realtor, and chair of the Standish Rd. Neighborhood Conservation District, invited the COA Board to a meeting to be held Wednesday night, April 29. This meeting is to explain the concept of a neighborhood conservation district to the Wellesley community. A neighborhood conservation district is an action taken by a neighborhood to preserve its character in the face of real estate development. Each neighborhood can decide on its own guidelines for new building. This action is enabled by the Town of Wellesley bylaw 46A.

The minutes of the March 23, 2015 were approved without discussion.

Staff Reports: Staff reports are on file with these minutes. The Chair and the Board congratulated Gayle Thieme on the growth of the programming and services provided by the COA. The Director added to the reports, as follows:

Personnel: Unfortunately Lorraine Clough has submitted her letter of resignation as of May 21. James Murphy has started training as a part-time bus driver and Hector MacDonald, retired Wellesley policeman, will be the on call driver.

Transportation: The Friends of the COA are providing a \$500 fund to cover emergency (medical only) same or next day transportation. These rides will be coordinated with Veterans Taxi. A need has arisen for Interpreter services; this will be covered by a line item “other professional services” through a provider called The Language Line. At the moment there is no hard data on languages spoken by our clients.

The Director asked for a vote to tap the COA Gift Account for a \$125 gratuity to the servers who worked so cooperatively and hard at the Volunteer brunch in the face of the emergency caused by the lack of water in the Wellesley Community Center building. The vote was moved, seconded and passed unanimously.

The Director’s request that there be a letter from the COA board about the general and specific difficulties of working with the WCC produced general discussion of the COA’s position as renters in the building and the responsibility of the WCC as landlord. Miguel Lessing said that he and Hans Larsen, Executive Director Town of Wellesley, have agreed to meet with the WCC Board. In addition a motion was made and seconded that a letter addressed to the WCC Board (with a copy to the BOS) from the COA Board indicating our continuing displeasure with the operation of the WCC building should be sent over the Chair’s signature. The motion was passed with one abstention. It was further suggested that the letter be strong and explicit documenting the instances when the COA operations have been impacted by the attitudes and actions, or non-action, of the WCC.

Report of the Board Reorganization Task Force: The chair of this committee, Miguel Lessing, made a power point presentation to the board. It is on file with these minutes. Mr. Lessing spoke particularly about the fact that the Task Force was carrying out the recommendations developing from the retreat in January about board reorganization –focusing on board size and board relations with the Board of Selectmen. It is also important that the board be in a strong position as it takes on the work involved in furthering the Tolles Parsons senior center. According to Town Counsel a letter from the BOS stating what their wishes are will be our guiding document. COA bylaw changes require a 30-day cooling off period from April 27. The COA board will vote to adopt, then the BOS will vote. Article 33 of the Town bylaws will contain our changes which will then go to Town Meeting in the fall of 2015. If approved the changes will go into effect July 1, 2016.

The ensuing discussion was mainly on the reduction in the number of the voting members of the board and the place of the Associate Members. Some felt that 7 voting members-- 4 officers and 3 members were too few and that the executive committee would outnumber the members of the board. There was also the question of terms of voting members and of officers and a quorum. Some approved the notion of the Associate Members sitting with the board when they had business to bring to the board but not otherwise; others felt that that was too strong a separation between the Voting Members and the Associate Members.

Because of time constraints, it was voted to hold a special meeting of the COA board for further discussion on May 18 and to postpone the regular May meeting of the Board until June 1 and to hold the June meeting as scheduled on June 15.

Transportation Committee Update

Dianne Sullivan, Chair of the Transportation Committee submitted the following motion: “To request a suggested \$3.00 donation per

passenger for special COA bus trips within a 50- mile radius of the Wellesley COA.” The motion was passed unanimously.

Legislative/Advocacy Committee Update

Jerry Kelley submitted the following report. “The Mass Legislature has been working on the FY 16 State budget and the Mass Assoc. of COAs has been advocating for an increase to the Formula Grant. The goal is to increase from \$8 to \$9 per senior in the 350 cities and towns, with the goal of \$12 per senior by 2020.

We have contacted our legislators. The House Ways and Means Committee has included this year’s increase to \$9 per elder which means an increase for Wellesley of \$5,429. We have been asked to send a thank you to key members of the House, our representative, Alice Peisch as well as reaffirming to our senators the need to match this in the senate.” Mr. Kelley prepared and passed around letters to be signed by board members with indications of whether the signer is a member of the executive committee or a committee chair.

Mr. Kelley also made a plea for more members of the Legislative Advocacy Committee.

The updates of the Demographics and Needs Assessment Committee and the Tolles-Parsons Center were postponed until a later Board meeting.

There being no other business it was voted to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted

Shirley Quinn, Secretary