

**Meeting of the Northborough Council on Aging
July 11, 2023 – 5:30PM – Northborough Senior Center**

As the hub for all aspects of healthy aging, the mission of the Northborough Council on Aging/Senior Center is to enrich and enhance the lives of older adults.

Call to Order: A meeting of the Council on Aging of the Town of Northborough was called to order at 5:30 PM by Adrienne Cost, Chair with the following also present:

Linda Cragin, Member
Theresa Lee, Member
Jerry Anderson, Member
Paula Moore, Member
Virginia Simms George, Member

Elizabeth Nasser, Member
Fran Bakstran, Member
Ron Doucett, Friends
Mitch Cohen, Select Board rep
Kendra Faldetta, Director

The following COA members were not present: Alli DellaRovere, Joan Frank, School Committee rep.

1. Approval of the Minutes:

The minutes for the June 2023 meeting were approved.

2. Friends Report:

Ron provided the Friend's report. The fundraiser at the Cellar Restaurant was very successful and may be repeated in the fall. Smaller grocery-style reusable bags (good for take-out orders) have been ordered and will be for sale. A brick has been ordered in honor of Agnes Sagerian. The Jewelry Cart continues to be very financially successful due to the effort of the team of volunteers who manage it. There will be no meeting in August.

3. Director's Report:

Kendra provided some fiscal year end statistics from My Senior Center: total swipe-ins: 18,847; number of individual swipe-ins: 1,415; average daily attendance is 71.12 people with Thursday being the busiest day at 101.24 in attendance. Total swiped volunteer hours is 2,865.13, valued at \$42,796.95 at MA minimum wage – though most of the work would be valued higher than minimum wage. These figures do NOT include those who do not swipe, the activities that are held off site (walking club), and van trips. There continues to be a focus on getting attendees to swipe. There was a raffle in June to promote this (with a gift certificate to the Bistro).

They also don't include the efforts of Jocelyn. We are fortunate to have such a superb outreach worker. She supported 1716 encounters or 446 unduplicated individuals; this does not include those that just drop in or the numerous phone calls needed to serve these individuals.

Kendra also reported that the BeWell Kickoff, while not geared to seniors, was successful. The books on display were recognized in particular by Asian participants who were thrilled to see a book about a grandfather/granddaughter representing their families. The Summer Fun Day went very well and attendees have already asked about next year. Kendra's father took pictures as a volunteer from UMass Chan Medical School. Dinners and BBQs are planned and have sold out. Birding is very popular and a session planned for August is already full. A bird walk is planned for November.

The Featured Senior interviews will start in August and one will be highlighted each month. There have been several volunteers and others have been asked and accepted.

New programs include a social bridge club, assistance with tech during the summer (session in July is full) and creating cards through paper quilling.

4. WRTA:

A driver was interviewed but accepted another full-time position. Salary increases are effective July 1 and Kendra hopes this increase assists with recruitment as 2-4 more drivers are needed.

5. Springwell (formerly Bay Path):

Communication continues to be a challenge with Springwell – they reported that this was an IT glitch, and they did not realize they were not getting voice mail messages. There are few answers related to service delivery for seniors with significant needs; there is also a lack of willingness to be flexible with strategies for communication with clients, for example, a client who is hard of hearing and speaks another language. Kendra and Jocelyn have provided several workarounds to the Springwell staff but they don't implement these suggestions. This violates the ADA. Kendra also asked for an Northboro Senior Center outreach flyer to be included in the meals on wheels delivery and this request was denied.

It also seems clear that Springwell can manage services in more urban communities (Brookline, Framingham) but struggles with more suburban ones, particularly those in the far west of their service area. Protective services for Northboro, Westboro, Marlboro and Hudson are still managed by Elder Services of Worcester (ESWA) and communication with ESWA staff is much better.

As this concern has not improved one year after the merger, the COA decided to: 1) ask Kendra to reach out to the senior center directors and outreach workers in Westboro, Marlboro and Hudson to assess their interest in collaborating on a communication to Springwell with a cc. to the Executive Office of Elder Affairs that includes 2-4 examples each of the concerns, 2) Adrienne will reach out to the COA Board chairs in these communities to assess their willingness to co-sign the letter, and 3) Linda will compile with information into a letter with Fran reviewing. The final version will be approved by the Board(s) before being sent.

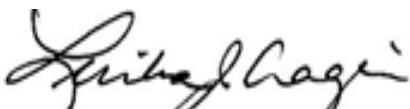
6. Old/New Business and Community Awareness:

Linda shared information about fitness parks highlighted by AARP: <https://fitlot.org/> that are designed for all ages and abilities (note the Worcester Senior Center is on FitLot's home page). This could be a great collaborative project with Northboro Recreation Department, perhaps on the land identified for the dog park, could be integrated into the accessible walking trail at the senior center and Master Plan activities, and perhaps be partially supported by Community Preservation funding. It would also project the anti-agism image that is so important. Linda will contact FitLot for more information.

Mitch asked to provide several updates:

- The Master Plan needs representation from the Senior Center/COA. Adrienne has not been able to attend. At the August meeting, the COA will have an election to identify a representative.
- As the Selectboard meeting, it was raised that groups should be allowed to use the Senior Center after hours. Mitch understands the significant impact on staffing, the building and its equipment. It was noted that staff are stretched with the support needed for COA activities (staff move all chairs and tables for activities, the floors and chairs have not been cleaned since the building opened, there is no way to secure the staff desk area, three hours of janitorial services can barely handle the kitchen, bathroom, and meeting room maintenance). Mitch shared that this is not on the agenda for further discussion.

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm.



Linda Cragin, Secretary