

DEDHAM COUNCIL ON AGING
Meeting Minutes
March 18, 2021

Present: Vice-Chairman Marie-Louise Kehoe, Sherri Hannigan, Diane Barry-Preston, Maureen Teti, Sandra Tocman, Parks and Recreation Representative Charles (Chuck) Dello Iacono, Police Chief Michael D'Entremont, HESSCO Representative Anne Heller, COA Director Sheila Pransky

Absent: Chairman Leanne Jasset, Geri Pacheco

Meeting called to order by Vice-Chairman Marie-Louise Kehoe at 5:07 PM. All votes were by roll call because this was a remote meeting on Zoom,

Motion made by Sherri, seconded by Sandra, to accept the February minutes. So voted with Chuck voting present.

Director's Report:

- Covid-19: Along with the Board of Health (BOH), we have successfully scheduled and completed all four of our large Covid vaccination clinics for residents 75 and over. We were able to provide rides to the clinics via cab using our Urgent Taxi Grant. We also administered the vaccine to the homebound and seniors who live in Dedham Housing Authority housing. Our staff worked very hard making phone calls for appointments and staffing the clinics. Every clinic was a "delight"! People getting their shots, seeing friends and neighbors, and meeting staff members turned the clinics into a social event. It was a rewarding collaboration and we hope we will be able to hold future town clinics. As of now there are no plans to do so by the state.
- Along with fellow COA directors, we sent a letter to Governor Baker, the Lt. Governor, and State Senators and Representatives expressing our distress with the management of the vaccine rollout and its negative effect on seniors. Our local elected officials concur with our opinions, but few have faith much will change for our older adults.
- We sponsored a St. Patrick's Day drive through event with music and refreshments and will be offering our AARP tax clinics from April 14th to May 17th because of the change in the tax deadline.
- Budget hearings have taken place and we have been tentatively approved to purchase a van. We have agreed to pay up to \$20,000 toward the cost. The town budget is level funded for next year.
- We are continuing to move forward with granting the tax work off participants a modest grant from the Covid-19 Relief Fund. We have about 14 seniors who have qualified, but the funding has not yet happened. We will know by our next meeting.
- Our Technology Pilot Program is will begin as soon as we receive approval from Town Counsel on the agreement. 18 seniors will receive instruction on how to use an iPad. The WiFi connection will be supplied by us.
- We have a new Pen Pal Project next month. Over 20 seniors have agreed to correspond with 20 middle school students. We hope to gather as a group at the end of the project.

Motion made by Diane, seconded by Sandy, to accept the Director's Report.

HESSCO:

- The monthly meeting focused on the work of the ombudsmen. Covid has hampered their work because when a request for service is filed with them, they cannot meet with the client in the nursing home.
- There is a grant from the Massachusetts Area Planning Council (MAPC) for transportation to non-medical appointments and a regional grant along with other Dedham grants.
- Revenues and services are both down due to Covid.
- Comfort Pass is offering mechanical gifts to nursing homes. There are patients who benefit from them.

Maureen made a motion to accept the HESSCO report, seconded by Sandy. So voted.

Senior Center Update:

- In the Director's Report, Sheila questioned the impact vaccinations will have on the Senior Center re-opening. She said there has been discussion of a Town Manager Re-opening Committee, but there has been no further information.
- Outdoor programs will begin in April.
- Program reservations are open on Friday mornings. The phones are very busy then.
- There was a discussion of the pros and cons of programs and spaces.

Livable Dedham Diane Barry-Preston

- Diane and John Briggs from Parks and Recreation are finalizing the plans for the adult park equipment. The equipment has been vetted for safety.

Old/New Business:

- Sandy asked about the donation in memory of Russ Poole. Maureen noted that at a previous meeting, we decided since the renovation of the Ames building was still in a state of flux, we should wait. Sheila said the space between the Public Safety building and the Ames may be a good choice. At this point it is difficult to make a decision.
- Maureen asked about the status of Board reappointments. Marie-Louise said the post to fill Russ Poole's position has not been done. She will follow up on this and report back to the Board next month.
- Sheila said Josh Blaney the Youth Commission Director is ill. She will forward cards and well wishes to him if people wish. Josh has been a tremendous help to seniors during the pandemic.
- Sheila asked that we contact the Town Manager and the Select Board about reopening the Senior Center. The Center will be used for voting in the upcoming election.

Public Comment: None

Motion made by Chuck to adjourn, seconded by Sherri. So voted.

Meeting adjourned at 5:48 PM.