

Harvard Council on Aging
Board of Directors Meeting
April 26, 2010

Present: Sharon Briggs, Jan Goodell, Barbara Kemp, Carlene Phillips, Fran Nickerson, Mike Peters, Bill Mohn, Connie Larrabee. Ginger Quarles
Absent: Colleen Nigus

Call to order: 4:08 p.m.

The minutes of the March board meeting were approved as submitted

The treasurer's report was approved as submitted

Action Plans Update

Public Relations: The new COA brochures have been distributed to twelve locations in town, including three churches, five medical offices, the General Store, Town Hall, library, and Police Station. Sharon reported that there are still some old brochures upstairs in the library, and Connie said she would replace them, and will also take some to the Westward Orchards farmstand when it opens.

Progress on a proposed short informational video about the COA is still stalled while Mike tries to get help from either the Cable Committee or interested students. Mike will be away during much of May, but will continue to work on it when he can. Carlene suggested that he should contact Worth Robbins, who might have useful suggestions about finding help.

Ginger reported that Laura Bridges has been interviewed for a newspaper article about the volunteer coordinators program, which should appear soon.

Volunteer Coordination: Sharon reported that computer volunteer Karen Cruise has modified some software so we can keep better records .

Ginger reported that Laura Bridges is getting started and has provided some good outside perspective about the shortcomings of Hildreth House as a senior center, and ways they might be addressed.

Housing: Jan reported on a meeting she attended about the proposed Stow Road housing development, but noted that it isn't senior housing.

Barbara and Jan both reported that the proposed housing at Barba's Point is either dead or on indefinite hold because it has been found to be the habitat of an endangered spotted salamander.

Lou Russo's senior housing building on Ayer Road is also on hold awaiting funding.

Old Business

Handyman Project: Ginger reported that she put a notice about the proposed handyman project in the newsletter and has had calls from five seniors in need of help. Laura will talk to them, and to anyone else who calls, to get a better sense of what they need. Meanwhile, volunteer coordinator Jim King is working on putting

together a liability release form, which will have to be approved by the town administrator and reviewed by town counsel.

Parlor update: Connie reported that the upstairs parlor – including the floor - has been painted, and the furniture is now in place. Ginger said the Nashoba Nursing Service is interested in holding grief-counseling sessions at Hildreth House, and would like to use the parlor as long as participants are able to climb the stairs. Fran pointed out - and everyone agreed - that it is wrong to offer activities for seniors on the second floor if everyone can't have access, and suggested that the board take a stand on the issue. After some discussion, the board voted unanimously on a resolution to support full access for everyone as a top priority, not only at Hildreth House, but in all public buildings. And toward that end, the board also agreed that the COA should speak in support of the Town Center Building Task Force article at Town Meeting, if it seems necessary, and designated Carlene as its spokesperson.

New Business

New member: Barbara and Connie reported that Laura Andrews is interested in joining the board to replace Colleen Nigzus, whose term expires in June. After a brief discussion, board members agreed to invite Laura to the May 17th board meeting so we can talk to her.

Hildreth House condition: Connie reported that when the van returned from a trip to a play in Concord last week it was too dark in the parking lot for people to get safely to their cars. The van driver was considerate enough to position the headlights so people could see, but board members agreed that the outside lighting is not sufficient for people to safely negotiate the uneven pavement at night. Sharon will set up an appointment with Tim Bragan to discuss this problem, and also the deplorable condition of the hot water heater, and what everyone agreed is inadequate cleaning of the house.

Director's Report

Budget: Ginger reported there will be no budget cuts this year because of savings from new health insurance agreements with the town's unions. She urged board members to express their appreciation to town officials who worked hard to make the changes possible.

The traditional COA luau is scheduled for May 21 at 11:30 a.m. at Hildreth House, and will be catered by students from the Shriver Center on Devens, Ginger urged all board members to attend, and several signed up on the spot.

An Indian Hill music program funded by a grant from the Cultural Council has been rescheduled due to lack of interest in the earlier dates. The three-part series is now scheduled for May 11 and 25 and June 8 @ 1 p.m. Only six people have signed up so far, and a minimum of 10 is required. Unless something changes in the near future, the program will be cancelled.

Starting in May, a free chair-exercise program will be held at Hildreth House on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

A handyman talk is scheduled for Thursday, May 13 at 10 a.m. A man from Aubuchon Hardware will talk about various projects, followed by a question-and-answer period.

A program about the Hildreth family will be held at the Historical Society on Thursday evening, May 13 .

Ginger reported there is still one applicant without a job in this year's senior tax-workoff program.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Connie Larrabee