

## **Needham Council on Aging Board Meeting**

**December 12, 2024**

**Present:** Colleen Schaller, Chair, Penny Grossman Vice Chair, Carol De Lemos, Helen Gregory, Ed Cosgrove, Dan Goldberg, Sue Mullaney, Ann DerMarderosian, Kate Robey, Ted Prorok

**COA Staff:** Jessica Moss Assistant Director of Counseling & Volunteer

**Director of Health and Human Services:** Timothy McDonald

**Friends of the CATH:** Beverly Pavasaris

**SHINE:** Amy Gomes

1. **Call to Order** The meeting was called to order by Ms. Schaller at 5:05 pm combination in person and on Zoom
2. **MBTA Neighborhood Zoning Plan Discussion**  
The Board discussed if they were supporting the neighborhood plan given the recent petition and the special election on January 14. The vote is a yes or no. Yes to support the Neighborhood Plan and No to not support it. Ms. Schaller noted that the planning board is working on a different plan which may not be the same as the base plan approved at Town Meeting. Mr. McDonald provided some background from his reports on Needham seniors in both 2017 and 2022. 800 people as well as 7 stakeholder surveys and their biggest concern is staying in the community and being able to afford to do so. He noted that the base plan prior to the most recent town meeting vote allows for 900 to 1100 units over the period of the base plan. The MBTA plan on the other hand requires 1792 units to meet base compliance. The Neighborhood Plan allows for up to 3700 units. The Neighborhood Plan's intent is to create more housing over multiple small parcels across town and over many years. This is an infill plan versus Lexington which has many more open parcels and went with a green fill plan. This is also different from Wellesley who only changed the zoning in the Rt. 9 area.  
**Mr. Cosgrove made a motion to support the Yes vote for the Neighborhood Plan. Ms. Mullaney seconded the motion. The roll call vote was 8 in favor and 1 not in favor. The motion passed.**
3. **SHINE Report, Ms. Amy Gomes**  
Ms. Gomes noted that open enrollment went very well and the appointments both on Zoom and in Needham and Framingham filled quickly. Because the appointments were filled so quickly some clients were referred to the Medicare finder. SHINE ran one training course on how to use the finder and will repeat the same training next year as it was useful to seniors and their caregivers.  
Several Board members thanked Amy and noted that the kind of attentiveness received from SHINE counselors makes a great difference in people's lives.
4. **Budget Update, Mr. McDonald**  
Mr. McDonald noted the adjustments to the COA capital budget request. #1 has become the plan to swap the fitness room with the game room. #2 is the redesign of the back entrance of

the CATH to accommodate a handicapped entrance and #3 is the kitchen rehabilitation to allow meals to be prepared on site. All three projects are in the Town manager's capital budget. Now it goes to the Selectboard and then to the Finance Committee for reconciliation. The reconciled budget is what goes before Town Meeting. Given the discussion of the priorities and the amounts of money are relatively small compared to other department requests Mr. McDonald noted that one of the three will get funded and possibly more -- changing the priority to the fitness room swap will hopefully get it done in two years (design first year and construction the second.)

## **2. Aging Services Division**

### **Social Work, Ms. Jessica Moss**

Ms. Moss noted the numbers returned to normal in November. The counseling wait list is zero as of today. Ms. Moss thanked Kathy Whitney for her work on the history program with Mitchell school. Several families are involved and in the spring it will be partnership with the Needham History Center, the COA and Mitchell.

Ms. Dick has had 73 encounters at the Needham Community Council and her work there continues to go well.

The Go Go Grandparent grant will be highlighted for medical rides in the next Compass.

The iPad grant has 10 out of 42 sign ups. In the New Year, the plan is to have the rest of iPads distributed.

In programming Ms. Moss noted that Lunch & Learn on getting through the holidays was well attended.

The caregiver and meditation groups attendance continue to grow each month.

Ms. Moss also checked in with all 26 volunteers; the boutique is planning an after holiday sale.

## **3. Chairperson's Report, Ms. Colleen Schaller**

Ms. Schaller noted that the other updates are in the Director's report.

## **4. Approval of November 14, 2024 Minutes**

5.

**Ms. DerMarderosian made a motion to approve the November 14, 2024 minutes. Mr. Cosgrove seconded. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote**

## **6. Update on Veteran's Affairs, Mr. Prorok**

Mr. Prorok noted all the November events went well. November 8<sup>th</sup> the Elliot school principal invited a member of the VFW to lead the students in the Pledge of Allegiance, November 11 Veteran's event at Memorial Field was well attended, the Poppy Drive on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> at both Roche Brothers and Sudbury Farms received multiple donations and the November 14 paraplegic dinner hosting multiple VFW posts was a particular success since the first annual event since COVID.

Mr. Prorok mentioned the upcoming December 14 Wreathes Across America event at Needham Cemetery. He also noted the January joint meeting with the exchange club to award certificates including Patriot's Pen.

Mr. McDonald noted that the town is looking at the Valor Act which is a property tax exemption Not an abatement; and also, to change the funding for the Senior Corps program to accommodate the Valor act both at the May 2025 town meeting This would be funded from overlay surplus and means tested. Mr. McDonald will return at the January or February meeting to explain further as the program would affect seniors but also non senior veterans.

**7. Old Business**

**None**

**8. Friends of the CATH**

Ms. Pavasaris noted they are always working on the boutique. There is an overabundance of jewelry and some will be included in the Christmas holiday packs to seniors.

March 7 is the staff appreciation lunch and April 14 the volunteer appreciation lunch. Panera will provide food for both.

**9. New Business**

Bev thanked Copley Motors for providing breakfast for the last 6 week for volunteers.

Bev also thanked Panera for the Monday and Wednesday night collections of leftover food.

Panera will be thanked officially in the next Compass.

**10. Motion to Adjourn**

Mr. Goldberg made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Mullaney seconded the motion. **The Board meeting was adjourned by unanimous voice vote at 6:10 pm**

Respectfully Submitted,

Faith Crisley

Recording Secretary