

**Weston Council on Aging Board Meeting Minutes  
February 20, 2020**

Present: Mignonne Murray (Director), Marge Ackerman(Vice-Chair), Jean MacQuiddy, Carol Ott, Wayne Johnson, Jane Donnelly, Leslye Fligor, Tom Nicholson, Betsey Boyd, Susan Ruskin Friend

Absent: Gerri Scoll, Alice Benson, Vida Goldstein (Associate Member), Prather Palmer, Teresa Young (Associate Member), Melissa Galton

The meeting was called to order by Marge Ackerman(Vice-Chair) at 8:35am.

There was a moment of silence in memory of former COA board member Liz Hochberger.

There were no resident concerns presented.

The minutes were reviewed and discussed. The minutes passed unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report:**

Prather was unable to attend so we will review the treasurer's report at the next board meeting.

**Director's Report:**

Mignonne discussed the successful Chinese New Year's Party. The COA has seen an increase in Asian members of the Weston community using the COA transportation resources.

Mignonne summarized the COA Report that she is submitting for the Town Annual Report this month. The COA Report focuses on the needs assessment, transportation and the successful completion of the new lounge.

Tom noted that 42% of Weston residents are age 50 and older, with over 25% of residents older than 60. He felt that it was important to acknowledge an appreciation of the Friends of the COA for their contributions. The COA has an important role in decreasing social isolation which is a critical need for older adults in order to stay vital.

The focus of discussion was how the COA Board can increase interest within the entire Weston community to support the needs of older adults. Many ideas were discussed including projects and community events, engaging Weston parents through liaison to the PTO and a COA open house for PTO parents; newsletter or supplement to the newsletter, COA Fall Open House: invite all Weston residents 55 and over to the fall COA open house.

Conduct a Resource Fair open to all residents to familiarize them with services that are available to their parents and older adults in our community. Publicity—be more proactive with the Weston Town Crier; publicize a cartoon series showing active seniors; engage Alanna Muldoon, the AIC resident videographer, and create a series of videos about the COA. Mignonne noted that ageism is very common in our society, citing a celebration in many public schools of "a 100 days at school" where children are encouraged to dress up as a 100 year old person by wearing shabby clothing and walking with canes and using wheelchairs.

The Indoor Walking Pilot at The Cambridge School of Weston is a success. 59 people have signed up including 8 people who are new to the COA. There was a suggestion that filming people walking on this track would be a perfect activity for the potential film discussed above.

Mignonne announced that Town Manager, Leon Gaumond asked the Department Heads to inform town boards about an upcoming training in regard to the Open Meeting Law.

The Volunteer Recognition luncheon is scheduled for Friday, April 17.

There will be four Occupational Therapy students joining the COA on 2/21. There may be an undergraduate social work student as well.

### **Committee Reports:**

COA Housing – Alice was not able to attend the meeting today. The COA Board was reminded that there is round table discussion in the spring spearheaded by the COA Housing Committee in partnership with the Affordable Housing Trust bringing together all groups in town that are concerned with housing. A consultant will be there to facilitate the meeting which will include a representative from many town boards.

Governance – Marge reported that Carol Ott's first 4 year term is coming to an end soon and Carol has agreed to serve for a second term. Upcoming board openings need to be posted in March.

Awareness Report – Betsey suggested trying to expand the group beyond this board in order to engage with other ideas and networks. A good way to increase interest in the COA might be more COA Board sponsorship of town wide activities. Suggestions included: sponsoring Tai Chi sessions in the summer on an open town playing field, providing popcorn for summer movies on the Town Green, setting up a COA booth at Spring Fling with Zumba classes, inviting the Weston Community League to hold a board meeting at the COA.

Community Connections – In May, the group is planning a 3 part program on navigating the health care system. It will be scheduled to begin at 4 PM so working people can attend. 1. Health Care System Entry, how first responders and emergency departments work. Presenters will include Fire Chief, David Soar, and the director of the Newton-Wellesley Emergency Room. 2. Discharge from the Hospital, problems encountered in transfer from hospital to home. A Springwell nurse with home care experience will be a presenter. 3. Insurance Coverage Problems, Michelle Gucciardi, the COA social worker and a SHINE counselor will discuss insurance coverage issues including out of network and long-term care coverage.

FCOA – Betsey reported that the FCOA has made a generous contribution of \$14,000 toward the new vehicle. The FCOA spring fundraising appeal letter will be sent out in March.

Needs Assessment - Tom reported on his presentation to the Permanent Building Committee that included town officials. There is a process to try to get more space for the COA and we need to build a concrete case for COA needs. Then the COA will need to go to appropriate town committees such as the Health Committee to publicize needs. We should also talk to Regis, the Campion Center and other

potential stakeholders. The Recreation Department and possibly the Fire Department are also important stakeholders. We should get input from COA staff about how to attract more residents to the COA—what kinds of programmatic needs are we missing such as ping-pong tables or pool tables to attract more men or a cafeteria located in the COA such as we have seen at other COA's in Massachusetts. The COA input into a feasibility study need to include a discussion of which programs are missing at the COA due to a lack of space. These are the questions that need to be answered: Who are we NOT serving? Jean noted that 14% of Weston seniors have incomes of less than \$25K per year. Where are those seniors and what are we doing for them—there is a concern about their social isolation. What services that are needed can't we provide currently due to space limitations? We need to provider an assessment of this building and how we are using it. We also need to include a discussion of other buildings—could some activities like yoga take place elsewhere in Weston such as the Campion Center, Regis or at unused rooms at one of the Weston school buildings?

Transportation - Melissa and Gerri met with Leon Gaumond to discuss concerns about the MWRTA; Jean sits on the MRWTA Board. The Transportation Committee met on February 12 to discuss ongoing matters related to the increase in taxi usage, possible usage of gogograndparent and the discount COA Taxi Vouchers program. There has also been a very good reception to the new COA vehicle.

Springwell – Wayne reminded the board that Springwell can coordinate at home care for residents.

Additional issues that were discussed:

- The Board looked at the Wellesley COA website which is very comprehensive and easy to use. Does this website provide a good blueprint for a future Weston COA website? The Wellesley COA website is part of the Wellesley Town website.

There being no further concerns, Marge moved that we adjourn, Carol seconded and the meeting adjourned at 10 am.

**The next board meeting will be held on Thursday, March 19<sup>th</sup> at 8:30am.**