

DATE: December 5, 2023
TIME: 9:39 AM

**Draft- Belmont Council on Aging
Minutes From November 7, 2023**

Meeting Called to order 7:01 pm

Present: Dana Bickelman (ex-officio), Pierce Ellinwood (ex officio), Ted Dukas, Chao Qiang Lai, Maryann Scali, Jane Shapiro, Peg Callanan, Ellen Sullivan (vice-Chair), Tomi Olson (Chair), Karen Donelan, Andrea Paschal, Belmont Voice Representatives Jane Sherwin and Lucia Arno-Bernsen

Not Present: Judy Morrison, Joel Semuels

1. Meet Belmont Voice

- Tomi introduced Belmont Voice representatives Jane Shapiro and Lucia Arno-Bernsen to the Board. The Belmont Voice is a non-profit, community run and community supported organization that currently circulates an online newsletter to Belmont residents informing them of news and events in town. They are planning to send a weekly print newspaper to every household and business within the next few months. Advertising and fundraising help to fund the newspaper. They recently just hired an Editor-In-Chief, Jesse Floyd. Members of the Board of Directors are meeting with as many organizations in town to introduce themselves and form relationships with all sorts of groups in town in order to share non-partisan info about what is happening in town and what are the current issues that are of concern in town.

2. Senior Citizen Concerns - M. Scali

- Seniors are concerned about the short period of time between the breakdown of the Senior Crafts Fair on November 18th and the set-up of the Lions Club 75th Anniversary Celebration later that day. Will there be enough time to properly break down and clean up after the Crafts Fair? Dana assured everyone that the Center is aware of the small window of time and it will all work out okay.
- Many Seniors have expressed concerns about a number of kitchen appliances that are broken/in need of repair. Dana has put in a work order to fix the dripping sink and a part has been on back-order for a long time to repair the walk-in refrigerator. Jane asked if Dana could get a quote to replace the industrial walk-in refrigerator- she explained that it would be good to know that cost for future reference. Dana will get a quote.
- Seniors have expressed concerns about the library moving in to the Senior Center. What is the plan? What is the timing? How will we run all of our programs while sharing space with the library? Dana mentioned that staff have also expressed concerns/anxieties. Pierce will put regular reminders, timelines and communication in the bulletin about the library and its' services, timeline for moving in, etc. Dana will be meeting regularly with staff to keep them updated on library happenings.
- Seniors are looking forward to having online class registrations available to them. Dana is working on this and will keep the Board informed when they will be available.

3. Review of Past Meeting Minutes

Reviewed and accepted unanimously with minor corrections.

4. Updates and Correspondence

A. Director - Dana Bickelman

Dana reminded the Board that she is meeting with the Warrant Sub-Committee on November 17th at 9:30 am in the Select Board Conference Room to discuss our budget. She has been asked to draft a level funded budget (level services to last year). Dana encouraged Board Members to attend the meeting. Peg asked to have budget materials prior to meeting in order to have time to review them. Dana will send out budget materials to all Board Members.

B. Assistant Director- Pierce Ellinwood

October was a very busy month. Events included: History of the New England Patriots, a Salem Witch Trial program, two evening programs (a concert and a Murder Mystery program that was extremely popular). November programs include: an Albert Einstein program, the Annual Veterans Day Breakfast, the Friends of the COA Crafts Fair, Songs of WWII, a musical education program, Rainbow Jeopardy, weekly viewings of the TV Show “The Golden Bachelor”, and the Annual Springwell Thanksgiving Luncheon. December will include a lot of holiday events and programs. Beginning in January, Pierce will begin to integrate the library’s calendar with our calendar.

Pierce is working hard on communication and outreach. Along those lines, he is working on a cohesive communications plan which will include revamping our web-site and streamlining the newsletter. Pierce has worked with a designer and has solicited a lot of input to create a new logo for the Beech Street Center. The new logo was shown to the Board and the Board was enthusiastic about it. All of the COA’s messaging will be updated and centralized behind this logo. Peg suggested giving some explanation of the thought process/design behind the logo (i.e. Copper beech tree leaves, Marauder Blue and Maroon B, etc.). Pierce appreciated Peg’s suggestion and he will do this.

C. Friends of the Belmont C.O.A.

Tomi reported that she was appointed to the Friends. The new President is Jon Stearns and the new Treasurer is Andy Levin. The Crafts Fair will take place on Saturday, November 18th.

D. Springwell-Jane

Jane reported that Springwell operates 2 congregate housing facilities in Waltham and Newton. There are openings in these facilities and qualified candidates can apply. Questions can be directed to CristinaBryant@springwell.com.

E. Transportation-Ellen

We are continuing to struggle with using Belmont Taxi as medical rides for our Seniors. Wait times have become extremely long and hours have been greatly reduced. Marty, Margie and Ellen are looking into models that neighboring towns use to provide medical rides for their

seniors. Lyft Concierge is a service that is being seriously considered- however, a dedicated person must be available to take calls and seniors must have access and knowledge of how to work a cell phone. Marty, Margie and Ellen are meeting again to review all of this and hope to have an update for the Board at our next meeting.

Tomi mentioned that she spoke with a Senior who uses the Medical Taxi and while the senior greatly appreciates the service, the Senior was upset that she received a letter telling her the cost of the ride and looking for a donation. Tomi asked if we could soften the language of these letters a bit. Ellen said that she would come up with a way to soften the language.

F.Age Friendly Action-Judy was not present at the meeting but did send the Board an update of the committee's work.

- General updates:
 - Personnel – We have a new School Board representative, Jeff Liberty who has agreed to focus on Walkability.
 - Dec 18th Select Board update - please join to support us!
- Specific updates:
 - Housing – we need a new Rep from Housing Trust
 - ADU recommendation made to Housing Trust in Spring, now waiting to align our recommendation with the priorities of the Belmont Housing Production plan.
 - Planning “Age Well” event for Spring focused on Home fit, health and safety with vendors and town resources. Reach out to me if you would like to help! (will be funded in part by AARP sponsorship from last year).
 - Outdoor spaces –
 - Gained agreement from Rec. Commission to our Age Friendly Guidelines for Outdoor spaces.
 - Share guidelines with COA board (and hopefully other groups) and do public review in Jan at Beech Street.
 - Dec 18th Select Board – hope to gain approval to implement from Select board on guidelines and then share across the many points of implementation.
 - Walkability – GOAL -to align with Safe walks to School, map senior walking paths and together prioritize maintenance for DPW. Expect to have recommendations for improving walkability by spring. We also want to include the walking groups led from Beech Street as key influencers. Dana / Pierce let's talk about that one.
 - Communications – new Belmont Voice is key part of improved communications – paper version of the paper will be key for seniors. Pierce already sharing Sr. Center activities with them for town Calendar (thanks Pierce).

5. Old Business:

Library Update: There is a meeting tomorrow with COA staff and library representatives to further discuss upcoming changes and hopefully help to alleviate anxieties. Karen suggested

holding regular staff meeting throughout this transition/partnership to help communication across the departments and answer any questions/concerns that may arise. Dana agreed.

6. New Business:

- Board Nominations: The nominating committee presented their nominees for Chair (Karen Donelan) and Vice-Chair (Jane Shapiro). A motion was made to appoint Karen Donelan as the next COA Chair and Jane Shapiro as the next COA Vice-Chair effective January 2024. A vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

7. Next Meeting

Monday, December 4th at 7 pm.

8. Adjourned at 8:15 pm

Respectfully submitted by Ellen Sullivan