

## **Council on Aging Minutes for Meeting of November 13, 2019**

**Members present:** Linda Avis Scott, JoAnn Bernhard, Susan Gomberg, Janis Gray. **Guests:** Sally Fairfield, *Geezette* editor; Brian McHugh, Franklin Regional Housing Authority.

**The meeting was called to order at 5:32 p.m. by Co-chairs JoAnn Bernhard and Linda Avis Scott.**

### **Business:**

**-Newsletter** To allow Fairfield an early exit from the meeting, we revised the agenda to make review of the newsletter draft the first order of business. Suggestions were made for edits. The folding party will be Wednesday, November 20 at 5:30 p.m. Friends are welcome to join us.

In the absence of Susan Millinger, Secretary, Gray agreed to record the minutes.

**-Minutes of the Meeting of October 9, 2019** Motion to approve the minutes of October 9 as presented was made, seconded, and passed.

**-Community Lunch** The November 5 lunch had a great turnout – 14!

**-Med-Ride** Elaine Puleo, the ride coordinator, has returned after being out of town. Between this week and next, four rides have been requested, so the need is picking up. Puleo has created a spreadsheet to keep track of rides, drivers, reimbursements, etc. (Bernhard is keeping another spreadsheet on all COA expenses.)

**-LifePath Announcement** As part of its Municipal Officials Workshop Series for 2019-20, LifePath is offering a free training, “Age-Friendly Community Planning: A Tool for Building Stronger Communities” on Tuesday, December 10 (snow date December 17) from 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. at the Olver Transit Center in Greenfield. Lunch is provided. Please RSVP at 413-774-3167 or at [registrations@frcog.org](mailto:registrations@frcog.org). *Members of our COA who wish to attend will RSVP for themselves.*

**-Foot Clinic** Gomberg reported that November is full, with two on waiting list, December is full, with one on waiting list; January has two people signed up. Scott added that the October foot clinic resulted in the largest expenditure from our grant for the foot clinic invoice, because some people had an inability to pay (so donations were down).

**-State grant application** No updates to report.

**-Senior Housing** Brian McHugh of Franklin County Regional Housing Authority arrived to provide perspectives on affordable senior housing. But first he noted that Wendell and Shutesbury just got a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for housing rehabilitation. To qualify, applicants must be low- to moderate-income. About \$700,000 is available for the two towns (combined) until the end of next year.

McHugh then turned to the prospect of senior housing in Shutesbury. FRHA does market studies to show a need in the town and also show that the community is behind it. Such a study would be funded by a CDBG grant that FRHA would write. The next round of grant applications are due March 6, 2020. The cost of the market study would depend on where we are in our own explorations now.

Scott explained that the Conway School of Design had created a few conceptual designs for Lot 032. McHugh thought that was great, and that he would like to see them. Scott will send him a digital version. If we proceed, McHugh may be able to include dollars in the grant application to further the design with an architect. It could take several years to get to the point of having bid-ready plans.

McHugh could have FRHA could propose and lay out a path for us. He would also like Scott to get him copies of the Goshen Request for Proposal (RFP) and the Goshen Senior Housing Market Study and Preliminary Housing Development Site Identification Report.

If our grant application is funded, we'd find this out the summer (or maybe fall) after it is submitted.

McHugh noted that on smaller projects, such as the one Shutesbury may propose, the per unit cost is larger than bigger projects in bigger towns, due to economies of scale. Hypothetically, our market study may suggest we need 10 units, but the percentage of seniors in town may grow over time, so we might want to say 12 or 14 units.

Next steps: McHugh will reach out to Town Administrator Becky Torres and will talk about what FRHA will need from the town to put together a CDBG grant for us. FRHA can hold a public meeting to explain what projects CDBG can fund, but it can't steer the town toward senior housing. The record needs to show that the public had the opportunity to weigh in on the various uses for CDBGs.

Timing: McHugh said we *might* be able to get an application in by March 6, 2020, but he would prefer we wait until March 2021 to allow more time for buy-in by the town. That will create a stronger application.

After some discussion, we proposed doing our own survey of the town for senior needs (not just housing). McHugh can get us sample survey forms to help us get started, and advise us on the kind of information we want to capture. We might discover other issues for elders that we don't yet know about. (For grant application purposes, surveys are only valid for three years.) When we formulate our survey, McHugh would like to review it.

He also mentioned there is an "outside possibility" that funds may be coming back to the town through payoffs of housing loans taken out in the past. The money comes back through the FRHA, so he will be aware of it if any comes in. If so, Shutesbury could use it for advancing this project.

**-Annual report** Gray had finished a draft and had emailed it to members early that afternoon. Given the length of this meeting, she suggested we wait until our December meeting to review it.

**-Annual expense line/FinCom request** Scott moves, and Bernhard seconds, that we maintain the expense line in the town budget at \$200 for FY21. Motion passed.

**Meeting adjourned, 7:22 p.m.**

**Next Meeting: Regular November Meeting, the second Wednesday, December 11, 2019 at 5:30 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted, Janis Gray