

Needham Council on Aging Board Meeting

February 9, 2023

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

COA: Latanya Steele, Director, Aicha Kelley, Programming, Jessica Moss, Social Work

Health and Human Services Director: Timothy Muir McDonald

Guests: Anne Brain, Friends of the Cath

Advisory Board: Ann Cosgrove

SHINE: Michelle Gucciardi, Director

- 1. Meeting called to order by Ms. Schaller, Chair at 5:10 pm combination of in person and on Zoom.**
- 2. CATH Space Utilization Study Update, Mr. Timothy Muir McDonald, Director, Health and Human Services**

Mr. McDonald noted that he and Ms. Steele have had two meetings with the architects and met with several area COA Directors who have recently renovated or built senior centers to discuss challenges and successes.

The overall goal is to increase programming space over administrative space. The preliminary recommendations are below.

The work once approved will be completed in phases due to Town funding priorities.

- a.** Expanding the parking by leasing or purchasing spots from the MBTA. Also expanding the number of handicapped parking spaces. This involves multiple levels of government so will take time.
- b.** Reconfiguring space to accommodate popular programming. A switch of the gaming room with the fitness room is suggested as the number of users of the fitness room has grown exponentially. Another possibility is moving the game room to the second floor.
- c.** Redesigning the computer room as modular space so that it can be used by SHINE during open enrollment and for tax season but other times used for different programming. This could involve laptops on movable stands, new monitors and modular seating. This is how many organizations reconfigure their common computer space needs to maximize use today.
- d.** Redesigning the deck with awnings, trellis configurations and new furniture to make an outdoor living room and provide shade for more 3 season programming.
- e.** Providing a fully handicapped entrance near handicapped parking either at the café door or nearby new handicapped parking spaces.
- f.** Utilizing the basement as programming space for the first time. For example, it might be suitable space for card games and the pool table.

The final report will first go to the Permanent Public Building Committee to see what is feasible and in what phases on a three, five and ten year plan can be implemented followed by the Finance Committee, as a part of the Capital Plan review and then the Town Manager.

The goal is to tune and extend the life of the ten year building and to fully justify and explain why changes are needed. For example, the fitness room is much more popular and necessary than was envisioned when the building was built. Mr. McDonald requested the Board's priority feedback and consensus on needs to help sell the project in the face of competing priorities including the fact that both Mitchell and Pollard school renovations are on the horizon. The 1.6 million that the entire renovation is likely to cost is not a small sum.

The Board asked about the kitchen renovations. Mr. McDonald noted this is a separate study but the vendor did not meet the Town's needs so now the same design team for the CATH is involved in a value study. The discussion involves changing the kitchen from a demonstration to a full production kitchen which could accommodate Traveling Meals preparation as well as full lunch meals for the CATH. He noted that the school nutritionist is contributing her expertise to the architectural team on what is required in a production kitchen.

Ms. Gregory thanked Mr. McDonald and the team for working so hard on meeting current needs while planning for future needs.

3. Aging Services Division

a. Social Work, Volunteer Report, Ms. Jessica Moss

The Board asked about and congratulated Jessica on her new baby Tommy.

Ms. Moss noted the grant from the Mass Development to restart the taxi program was approved this month. The \$49,999.00 for taxi transport meets needs that are not covered by other town services.

The MetroWest Health Foundation also funded a \$4000.00 grant to resume private clinical supervision for the entire social work staff. This will cover 40 sessions with her and clinical supervision is also utilized by the Youth and Family Services staff.

Ms. Moss noted they will miss Jill who has taken a new position but her job will be posted soon.

b. SHINE Report, Ms. Michelle Gucciardi

Ms. Gucciardi noted that open enrollment ended on December 7. They maintain 66 counselors throughout the region up to 2/3's of whom are volunteers. Right now, she and the assistant director are having 1 to 1 meetings with all counselors to discuss what worked and what could be improved.

Ms. Gucciardi noted that looking ahead over the next 12-14 months the continuous enrollment protection that Medicaid provided during the COVID 19 emergency is ending on April 1. This will mean that people can be terminated from Mass Health due to ineligibility. There will be many people who need assistance transitioning from Mass Health to Medicare as there be high demand and understanding the process and forms will be a challenge for many. SHINE is training certain counselors in transition specifics to meet this need.

Ms. Gucciardi also noted that are new State-funded billboards going up across the region to highlight SHINE's services. This will help boost the numbers among younger eligible people who may not visit their local COA. The signs will be located between Watertown and as far west as Westboro through ClearChannel outdoor advertising.

c. Programming Report, Ms. Aicha Kelley

Ms. Kelley noted that programming continues to be very busy. There were many new faces; ID tags ran out and had to be reordered which is sign of the new attendees. Ms. Kelley noted that Needham is the only COA still delivering meals-- about 80 per day. New delivery technology was implemented this month that helps Patty and Leslie manage this process more quickly and efficiently.

Ms. Kelley noted she is planning programming now through August.

She noted that the February 9 *Valentines Traditions in Boston with Anthony Sammarco* program was standing room only.

She also noted five sponsors have returned this month.

Ms. Kelley noted a survey will be sent soon requesting the programming needs for fall 2023.

Ms. Kelley also asked Ms. Schaller and the Board what kind of statistics they would like in her future reports and to email her with needs.

Ms. Kelley noted in answer to Board questions that more in person programming is returning but that for example Sandi continues to teach her yoga on Zoom as her 65 person class could not be run in person as then the limit would be 20.

d. Director's Report, Ms. Latanya Steele. Ms. Schaller asked the Board if everyone had time to read Ms. Steele's report and if they had any questions on the transportation details in the report. The Board noted the report answered any questions they might have otherwise had.

4. Chairperson's Report, Ms. Colleen Schaller

a. Minutes

Ms. Schaller asked for votes to approve the November, December and January minutes which had been delayed due to November/December changes and the 110 West Street project presentation at the January meeting.

Mr. Cosgrove made a motion to approve the November 10, 2022, minutes. Ms. Gregory seconded. The Board unanimously approved the minutes by voice vote.

Mr. Cosgrove made a motion to approve the December 8, 2022, minutes. Ms. Gregory seconded the motion. The December 2022 minutes were unanimously approved by voice vote.

Ms. DeLemos made a motion to approve the January 12, 2023, minutes. Ms. Gregory seconded. The January 2023 minutes were unanimously approved by voice vote.

Ms. Schaller noted that she attended the recent Planning Board meetings. The petition for the Avery/100 West St. project was withdrawn on February 8. There will be changes to plan that will be brought back to the Planning Board after the April election. The Planning Board is aware of the COA Board's objections to the current plan. Ms. Schaller believes the next submission will not include more independent units but is likely to pass.

Ms. Schaller also noted that the Planning Board will submit changes to the current ADU's (Accessory Dwelling Units) policies.

She noted that it appears the ADU units will have changes that will include eliminating the permitting process, allowing them on personal property as a right but within certain rules. General rental of ADU spaces will be allowed to help the owner with their mortgage. Detached structures will need to have a five feet set back and a maximum height of fifteen feet. The size change will allow for an increase in total size from 825 square feet to 900 square feet. No on street parking will continue to be mandated; parking will need to be on site for any ADU. There is no overnight street parking allowed in Needham.

5. Housing Report, Ms. Helen Gregory

Ms. Gregory noted the report was submitted last month but she will send the link from the Town website to the Board.

6. VFW Representative Report, Mr. Ted Prorok

Mr. Prorok noted that he has met with the new Veterans Representative Service representative T.J. Tedeschi who is planning on spending more time at the CATH. He is very receptive to suggestions and dedicated and will be following up with the Veteran's parking space issue at the town Hall as well as the flag recycling bin project at the transfer station. One of his new ideas is to host a Veteran's Ball across all the towns he works with.

Mr. Prorok also noted that the Joint Patriot's Pen/Voice of Democracy writers award was won by Dennis Chang from the middle school in Needham for the Needham post/district. He received his award at the Patriot's Pen presentation at the Doubletree Inn in Westboro on February 5.

At the dinner he was the top presenter of 20 so will be representing Massachusetts at the National competition in Washington DC this spring. The winner there will receive a \$35,000 prize.

7. Friends Report, Ms. Anne Brain

Ms. Brain noted that the COA staff thank you catered luncheon in January was a great success and will become an annual event.

Ms. Schaller attended and noted that the staff never gets to eat together and it was a chance for the new drivers to meet the Friends Board and others.

8. Old Business

None

9. New Business

None

Ms. Schaller asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Cosgrove made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Gregory seconded. The Board adjourned by unanimous voice vote at 6 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Faith Crisley

Recording Secretary