

COUNCIL ON AGING BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Meeting Minutes

Date: Friday, January 5, 2024

Present: Pina Mingace, Mirian Bremer, Edna Murray, Neeraj Wadhera, Daisy Monsalve

Council on Aging Staff Present: Ashley Speliotis, Connie Lorenti

Community Members Present: Councilor Kristen Strezo, Norma Josef, and Joe Goss

Location: This meeting was held in person at the Holland Street Senior Center, located at 167 Holland Street, Somerville, MA 02144. These meetings are open to the public and all are welcome.

The Council's primary responsibility is to advise the Council on Aging in the promotion and implementation of programs and services to address the needs of the community's elder population.

1. Call to order: 11:14am
2. Approval of December Minutes
 - Minutes approved by Pina Mingace, seconded by Edna Murray.

3. New Business

Presentation from SustainaVille: Climate Change and Planning for a Healthy Future. Presenter: Naomi Gross

- Naomi provided an overview of the Climate Action Plan which is currently being updated. She spoke of increased weather events such as heatwaves and rainstorms. Inquired how do we adapt to climate change and opened the meeting up for discussion.
 - Feedback from the board included:
 - Acknowledgement of increased street flooding and the consequences of home and street flooding.
 - Discussion around increased construction and tall buildings which block air flow and sunshine to smaller homes.
 - Conversation between the acknowledgement of a dependence and need for air conditioning vs. the negative effects to the environment. Conversation

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included senior, low-income housing which typically does not have air conditioning.

- The desire for a city-wide composting plan.

Review of Board Members and Terms of Service

- All board members except for one, Ronit Prawer have decided to continue serving. Ronit has moved out of the country.
- We will receive further information regarding reappointments in the near future.
- A request has been made to open the search for new members.

4. Citizen's Open Forum

- Question regarding when results of survey will be published.
 - Survey is currently being analyzed by UMass Boston, results expected in May/June of 2024

5. Director's Report

- Parking at Holland Street
 - Feedback has been very positive regarding the new guest parking spots and the free handicapped spots. The pass system has been implemented smoothly and we have received feedback that there is adequate parking available each day.
- Status of ARPA Funding Projects
 - Furniture has been updated at the Ralph and Jenny Center; we are now gathering prices to update furniture at the Holland Street Center.
 - Digital Programming: Molly has been working with Somerville Public Schools to develop a new curriculum for the technology classes. A new 6-week class was held during December and January.
 - The Medical Equipment Program will be rolled out on February 1st. Residents aged 60 or older, or with a permanent disability will be eligible for rollators, commodes, bath chairs and transport wheelchairs at no cost. Residents will need a prescription or letter of need from their medical care team.
- Somerville Cambridge Elder Services
 - SCES visited with Ashley this morning to discuss programming and offerings at the COA. SCES provides COA with a Title III grant which provides transportation for seniors to the centers who would otherwise not have a transportation option.
 - SCES will be offering their Savy Caregiver's course at the Holland St. Center this April.

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- Memory Café
 - The COA restarted their Memory Café in December—Molly has received a grant from MCOA for entertainment and a light dinner for each café which will be held monthly.
- Partnership with Harvard University
 - This March students from Harvard University's Poetry without Borders Class will meet with seniors at our Holland Street Center to discuss works of poetry.

6. Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 12:18pm
7. Next Meeting: February 2, 2024 at 11:00am