

**Harvard Council on Aging
Board of Directors Meeting
February 10, 2014
Hildreth House**

Present: Pam Frederick, Sue Guswa, Bruce Dolimount, Connie Larrabee, Hank Fitek, Katie Petrossi, Suzanne Roberts, Carlene Phillips, Fran Nickerson, Debbie Thompson, Lucy Wallace
Guest: Joe Hutchinson (Master Plan Steering Committee)

Call to Order: 4:05

The minutes of the January 13, 2014 board meeting were approved as submitted. The treasurer's report was approved after some explanation.

Program Committee Report

Katie reported that about 30 people came to the January Life Transitions program featuring Tai Chi instructor Jeff Cote. About half of the attendees hadn't been to our previous programs so the committee thinks having it on a Sunday afternoon was a successful experiment.

The March program - a Brain Fitness Workshop - will be held on Saturday, March 22 from 1 to 3 pm in Volunteers Hall.

Master Plan Steering Committee

Lucy Wallace and Joe Hutchinson from the Master Plan Steering Committee asked for the board's input on issues important to senior citizens. Among the responses were concerns about the town's lack of preparation for the influx of senior residents from Bowers Brook apartments, and a general lack of knowledge about senior needs. Several board members asked whether seniors could use school facilities more often, such as the Bromfield computer lab, or if there could be provision for seniors to buy lunch there. Katie mentioned that she knows of four families with grandparents moving here to help care for grandchildren, and said these newcomers, too, might participate in COA programs.

Other issues raised were the need for down-sized housing, transportation options, and a commercial base to provide tax relief for seniors on fixed incomes.

Talking Points Committee

Sue reported that the committee's goal is to inform citizens about the safety, accessibility, and overcrowding issues at Hildreth House. Suzanne suggested there be more emphasis on the need to centralize services in one location rather than holding exercise classes, meals, and other events at various venues.

Hildreth House Improvement Committee Update

Connie reported on the fallout from the Capital Planning and Investment Committee decision to defer the building project to an unspecified future date. It appears certain that the warrant article requesting full funding will not be considered at

Town Meeting, so the HHIC 's fallback position is to request funding for design development instead. The HHIC believes the article should be submitted jointly by the COA and HHIC. The board discussed submitting a separate article asking for money to repair the Hildreth House parking lot and voted unanimously to do so. A vote on the proposed design development article was put off until a joint vote could be taken with the HHIC.

Director's Report

It's been a very busy month for outreach, with ten seniors needing more services than they had previously, and one protective order required. Maria has been working more than 19 hours a week to keep up with the caseload, and Debbie has been doing more outreach as well.

The next COA board meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 17, 2014 at 4 pm.

The COA meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Joint COA - HHIC Meeting

Present: COA Board members above; HHIC members Laura Andrews, Pat Jennings, Ann Taylor, Richard Blinn. COA Director Debbie Thompson
Capital Planning and Investment Committee Chairman Keith Cheveralls, CPIC member and Selectwoman Marie Sobalvarro
Joan Eliyesil, Harvard Press

CPIC Chairman Keith Cheveralls explained his committee's composition and how it arrives at its recommendations. He said the group recommended 11 requests of the 23 submitted this year. The Hildreth House project scored 65 on the CPIC rating scale, two points below the cut-off figure of 67. Cheveralls pointed out that unless the CPIC is funding the debt service, its recommendation is only advisory. In the case of Hildreth House, it was up to the selectmen to decide whether the article would go on the warrant and on the ballot as an excluded debt question.

He said his reasons for recommending deferral of the project included the high cost, the risk of cost overruns, the timing in regard to Town Hall and other competing projects, lack of private fundraising, and lack of support from the selectmen.

Marie Sobalvarro said she favored deferral because she didn't think the HH article would pass, it wouldn't hurt to defer it until the timing was better, and she hadn't heard from constituents that they think all COA services should be in one place.

Cheveralls and Sobalvarro both pointed to the need for a broad-based conversation to set priorities for large capital projects like Hildreth House, the fire station expansion, the DPW garage, and the school science labs and agree on a timetable for staging them. Marie said the town typically takes on debt every three years.

After the CPIC representatives had left, the COA board and HHIC members discussed their options and reluctantly agreed that there was little chance the \$3.7

million article would make it to Town Meeting. Therefore, they agreed to try moving the project forward by amending that article to request \$158,000 for design development only. The motion passed with one opposing vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 7: 10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Connie Larrabee, recorder