

MEETING: NEW BEDFORD COUNCIL ON AGING ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
DATE: OCTOBER 14, 2021
TIME: 9:00AM
PLACE: HELD REMOTELY ON GO-TO-MEETING

DRAFT

Members Present

Bruce Duarte, Chairperson
Nancy Feeney, Secretary
George Smith
Jane Stott
Zachary Boyer
Jacqueline Medeiros

Others in Attendance

Debra Lee
Pamela Amaral-Lema

Excused Absences

Patricia Costa – Vice Chairperson
Cynthia Wallquist
Virginia Morrison
Joan Swain

Mr. Duarte called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Duarte asked board members to look over the September minutes.

Minutes were presented and approved.

Social Day - Mr. Duarte opened the meeting with asking about the Adult Social Day Program. He specifically asked about the rate of illness and or infection. The COA Director reported that there have been no incidences of infection that the staff are very meticulous in cleaning and precautions. She also stated that there is a very strict protocol for participants. Regardless of vaccination status they must be tested before attending the program. Also, if they are out two days or more due to illness, they must be re-tested in order to return. The same is true if they are hospitalized or in rehab regardless of the time frame, they must be tested to return. It is thought by adhering to this strict safety measures that we have managed to

keep everyone free of the virus. The Director also told the board where the testing can be done.

Old Business

Hillman Street Renovation – Things seem to be on schedule, the COA Director sent an update. Move in date still schedule for the end of the month as far as we know. Director sent an email questioning this and is waiting for a reply. COA director fielding questions about Buttonwood as a polling place and the fact that they were open for the run- off election and will also be open for the regular election on November 2nd, 2021. Director reported that on election days the centers are not open for programming, that they never have been on those days other than for voting and or a quick cup of coffee.

Mr. Duarte did report that he had been in contact with the Mayor and thinks perhaps that might have moved things along more quickly. He stated that he intended to reach out to him again following the meeting to ensure things remain on schedule.

The Director reported that there was some trouble with the Park Board. That she received a letter asking that our vans that are being parked at Buttonwood be removed from the lot, as they are taking up space for people that want to use the park, especially overnight. The Director had the vehicles moved to Hillman Street so there are no longer there overnight, she did this the same day she received the letter. She informed Mary Rapoza Director of Parks and Recreation and the Chair of the Park Board that the vans have been removed.

Chairman's Report was moved for acceptance by Nancy Feeney and seconded by Zachary Boyer, and a unanimous vote to accept the report was made.

Special Guest: BG Shanklin Architect to explain the handicap entrance issue.

BG showed slides to help the board understand the issues on the table. BG showed several slides of the building and the different entrances. He showed the view of the alley way access and the front door. Anyone who would like to view the presentation let us know and we can send you the presentation. The Mass Access Board said the City has to bring a ramp to entrance one and they have till June of 2023 to place a ramp at the front entrance. There are a lot of specifics located within the report that are specific to the plan, the problems and the issues directly connected with this problem.

Cost is \$60 – \$80 K, a lift would cost about 10k – 20K but the lift doesn't solve the problem of when the COA is closed to get people to Community Services will not work.

Condition of interior is much nicer and up to code fire wise, the bathrooms are now accessible.

IT was voted that the COA should send a letter to the Disabilities Commission to protest the City's appeal of the ramp to the front entrance if they should launch an appeal.

George Smith moved the motion Zachary Boyer seconded the motion all were unanimous in the vote for this.

BG will bring this up at the Disabilities Commission. The ramp should be able to be built with us there, we should not have to close again to have this constructed. Timeline on the ramp would probably be 3-4 months. The city constructing the ramp would probably take twice that amount of time.

It was asked why the lift instead of the ramp and the short answer was the timing and the money were a lot less to go with the lift versus the ramp. According to the Access Board, they must build the ramp in order to be legal for operating this building. The Distance from the lot is too far, they have to be within 100 feet to the interior of the building.

The City needs a Master plan to solve the handicapped issues to the entire complex.

The second floor on Hillman Street has not yet been done and that will require a great deal of renovation as well.

The Commission wants to see the two ramps go in. If we can't get ramp one then Ramp two would be the alternative reported George Smith. This facility is also going to be used by the Disabilities Commission going forward.

The North east side of the building entrance is supposed to be opened up as an additional fire egress. Yet the entrance is not opened up.

Community Services Director's Report

*Cynthia will cover half the cost of Holiday Meals by the New Bedford Hotel and Trip Towers, the other half by Coastline being catered by Tia Maria's

* Clear Path Enrollment coming up

*Sunset Social is almost done for the Fall PACAA delivered D and D Cooked

*Hoarding Group cancelled at Buttonwood no interest

Report was moved and seconded and voted on unanimously

Was asked about the booster no information at this point but will give it to folks as soon as we have it. They do want to utilize McCoy for a site, but we don't know as of yet. Availability of vaccine is a current issue.

George Smith brought up the \$64 million question about what the money would be spent on. The suggestion for Age Friendly, A New Senior Center, Mental Health Help, Dental Help. Broadband, Internet, and Housing for Seniors was also brought up. Perhaps making senior housing out of the two nursing homes that have been closed. These things were brought up and were listed in the paper to follow up with the suggestions.

Senior Center to be opened the beginning of November. As soon as the person who interviewed as the Assistant Rec Leader. is approved it will be announced.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 4th, 2021, at the Hillman Street Administration Building if the building is open, will update the Board as soon as we have that information.

Adjourn

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Zachary Boyer seconded by Jacqueline Medeiros.