

DATE: June 8, 2022
TIME: 3:09 PM

**Meeting Minutes
Age Friendly Action Committee
2-23-2022**

Attendees: Heidi Barberio, Judy Singler, , Ralph Jones, Susan Polit, May Forkin, Judy Morrison, Kristin Daley, Tim Flood; ex-officio members Rachel Garrity and Nava Niv-Vogel

Non-member attendees: Robert Hummel (Town Planner), Gabriel Distler (Staff Planner), Margie Wayne (COA Board Member)

Call to Order

The meeting began at 11:30 am.

Introduction of Committee Members Attending for First Time Each member present introduced themselves, stating their name and which Town entity they represent.

Appointment of Chair and Secretary Committee unanimously voted to elect Judy Morrison as Chairperson. Secretary vote delayed until departure of COA intern Rachel Garrity who has volunteered to take minutes until her internship at COA ends.

Follow up on Senior who Requested Letter of Support for Making Home Age Friendly

Nava attended the planning board meeting on Feb. 15, when the request of resident, Naomi Ellenberg-Dukas application for special permit, which was approved. There was an interesting discussion regarding the letters of support Naomi had been encouraged to provide, as the planning board focuses on the bylaws regarding dimensions, considering the specifications of the building plans in the approval process, rather than community support. There was clearly a miscommunication of the expectations of documentation Naomi was expected to provide. However, based on the proportions of her property, the proposed design was such that it would not be intrusive to neighbors and was equivalent to the size of other homes in the neighborhood, which is why the permit was approved.

Members of this committee discussed that the planning board focuses on the bylaws in order to give applicants an equal opportunity for approval, rather than considering who has the most community support. Committee agreed on the importance of getting clarification from the planning board to better understand what, if any, letters of support are expected or considered. This information will be helpful to seniors going through the process in the future.

AARP Community Grants RFPs and Discussion on What Project to Apply For

Nava shared a grant opportunity from AARP, which could aid in the creation of the guide for seniors looking to make age-friendly adjustments to their homes. The average grant amount is \$11-15K, and this money is meant to be used for projects that are innovative and have a high impact. Eligible projects do not need to exclusively benefit seniors and can be used for community projects as well. Towns are allowed to apply for multiple grants. The application for this grant is due by March 22nd, and recipients will be announced by June 29th. The money received needs to be used by the end of November.

Committee discussed using grant funding to develop the aforementioned guide to assist residents who want to make their homes age friendly/disability friendly. Background on the need for such a guide was

shared: people get taken advantage of by contractors when they aren't aware of processes and norms. The guide would outline how to find a good contractor, the steps involved in adapting specific rooms/areas of a home to meet age-friendly standards, as well as the permitting process within Belmont. AARP has some guides that could be helpful to include or use as templates.

The money from the AARP grant would be used to hire a professional to put the guide together, as well as on printing and production of the guide. Eileen Tell is willing and able to help with this; she was on the Age Friendly Action Committee and has a consulting firm that is familiar with aging in place. She has agreed to help write the grant.

The added complications of Belmont-specific processes was mentioned; surrounding towns have more of a streamlined process. The potential to review bylaws surrounding these requirements was suggested.

The economic development committee is considering applying for this grant as well since there can be multiple projects from the same town. They would use the money for wayfinding signage along the Trapelo Road corridor, which is something that would benefit the community at large, including seniors. They are in the process of designing the signs, which they have secured funding for, and are looking for additional funding to implement the signs. They want to make sure that this committee is comfortable with this before proceeding.

It was suggested that the more grant applications the town submits, the more it shows need for additional funding and potential for larger grants in the future. Members also agreed that any project the town takes on should have an age-friendly lens and that any work produced by this committee should incorporate guidelines for aging/disabilities which are easily obtained. Committee wondered whether the signs would have an age-friendly design, which has not been determined yet. The design consult meeting will be held next week, after which there will be a better understanding of this.

Committee discussed the short timeline from when recipients would find out about successful applications in June and the deadline to use the funds in November. There was a discussion about preparing as much as possible prior to the decision in June in order to best set up for success. Members were reminded that the timeline outlined in the Action Plan allows more than a year to complete this project. Securing these funds would accelerate this work. Additional suggestions to kick start the project include: having an outline of the project in advance, consulting with professionals who have the expertise to interview key figures (inspectors, contractors, etc.). Naomi Ellenberg-Dukas recently went through this process and is willing to help with this project.

The motion to approve seeking the AARP grant for home adaptation was unanimously adopted. The motion to support the Economic Development Committee's application for the AARP grant for the Trapelo Road Corridor signage, was unanimously adopted. (Heidi was not present for either vote).

A working group was formed to begin working on the grant proposal. Judy Singler and Susan Polit volunteered to be a part of this working group. Nava will be a part of it as well, and will invite Naomi and former Age Friendly Advisory Council member, Eileen Tell to join, as they had expressed interest.

Schedule Upcoming Meetings

The next meeting will be held on **Wednesday, March 9th at 11am** via Zoom. Committee will discuss regular meeting schedule at that time.

Meeting adjourned at 12:44pm