

Needham Council on Aging Board Meeting

January 12, 2023

Present: Colleen Schaller, Chair, Penny Grossman, Vice Chair, Helen Gregory, Sandra Prinn, Ed Cosgrove, Carol de Lemos, Kathy Whitney, Sue Mullaney, Kate Robey, Dan Goldberg, Lianne Relich, Ted Prorok, VFW representative

Present Advisory Board: Anne Cosgrove, Sam Hart

COA: LaTanya Steele, Director

Health and Human Services Director: Timothy Muir McDonald

Guests: Anne Brain and Carol Ditmor, Friends of the Cath

1. Meeting called to order by Ms. Schaller at 5:00 pm combination of in person and on Zoom.

2. Balfour Presentation

Balfour representatives attended the meeting to present their new plan to the COA Board on the redevelopment of the Carter Mill/formerly Avery assisted living property.

Balfour's partner is Welltower, a real estate investment firm, owner of the property for over thirty years. HYM is the development manager.

The redesign includes 155 units total of which 118 are assisted living apartments, 28 memory care and 9 independent living apartments with 10th apartment meeting the affordable guidelines.

Julie Nash the operations manager for Balfour and Kristopher Yetman the Vice President for Development at HYM were the principal speakers.

Balfour noted they had been meeting with several Needham groups including Quiet Needham, the Village Club and both the Planning and Selectboard.

A discussion ensued on the 1.9 million mitigation payment to the Town as a memo of understanding agreed to in principle but not yet signed by the Selectboard. The new plans (copies distributed at the meeting showed the 10 independent first floor unit redesign.)

Mr. Goldberg noted that while he thought the plans were attractive and well designed the lack of independent living down from the 65 agreed to at Town meeting was a violation of the Town Meeting overlay district. He feels strongly and wanted to note that the market is changing in Massachusetts and there is a saturation of assisted living facilities but a lack of independent living. Several Board members noted that either they would like to sell their homes and stay in town in first floor independent living units or had parents they would like to keep in Needham.

Mr. Yetman noted that the overlay district zoning did not require a minimum number of independent living units. It mentions independent living as one option but the overlay zoning does not absolutely require it.

The Board also mentioned that this is the only property within walking distance to services such as the CATH, Trader Joe's and an urgent care which is why there is such a desire in the Town to see more independent units situated at this last remaining in town location.

3. Director of Health and Human Services, Mr. Timothy Muir McDonald.

Mr. McDonald noted that at the February meeting he will be presenting the space study final recommendations. Mr. McDonald will provide an overview of the Town study. He noted that one of the main points guiding the work is maximizing the programming space. The other plan is to activate the deck in a variety of weather. Separate and apart from the space study is the goal to buy or rent parking spaces from MBTA. Also separate- building a fully handicapped accessible entrance at the café door.

2. a. After the Balfour presentation the Board discussed the proposal. Several members noted that the need is for 55+ independent living that is not part of a larger corporate owned assisted living/memory care facility. Discussion also revolved around when the Planning Board would vote on the mitigation money and send it to the Select Board for their review and vote.

4. Chairperson's Report –Ms. Colleen Schaller

Ms. Schaller noted she had no updates and because of the Balfour presentation is tabling the November and December minutes vote to the February meeting. January minutes will be reviewed then as well.

5. Aging Services Division Report, Ms. LaTanya Steele

Ms. Steele noted that SNAP emergency allotments (EA) in place since March 2020 will expire in 3 months on April 11, 2023. The 60 day notice is likely to be given officially on February 11. This means that households will only receive their standard award which effects 240,000 older adults across the State beginning April 12, 2023.

Ms. Steele also noted that Representative Garlick's Report to the Community is coming up on Monday February 13 both virtually and in person.

6. Planning Board Letter Motion

The Board final discussion was an agreement that while noting that the original contractor LCD had 70 independent units in the plan the number that the new contractor has come back with of 10 is inadequate to meet Needham seniors independent living needs.

Mr. Goldberg made a motion; The Council on Aging Board met with Balfour on January 12. We are reaffirming our position as opposed to this development because of the lack of an adequate number of independent units in the plan. Ms. Robey seconded the motion. A copy will be sent to the Select Board. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

The Board agreed to discuss possible earmarking request of the 1.9 million mitigation fund for senior citizen needs at a future meeting. Ms. Schaller noted she would notify the Board ahead of the February

meeting if the mitigation discussion moves to the Select Board agenda before the next COA Board meeting.

7. Update about the Housing Plan Working Group, Ms. Helen Gregory

Ms. Gregory noted the working group approved the plan in late December. The transmittal letter will be complete this week and the plan will be sent to both the Chair of the Selectboard and the Chair of the Planning Board. Ms. Gregory enjoyed the experience and Ms. Schaller thanked her serving on the working group.

8. VFW Representative Report, Mr. Ted Prorok

Mr. Prorok noted that the VFW service officer position has been filled by Mr. Todd (T.J.) Tedeschi, Deputy Veteran's Service Officer. He also noted the annual December police dinner at the VFW was a success. The Voice of Democracy PEN contest is complete and one of Voice of Democracy Needham entrants will be attending the Westboro state-wide banquet. Other upcoming business is a meet and greet with Mr. Tedeschi at the CATH on January 26 at 10 am and a joint meeting with the Needham Exchange Club on February 2.

9. Ms. Schaller requested a Motion to Adjourn.

Ms. Gregory made a motion to adjourn; Ms. Cosgrove seconded the motion. The Board unanimously adjourned at 6:32 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Faith Crisley

Recording Secretary