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By Jim Alexander - Asst. Town Clerk at 11:53 am, Sep 13, 2023

MAYNARD COUNCIL ON AGING BOARD MEETING

Minutes

July 25, 2023

Meeting called to order at 2:00 p.m.

In attendance: Paul Guthrie, Mary Mitzcavitch, Jan Rosenberg, Mary Ann Shields, Diane Wasiuk and Amy Loveless. Guest: Peg Brown.

Minutes from June 20, 2023, were approved with edit.

Public Comments: None.

Correspondence: Documents from Peg Brown for discussion at today's meeting.

New Business:

Peg Brown presented information on a citizen's petition that is being created by the Maynard Senior Center Focus Group for the October Special Town Meeting. The timeline to submit the citizens petition is tight (done and verified by August 15). The citizens' petition will address the need for an expanded senior center space at Mill & Main or another suitable location with the recommendation that a minimum of \$120,000 in free cash should be allotted for a space, starting in FY24 for five years.

Peg stated that if the citizens petition does not pass at least it will have created awareness of the need for an expanded space for the senior center and that the Senior Center Focus Group would attempt to have it pass next year.

Mary Ann Shields asked what would happen if insufficient free cash was available during any of the years of the lease. Peg thought that the lease might have to be re-negotiated.

Peg noted that she and Deb Roussell had just met with Greg Johnson, Maynard Town Administrator, to discuss this matter further. Peg noted that Greg Johnson was in touch with the owners of the old Stratus property with mention of a school not being developed there. Peg reported that Greg Johnson asked that a commitment be made from the COA Board for endorsement of the need for a new space.

Members of the COA Board noted that the Board had addressed the need for an expanded space multiple times in the recent past including twice recommending that the Select Board consider developing an RFP in order to legally engage in negotiations with Mill & Main about space and the Select Board twice declined to do so. It was determined that the COA Board would not be making a recommendation via the citizens petition but would include recommendations within these minutes for anyone to be able to reference. The following recommendation was made:

The COA Board unanimously voted to continue to actively seek a more accessible space in which to expand programs and services and increase engagement with Maynard seniors.

Peg presented a handout of the mission statements of the Council on Aging Board, the Friends of Maynard Seniors, and the Maynard Senior Center Focus Group. Peg drew the distinctions between the groups noting that the COA's mission statement reflects programs and services, the Friends reflected financial support and the Senior Center Focus Group stressed advocacy. Discussion included the importance of the role of each and how all support each other for common and shared goals. Amy will make an edit to the COA's mission statement, changing "maintain" to "in maintaining" per the COA Board's recommendation.

Peg updated the COA Board that Greg Johnson had explained to members of the Senior Center Focus Group that an RFQ was not needed since it does nothing further than what proposals the COA and the Senior Center Focus Group from Mill & Main already provided.

Peg shared documents which compiled details about what would be needed in an expanded space, including but not limited to, size of rooms, number of rooms as well as potentially what furnishings and equipment might be needed. She noted that the specifics should come from the COA Board. Discussion included the COA Board's consideration of creating a sub-committee focused on facility specifications and furnishings to determine guidelines for evaluating potential spaces. The COA Board will re-visit this in an upcoming meeting.

The COA Board, and Peg, exchanged thoughts about visits to other area senior centers when everyone returns from upcoming vacations and arrangements can be made.

Mary Ann Shields presented "Maynard Council on Aging Plan of Action: A Timetable for Development of a New Senior Center." The document outlined, on a month-by-month basis, preparation for the UMASS Gerontology Needs Assessment Study, process for a feasibility study, and the outcome of both leading to the development of a new senior center space. Mary Ann noted that the citizens petition is important but that the COA Board should be "apolitical" and not be endorsing as the COA Board. Members of the COA Board agreed. She noted that the COA was operating on one front and the Senior Center Focus Group on another front.

It was discussed that the needs assessment study would inform space considerations with the response from the community at large and would be of great benefit in evaluating what the space needs are beyond what is currently being proposed. Members of the town administration/Select Board had expressed interest in the needs assessment study results before the development/funding of a new space for these reasons.

Mary Ann noted that the Plan of Action included opportunities to add important questions which were relevant to Maynard's seniors to the needs assessment study.

Peg noted that the 2013 Community Life Center Study was possibly not accepted as an out-of-town company had done it. Jan noted that there was no infrastructure to move the results of the study forward.

Peg stated that she loved the Plan of Action but questioned whether we are able to wait until 2026 for a new senior center space. She asked if a parallel option, such as a leased space should be sought as well. Jan, Paul and Mary expressed feelings that a more accessible space should be sought now, and the Plan of Action should continue as well.

The COA Board voted to adopt the Plan of Action as guidance in its draft form. Mary Ann will be making several changes as discussed during the meeting as the document will be re-reviewed at the next COA Board meeting for final approval.

Consideration of a COA Board meeting in August was discussed pending availability of members. Paul agreed to contact members to determine availability after August 22.

Meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.