

COA Board meeting minutes January 3, 2022

Present: T. Olson, Chair, E. Sullivan Vice Chair, A. Paschal, M. Wayne, N. Niv-Vogel (Ex-Officio), J. Semuels, J. Shapiro, J. Morrison, M. Scali, K. Donelan & T. Dukas, D. Bickelman (Ex-Officio), M Paolillo Select Board Liaison

Not Present: C. Qiang Lai

Guests: Sue Croy, Linda Oates & Jay Marcotte

Call to order at 7:01 pm by T. Olson, Chair

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: February 14, 2022
TIME: 9:00 AM

1. Citizens' Concerns- M. Scali
Seniors asked if there are any changes in access to the Sr. Center. The answer is no there are no changes. Center is open 5 days a week and participants are encouraged to wear N95 masks.
2. Review of Past Meeting Minutes M. Wayne
 - The minutes from the December 1, 2021, meeting were unanimously approved as amended.
3. Features Related to Seniors in Payson Park Renovation Project - L. Oates, J. Marcotte, Sue Croy.
 - Sue Croy presented the project overview, background and progress on Payson Park updated. They presented recommendation to all committees. Phase I – assessment by consultants and the group yielded a plan to update current park layout for safety and access. Jay Marcotte, DPW is in support of plan. CPC agreed to plan in December with no contingencies for presentation to the Town Select board in spring '22 to town meeting. Specific improvements include:
 - Elm street steps and handrails and retaining walls
 - Van Ness entrance to be updated
 - Paved paths for existing entrances for improved access
 - Improved playgrounds
 - New Lawn
 - Update Seating and benches as well as picnic tables, screening, and concert areas
 - COA comments:
 - M Scali asked about accessibility considering there are stairs. J. Marcotte noted someone in a wheelchair can access and roll along the paths.
 - M Paolillo reinforced the need to align with the approved report on disability access done by the Center for Human Design. Jay noted that the recommended plan aligns with all guidance for disability access.

- E. Sullivan asked if there will be designated handicap parking. The Park update is paid by CPC funds which do not cover handicap parking. Net the handicap parking is outside scope of this project
- Nava asked if paths are for bike use – Jay noted they are not able to enforce no use of bikes. Nava reinforced the concern for seniors walking on paths with bikes. Jay agreed it should be addressed when the Park is done potentially with signs.
- Bocce court to be removed. Nava requested ability to reuse whatever they are “removing” to enhance the Senior Center Bocce court. Jay agreed they could recycle materials from the Park to the Sr. Center Bocce court. He and Nava will follow up.
- T. Olson asked about crushed stone versus asphalt which tends to buckle with temperature changes. Jay noted that crushed stones are difficult to maintain. In addition, she asked about the concrete slab which was donated by a resident. She raised the concern about moving concerts to Plaza which could extend into the T-ball area. Finally, she raised concern that the 20% contingency is large.

4. Updates and Correspondences

A. Director’s Report

N. Niv-Vogel

- No answer from Board of Health on getting Covid tests – if the town does get them COA will work to distribute them.
- Jan 24th – next select board meeting – the Age Friendly Action Committee individuals will be confirmed.
- Senior interest in long walk indoors. Nava asked about using the high school. Recreation department notes the High School is very busy, but they are looking into how to do it. Mark Paolillo offered to reach out to directly to recreation / school department to find access potentially for use of field house and follow up with Nava.
- Social worker has been certified in dementia coaching. Karen noted she works with Brent Forrester a psychologist who specializes in Dementia at McLean. He offered to provide support to COA and collaborate on program or training.
- Ordered KN95 masks for employees and volunteers who work at the Center
- Will know next week about \$7000 grant for 2page town-wide mailing.
- M. Scali asked about how to protect Sr Center visitors during this Omicron surge. Nava follows protocols and alerts Health department should someone who visited Sr Center and had Covid.
 - M. Paolillo suggested having another conference call for seniors to provide information / communication on Covid and how to find testing.
- K. Donelan suggested if Sr. Center provides tests, it should likely be done via drive by pick up versus coming into the building. Also, the “in-home” tests may be difficult for Sr. to self-administer.

- M Paolillo will take the concern to the select meeting to consider limited testing for seniors who are most vulnerable.

B. Assistant Director

D. Bickleman

- December holiday programs well attended.
- January will be a busy month. Including programs about the safe use of the MBTA, New Year cook's corner, animal show, and special MLK program. We also have some new art classes starting as well.
- J. Shapiro asked if DPW could do recycle program

C. Friends

J. Semuels

- Completed fund raising season
- Membership about the same as last year ~300.
- Next meeting 1/13/22
- Looking for people to write articles for their newsletter for April

5. Old Business

- Relationship with Belmont Housing Authority- T. Olson
 - T Olson plans to meet with Janet to address questions for residence including access to the director. Their next meeting is 1/ 20/22.
- Creating Inclusiveness and Making the COA Welcome to All -T. Olson
 - To be discussed at next meeting
- Safety at the Senior Center- N. Niv-Vogel
 - Coffee hour with Belmont Police successful with a soft introduction to seniors. They acknowledged that police can seem intimidating with Sr. but came to listen and hear of any sr. concerns about safety. Roy goes around the entire Center twice a day to check on visitors.
- Update on COA representation to Springwell Board -T. Olson
 - The Springwell Board chair asked to have only one person to represent Belmont. J. Shapiro agreed to be our representative. She also agreed to volunteer to support Barbara who manages the lunch program; since Springwell has not yet replaced the second person who had supported her. Those willing to help can reach out to Nava and / or Marie.
- Fostering Stronger Intergenerational Programming- N. Niv-Vogel
 - Connection with the school more difficult since the school volunteer position is gone. E. Sullivan agreed to work on finding a point person from the school board for us to work with.
 - New ideas include: Pen Pal, History project

6. New Business

- Discussion of Creating a Transportation Working group - E. Sullivan
 - Transportation is a critical need for seniors that takes up bulk of our budget and is currently dependent on temporary funding.
 - E. Sullivan, K. Donelan and J. Morrison agree to join committee with short term goals.
- New Agenda Item – Next meeting – update on COVID and invite Board of Health

Meeting adjourned at 9pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for 2/7/22.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Morrison, Board Member