

BELMONT COUNCIL ON AGING  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
May 10, 2004

Present M. Ahearn, E. Hamann, N. Hegarty, J. Kantor, H. Kazarian, A. Lougee,  
B. Miranda, T. Morabito, N. Niv-Vogel  
Absent J. Bruschi, J. Horner, P. Solomon

Barbara Miranda (Chair) called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Acceptance of Minutes

The minutes from the April meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved.

Senior Citizens' Concerns

Barbara Brown addressed the Board about a general sense of confusion she has observed in the senior community regarding the 3 senior-focused organizations – the Belmont Housing Authority, the COA, and the Friends of the COA. Many folks are confused about the purpose of each entity and unclear about which group or groups they are intended to address and serve. Barbara also said that there is a need to better explain the “green building design” concept as many people do not understand what this means. Highlights of the ensuing discussion follow:

Nava reported that a COA intern is currently putting together a DVD that highlights various COA activities. The DVD will eventually be shown on the Belmont cable station. Barbara Miranda suggested that COA brochures be brought to the different forums (i.e., BHA meetings). Neil Hegarty and Anne Lougee volunteered to work together to design an organizational chart which can be used to better illustrate the functions of each group.

Nava will contact Linda Pinkow, editor of the Citizen Herald, about creating a column whereby information about the senior community's activities could be presented on a weekly basis. This would appear apart from the senior news section.

Ethel Hamann suggested an article explaining the “green building design” be included in a future issue of the Senior Notes.

General Announcements

Barbara Miranda circulated a copy of a memo that town department heads received from Tim Higgins, senior planner for the town, regarding the O'Neill Properties 40B Project Eligibility Application for the Uplands property. Barbara noted that although the application states that a large number of units will be deemed affordable, there is no specific language that any of those units be designated for seniors. As a town department, the COA's express interest is that **any** future development would include an affordable component specifically for seniors. To this point, Barbara will draft a response and circulate it to the Board in the next few days for comments before submitting it to Tim Higgins by May 19<sup>th</sup>.

Springwell Report

Sue Temper, Executive Director of Spring Well, has been elected President of Mass HomeCare, the membership trade association for senior service organizations in the state. This is a one-year term.

Springwell is involved in a process to “enhance the elderly community-based waiver – giving seniors the choice to stay home.” This is a Medicaid program that attempts to substitute home care for nursing home care when appropriate.

The House Ways & Means budget was public by the time of the last Board meeting and was somewhat favorable despite these difficult financial times. The Prescription Advantage Program was increased significantly, and the home care budget was also increased. The one area of concern was a state-wide cut of \$100,000 in the Protective Services budget. This is an area that is increasing in numbers of reports of abuse and the cut is difficult to fathom at this time.

Springwell will have the services of a graduate student consulting team from the Heller School at Brandeis beginning in the fall to help the agency in assessing whether or not it is feasible to attempt to replicate a program that exists on Beacon Hill in Boston. Through this program, residents pay an annual fee in order to have access to services that would facilitate remaining in their own homes. It bridges the gap between low-income services and services that people of significant financial resources are able to purchase entirely on their own.

On May 6<sup>th</sup>, an all morning training session was held for new Board members and others who chose to attend. It was very well done and supplied a great deal of information to all who attended.

#### Director’s Report (see attached)

Additions to the Director’s report: The COA budget was approved at Town Meeting with only minor variations made by the Warrant Committee. The budget allows for a part-time administrative assistant, to begin work on or after July 1<sup>st</sup>. Nava noted that a current volunteer is interested in applying for the position.

Management of the recreational trips program is going well. The FY’05 budget allows for discounts to be continued as they were previously by the Recreation Department department. Discounts for trips will be more evenly divided among all trips offered by the COA. The COA is applying for a \$1,500 grant from the Cambridge Savings Bank to finance 100% of the holiday party, which would free up funds for more travel discounts.

Given the need to secure future trips with deposits well before they occur, Town Meeting approved the establishment of a \$15,000 revolving fund for the COA for this purpose. Nava will investigate whether this amount can be increased in the future.

The senior quilting group has completed a quilting project that was funded by the Belmont Cultural Council. The extraordinary quilt, patriotic with Belmont themes, will be shown at the Senior Center Art Fair on Tuesday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, and will eventually be on permanent display somewhere in the Town Hall Complex.

#### Old Business

Senior Center Building Committee report: Neil Hegarty reported that the committee continues to meet every Tuesday evening to iron out the details regarding the layout of the new building. The architect is currently working out design responses to questions and issues that were raised at a community meeting held April 27 at the Butler School. Another community meeting will be held on 6/3 at the Butler School.

Responding to a question raised at the last COA Board meeting, Neil said that the elevator will be to code and able to accommodate a gurney, if needed. The issue of town storage at the facility is currently unresolved.

Tom Morabito expressed concern that several statements made at Town Meeting to the effect that the Friends' organization will raise 50% of the cost of building the new center. Barbara reiterated that both she and Gerry McCarthy have stated to the Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting that the Friends will raise as much as possible for the new center, but cannot commit to a specific amount.

Update on Shaw's discount for Seniors: Barbara circulated a letter she drafted to Shaw's inquiring about the implementation of a senior discount program. She asked that any reactions and/or changes be communicated to her by Friday, May 14<sup>th</sup>.

Staff Appreciation Luncheon: The luncheon, to be held at noon on May 24<sup>th</sup>, will include 10 COA staff members and the COA Board. A sign-up sheet was circulated at the meeting. Barbara will buy gifts to be given at the luncheon.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Lougée