

**Meeting Minutes
AGE-Friendly Belmont
1-12-2021**

DATE: June 9, 2021
TIME: 11:13 AM

Attendees:: Heidi Barberio, Wayne Haley, Nava Niv-Vogel, Judy Singler, Timothy Flood, Kristin Daley, Susan Polit, Alice Melnikoff, Bev Freeman, Peter Struzziero, Eileen Tell, Mackenzie Kewley

The meeting began at 11:06 am.

Review of minutes from most recent meeting

The vote on minutes approved as amended, with all in favor except for one abstention.

Review of Housing Action Plan Judy suggested tweaking the plan. Eileen offered to wordsmith the action plan and suggested using consistent language and format across the action plans. Judy stated that the language should be more succinct. Eileen stated that she will use the track changes feature in the revision. She will work with Judy to draft an improved action plan. The draft will then be forwarded to Nava.

Tim had an issue with the wording in the long term steps section of the housing plan. The council agreed with his assessment that sentence beginning with "if the planning board does not...." suggests a negative frame to the actions recommended and is not desirable. Eileen's improved plan will make change in wording reflecting a need to stay positive.

Nava thanked Judy for forwarding the AARP "home-fit guide, since it already contains features that we would want to include in our own guide. Nava will include language in the executive summary about the use of AARP tools in each action plan and perhaps include a bibliography.

In the course of the discussion about AARP materials, Judy mentioned that there will be a webinar sponsored by AARP next week, and that she learned about it through AARP newsletters. Conclusion of this discussion was that Judy would send around the link to the newsletter, and members would take responsibility individually, for finding out about AARP educational offerings..

Review of Transportation/Walkability Plan Susan raised the problem of inadequate snow and ice removal on sidewalks that affects seniors most. Over the course of the discussion it was concluded that, even though the town's by-laws explicitly requires that homeowners and businesses remove ice and snow from sidewalks on their property, enforcement is weak. Therefore, the action plan can include a piece about working towards a way to enforce the by-laws while acknowledging full well that there isn't enough town staff to provide enforcement.

Discussion turned to the question of the need to focus on repairing existing sidewalks, not just creating new pathways. New pathways should be located where seniors are more likely to congregate and should not solely overlap with safe routes to schools. Since taxes are very high in Belmont it was proposed that it might be a win- win for the taxpayer and the town if homeowners would repair their own sidewalks and then receive an abatement for the amount of the sidewalk repair. Property values

could rise in the town as a result, and the Town would be less exposed to liability for sidewalk related falls and injuries

Exploration of such a proposal will be included in the action plan.

Review of the Communications Action Plan Alice requested that the plan be more explicit about the need to find ways to communicate to seniors who do not have access to, or are not literate in, computer technology.

Judy raised the issue of the importance of communicating with the business community. After much discussion it was decided that at some point in the future, when leadership within the business community is expected to coalesce, the implementation committee that succeeds this council will request a point person with that community. However, it is not necessary to include this in our action plan.

Judy suggested that the plan be more action oriented, with short term goals, as opposed to focusing on a five year plan.

Discussion of Format of Final Action Plan

It was agreed that the format with the gray scale was the most favored of the 3 presented by Mackenzie. Moreover, it was discussed that photos would not be inserted on the pages with text. However, photos could be used in a separate page dividing the 4 action plans. It was agreed that only photos of local places should be used. It was also agreed that shading of text should be other than gray. Mackenzie will look into different shades such as pale blues. It was also agreed that the document should come out well on a printer, not just look good electronically.

Nava took a moment to share that the Council was an inspiration for the COA's effort to obtain parking permits for seniors. The Select Board voted to approve this program at their recent meeting of Jan. 11.

Finally, Nava asked the group their suggestions regarding the name of the future iteration of this council. A vote to approve Wayne's suggestion calling it the "Age Friendly Action Committee" was taken. All were in favor with one abstention.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 25 at 11 am.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:02pm

Respectfully submitted,

Bev Freeman

Secretary