

Harvard Council on Aging

Board of Director's Meeting & Annual Planning Meeting

August 17th, 2012

Present: Connie Larrabee, Pam Frederick, Katie Petrossi, Carlene Phillips, Debbie Thompson, Fran Nickerson, Sharon Briggs

Absent: Bonnie Sweeney, Mike Peters, Hank Fitek

Guests: Bill **Herbert**

Call to order 9:00am at Hildreth House

The minutes of the June 18th 2012 Board of Directors meeting were approved as submitted. The minutes of the July 23rd 2012 meeting we approved with revisions. There was no treasurer's report.

Regular Business:

Final Planning for August 24th BBQ:

The BBQ menu was planned and the Board determined who would shop for food (Connie, Pam & Katie), help set up (Connie, Carlene, Katie), grill (Mike Peters, Glen Frederick), and clean up (Connie, Carlene, Pam).

Director's Report:

Debbie Thompson accomplished several important goals as COA Director in 2012, including:

- Spearheaded efforts to get a COA Receptionist & MART Dispatcher located at the Hildreth House
- Changed the monthly newsletter from a "snail mail" format to a two-pronged approach of email distribution and placement at local gathering places. This has resulted in a significant reduction in costs.
- Purchased of MySeniorCenter software program to better track data for the center
- Increased community awareness of COA events & services through local papers

The COA has no records at Town Hall, so no action is necessary before the offices are moved to another location during renovations.

In response to last month's discussion about the source and balance of the Scholarship/Activities Assistance Fund, Debbie determined there was a donation of approximately \$500 to the gift fund, marked for this purpose. No decisions were made regarding restrictions of these funds in terms of activities/services covered or eligibility requirements.

Debbie investigated the requirements of This Old House to determine if collaboration is possible when planning renovations to the Hildreth House. It appears possible but not likely.

Hildreth House Improvement Committee:

The critical question the new town committee must be able to answer is how the projected cost escalated from 2.3M to 5M. Lou Russo has said he would be willing to help with that. Speculation included site planning, the comprehensiveness of the initial estimate, etc. Anticipate the committee appointment would be for 2-3 years as it is unlikely we will be asking for funds at

this year's ATM. Ideal candidates would be willing to listen to all stakeholders in town, to see what people want from their senior center.

The COA was asked to recommend one or more people for the MBC. One COA and one Friend would be ideal, as well as a community member who utilizes COA services. Board members discussed Dave Vannicola's interest in the committee & input from the Men's Coffee group: parking improvements, more people-to-people programs, and more programming targeted towards men.

The Board unanimously nominated Connie Larrabee as the primary member and Fran Nickerson as the secondary member. We are still considering a recommendation for an FCOA member and community member.

Community Preservation Committee Application:

The Board discussed potential projects, such as a ramp and railing for the back patio, or fixing or replacing broken dining room windows. Debbie will follow-up with CPC.

Planning Session:

Review of 2011 Goals:

Last year the Board set six goals for the upcoming year:

- Evaluate Tax Relief programs (Sharon, Fran, Marie Sobalvarro): The board did evaluate existing and proposed programs in preparation for Annual Town Meeting.
- Reactivate and energize the Friends group: Despite our efforts, little progress was made on this front until recently, and much more needs to be done.
- Coordinate with emergency services to start a Triad program (Debbie & Bonnie): There has been greater coordination with emergency services this year, but a Triad program has not materialized.
- Improve newsletter and expand website (Debbie, Connie, Carlene, Mike): Debbie redesigned the newsletter & changed it to a primarily email format coupled with local distribution points. No website changes have been made.
- Expand program offerings at Hildreth House to encourage "purposeful aging" (Katie): More work needs to be done on this, although the building is seeing more use in general.
- Move upstairs offices and create a reception area downstairs (Mike & Connie): Completed.

In addition to the six goals above, the COA Board continued to push for the relocation of the MART dispatcher to the Hildreth House, and accomplished that goal this spring.

Program Development:

Katie, Pam & Carlene will work to evaluate existing programming, as well as suggest & support new programming. The Board briefly discussed options including Triad, navigating hospice, a seminar series on healthy aging, a peer-led theatre group, art classes & exhibitions, memoir writing, etc.

Bill reported on suggested improvements to the Men's Group, including better publicity for bringing a friend. Currently 12-20 people participate on a weekly basis. Perhaps a joint coffee could be arranged with the Congregational Church since they meet on the same day but at an earlier time.

The newsletter transitioned from paper-based to email this year. There are a handful of people who asked to continue receiving theirs in the mail. Debbie mails them out and will include a check-in in the next newsletter to see if there are others that want to go back to paper. An automated phone campaign via MySeniorCenter could be appropriate as well.

The Board discussed the need to balance efforts for vulnerable & well elders. Additional support for elders during critical transitions may help establish relationships earlier, before official outreach action response needed.

The Farm to Table program has been successful so far and we would like to see additional utilization & partnership.

Hildreth House Improvements

Hank, Connie and Fran will form a COA committee to identify improvements and daily maintenance needed in the interim before a major renovation can be completed. Suggestions include parking lot improvements, patio upgrades and window repairs.

Public Relations

Connie, Fran and Katie will form a committee to publicize what the COA is doing now, updating the newsletter and brochures, and video. Over time this committee will also publicize activities of the town's Hildreth House Improvement Committee and the findings of the COA survey.

FCOA Development & Support

No committee was formed, but the Board agreed that the COA has a vested interest in FCOA fundraising to provide additional programming resources as well as eventually building/renovation funding. An ideal FCOA would have strong, enthusiastic leadership focused on fundraising. A small board with a larger membership. Friends of the Library may be a model for FCOA – annual membership dues, visible in the community through a tangible fundraiser as well as a funds drive. Katie will ask Renee and/or Marie to attend monthly COA meetings or submit a report, providing a summary of finances and activities to enhance collaboration as the renovation/building efforts move forward.

New Survey:

Fran and Katie will organize a new COA survey. The survey will have two main goals: to determine what the town wants from its senior center, and to augment MySeniorCenter data with usage information: service utilization, satisfaction with services, health & wellness outcomes, barriers to participation, identifying vulnerable elders, what the 60+ population wants, senior housing, safety in town and at the Hildreth House, etc.

Fran and Katie will work to have a working draft to the Board by the October meeting.

Goal Setting & Action Plan

- Reinstatement of the annual Volunteer Appreciation Event in April
- Increased program count across the four areas of health/wellness, as well as increased participation rates. Comparison to national & state statistics, comparable towns, and our own usage over time.
- Balance needs of vulnerable elders and well-elder satisfaction. Both are critical.

Upcoming Events:

- August 24 – COA BBQ
- August 25th - COA trip to Saturday night concert series “Woodstock” in Groton
- September 7 – Peabody Essex Museum trip
- September 20 – Big E – Eastern States Exposition
- September 21 – Google Computer Class (Hildreth House)
- TBD – Dinner & Movie Night (Hildreth House)

The meeting was adjourned at noon.

Respectfully submitted, Katie Petrossi