

The Andover Council on Aging Board (COAB) met in regular session on Thursday, March 12, 2015 at 8:00 am at The Center at Punchard, 30 Whittier Court, Andover, MA.

Chair Don Robb called the meeting to order at 8:02 am and on

ROLL CALL: Present were Don Robb, Margaret O'Connor, Joan Fox, Ann Grecoe, Mike Roli, Stu McNeil, Jane Gifun, Ken DeBenedictis and Joe Ponti. Absent was Kaye Devanna.

Also present were Kathy Urquhart, Director of Elder Services; Donna Morse, Executive Secretary of Elder Services; Paul Materazzo, Director of Planning; Steve Fink and Tina Girwood.

Consent Agenda

Minutes

On MOTION by Ann Grecoe, which was seconded by Jane Gifun, it was voted to accept the minutes. On VOICE VOTE the motion was declared as PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Director's Report

Kathy Urquhart stated that she would like to talk about the roles of the Board and the Director. Don Robb suggested she draft a memo from the Director to the Board of what she'd like to discuss. She also reported that customer service and online registration have moved forward, although with some glitches, but there are no plans to make any major changes until the survey results are received and reviewed. She also reported that with regard to transportation, the Center has a bus and a van as well as two part time drivers, two small cars used primarily for MOW and an increasing problem with finding volunteer (Med Trans) drivers. A Board member said that she had received feedback from people about the change in mileage reimbursement for medical transportation and drivers also complained about driving clients that live in expensive homes who could afford to pay for a cab. Don Robb stated that this type of feedback should be brought to Kathy's attention when it happens. Kathy reminded the Board that there are no income limit criteria for participating in The Center's programming; people are not denied service based on their income. Kathy also explained some of the issues and inconsistencies with the MVRTA. Margaret O'Connor stated that she would like work with Kathy regarding transportation issues; this can be followed up on when the Five Year Plan and committees are discussed. Kathy stated that there is little feedback to a written Director's Report. One recent report was re: transportation, yet she received no feedback from the Board at the time and is now hearing comments about transportation that would have been more helpful then so she could provide the Board with follow up in a timely fashion. Don Robb suggested that there be a goal setting discussion at the June Board meeting.

New Business

Preliminary Report: Survey - Kathy Urquhart stated that there was a 28% return on the survey, asset mapping is in progress and two focus groups had been held. The afternoon focus group was a very good representation of Andover residents. The report is due the end of March or first week of April. The Board will probably receive a copy of the report electronically.

Committees - Don Robb stated that the Board currently has a Housing Committee and a Tax Relief Committee. The **Tax Relief Committee** is comprised of Mike Roli and Joe Ponti. The **Housing Committee** is comprised of Joe Ponti, Margaret O'Connor and Ann Grecoe. The Strawberry Hill project was voted down by the Planning Board and the Elm Street project will be decided on March 31. The Board members feel there is a need for an affordable way for people to downsize and still stay in town and close to the center of town. Paul Materazzo, Planning Director, stated that they tried to get something passed at the 2005 Town Meeting but it was unsuccessful. The thought was that maybe it's time to try again. Members were concerned about the possibility

that some of the proposed projects might opt for a one-time donation to the Town in lieu of building affordable housing. Don Robb stated that he would draft a letter regarding the Board's concerns and non-support of this idea. Don Robb said that a committee needs to be established to work with Director Kathy Urquhart regarding the facilities The Center at Punchard has access to for programming. He established a **Facilities Committee**, comprised of Jane Gifun, Ken DeBenedictis, Joan Fox and Ann Grecoe to work with Kathy to keep The Center at Punchard in good condition and look at using the Youth Center and the Andover/North Andover YMCA for programming. Kathy Urquhart stated that the facilities are program driven and the survey results should help with this.

Board Election in April - The COAB Bylaws require an election of officers in April. Nominations were taken for Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary. The Board will hold the election at its April meeting.

Old Business

Member Issues - **Joe Ponti** asked if sub-committees meetings have to be posted. The response was yes. COAB sub-committee meetings are just like regular meetings and therefore must be posted and minutes submitted. **Margaret O'Connor** spoke about the recent board training she attended. She shared that the use of cable TV to make people aware of the council was suggested, email is useless for aging population, newsletters are good and training for new board members should be required. Also suggested was to review one section of the by-laws each month. Agendas are public and need to keep to times on the agenda. A one hour meeting had been suggested. It was also suggested that boards not be overly large, 7 members vs. 15 members as large boards are inefficient and ineffective. She stated that there is a lot of tension here and the Board needs to support the Director and be more cohesive. **Joe Ponti** stated that he had brought in two recent letters to post on the COAB board, possibly under the heading of "A Word from the COAB". **Ann Grecoe** asked about business cards for the Board members. A generic card was suggested and this was agreed to by all.

Oldest Citizen Recognition - Kathy Urquhart stated that the recognition stems from the Boston Cane which recognizes the oldest town resident. The Board liked the idea but felt it needs more discussion.

Other

Historic Mill District Update - Steve Fink presented a video update on the proposed Historic Mill District project. He stated that this project is similar to what was done in Newburyport and Amesbury, both towns on the river. This project requires a town by-law change from industrial to mixed use allowing for better use of this area and could increase tax revenue to the town. The COAB supports this and will express its support of the zoning change needed to move this project forward. A "Letter to the Editor" will be drafted by Joe Ponti and Ann Grecoe for submission to the *Townsmen*.

On Motion of Margaret O'Connor, and seconded by Ann Grecoe, the meeting adjourned at 10 am.

The next regular meeting is April 9, 2015

Respectfully Submitted,
Donna Morse
Recording Secretary