

# COMMISSION ON AGING

June 27, 2022

5:30 p.m. (via Zoom)

## Special Joint Virtual Meeting with Age-Friendly Core Leadership Team

### Minutes

**Present:** Jennifer DiSette, Gayle Kataja, Denise Weeks, Beth Hillson, Philip Markuszka, Susan Pearlman, Dr. Chip Beckett, Neil Griffin, Barbara Bailey, Dr. Carrie Andreoletti, Jeff Stein, Wendy Mis.

**Liaisons Present:** Richard Johnson, Town Manager  
Lisa Zerio, Director of Parks and Recreation  
Patti White, Senior Services Program Supervisor

#### 1. **Welcome and Introductions**

Gayle Kataja opened the meeting at 5:33 and thanked everyone for attending.

#### 2. **Age-Friendly Community Initiative History**

Jennifer DiSette provided a brief history of the origins of the Age-Friendly Community (AFC) initiative, and updated the participants on the implementation of the action plan highlighting work that has been done to date, including efforts by the Commission to support Bike and Pedestrian Safety measures in town, as well as support for the preservation of outdoor spaces and buildings like the Old Cider Mill.

Patti White reviewed the feedback on the action plan that the Town received from Bill Armbruster, Senior Advisor, AARP Livable Communities. She reported that the feedback was very positive overall and included comments on the format of the plan, as well the process and governing structure for both developing and implementing the plan.

#### 3. **Remarks from Town Manager Richard Johnson**

Gayle introduced Richard Johnson, Town Manager, who informed the participants on the Town's efforts to date to support the Age-Friendly Community initiative.

Mr. Johnson elaborated on the changes made to the town budget which now includes categories of spending in both the Operating and Capital Improvement budgets that fit under the Town's Age-Friendly Livable Communities and Sustainability initiatives.

In the 2023 approved budget Mr. Johnson stated that funding is allocated for park improvements including enhanced shade structures and benches. He also reported that the town would be applying for \$500,000 through the State's Small-Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP)

to support other Age-Friendly Livable Communities projects such as an outdoor pavilion adjacent to the Riverfront Community Center, and park improvements.

The town will also be using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to install a handicap accessibility ramp at the Youth and Family Annex to enhance programming efforts outdoors.

The town is also working to enhance access and viability of the town green to support intergenerational activity and has continued to construct new sidewalks connecting Bell Street to the trail to Smith Middle school, and will soon complete the sidewalk path all the way from the East Hartford line to South Glastonbury.

Mr. Johnson also stated that the town had completed a five year (22-27) Affordable Housing plan and will be working to implement the plan including the possibility of the creation of a Housing Trust fund.

In summary Mr. Johnson indicated that the town is fully committed to the Age-Friendly Community initiative and anticipates that funding will be made available through the annual budget process for either specific items addressed in the plan, or general categories of funds to be prioritized by staff working with the Commission on Aging and Core Leadership members.

#### **4. Breakout Sessions**

The group broke up into separate meetings to discuss the three priority domains; Outdoor Spaces and Buildings, Transportation and Buildings. They were each tasked with the following:

- Identify other influencers/partners
- Next Steps and Who will do what
- Year two Goals on the Horizon
- Set Meeting Schedule for Group

#### **5. Report Back Session**

After the groups met they reconvened and reported the following:

#### ***OUTDOOR SPACES & BUILDINGS***

Participants – Barbara Bailey, Chip Beckett, Jennifer DiSette, Lisa Zerio (lead), Susan Pearlman (scribe).

Discussion took place in regards that the community conversation meeting to be held in the fall should be scheduled before the town budget proposals are due, in early November. This would ensure that any proposals related to the Initiative would be included in the budget requests for the coming fiscal year. Dates were suggested, including October 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> to be discussed with the whole group.

Lisa shared with the group a report on the progress to date on the Year One Action Plan for the Outdoor Space and Buildings Domain.

***I.1. Provide more trees, benches, picnic tables, and accessibility support to promote increased use and enjoyment of outdoor spaces by older adults and residents with mobility restrictions.***

Benches have been purchased and will be installed on Welles Street across from Naubuc Green, on Hubbard Street at the Historical Society, and a replacement bench at the Police Dept. Grant funding was received from an AARP Livable Communities Grant in conjunction with the Glastonbury Housing Authority Director Neil Griffin. The project will be to install accessible benches with arbors in a garden like setting at Knox Lane

A raised bed garden is being installed near the community center by an Eagle Scout candidate. The garden is expected to provide vegetables for senior lunches as well as the food pantry. A STEAP grant funding received in 2020 for tree management has funding available for tree planting.

Lisa also explained the private citizens interested in purchasing a bench through the Living Legacy program will be advised where a bench is needed; currently there are sufficient benches at Riverfront Park. A bench inventory is being maintained. All benches purchased will be designed for accessibility with arm rests, and will be placed on pads to ensure accessibility for those with mobility issues and/or in a wheelchair.

***I.2 Install additional map displays/signage in parks outlining trail and other amenities.***

Age-Friendly Banners are being installed at various town properties. The “Passport to Parks” program is available, both online and at the Parks and Recreation Department. The passport depicts 28 locations in each of four areas of town that have open spaces, trails, parks, etc.; the pamphlet shows the location, the amenities available. The town plans to publicize these Passports to ensure residents are aware of these sites. The poetry banners made possible through a grant from the Glastonbury Community Fund will be posted around the town parks and trails this summer.

***II.1. Increase residents’ knowledge of and appreciation for Glastonbury’s rich colonial and family history.***

The Farmers Market has been moved to an area near the Historical Society at Hubbard Green to make it more accessible. Lisa invited the Farmers Market to set up during the Town Band concerts this summer. The group discussed public access to farms. Chip pointed out that few farms welcome visitors as they are too busy with normal operations. Lisa agreed to invite Robert Laughlin, Director of the Historical Society and possibly someone from the Farmers Market to become involved in this effort.

***II.2. Create new or leverage existing planned events at town historic sites and farms with groups such as Glastonbury Grown and other community groups.***

See above discussion. Other groups, such as the Pollinator Pathway, GPIP were invited to participate in town events. Barbara suggested that perhaps the Farmers Market would be interested in having a program at the library to sell jams, etc. This could be coordinated with the Holiday Trolley program run by the Chamber of Commerce. Barbara will look into this.

***II.3. Develop a competition between Glastonbury youth and those of neighboring town to expand their collective knowledge of comparative history and architectural design of their respective historic district.***

Barbara is not aware of any similar type of competition between town libraries.

***III.1. Strengthen existing and create new partnerships with community/business organizations to enhance support of increased access and mobility for all residents.***

The group agreed that the Chamber of Commerce should be involved in this. Grant funds may be available to help small businesses become more accessible to their customers.

The group discussed the need for toilets around town. Lisa explained that she is working on making the portable toilets more accessible by putting them on pads. Chip suggested using composting toilets as they are more permanent and less subject to vandalism. Lisa will look into this.

***IV. 1. Increase designated handicapped parking to improve access to town fields, playgrounds and parks.***

Lisa advised the group that she looking at all of the towns facilities and will work with the town to see about improving access to these locations. This would include the possibility of paved paths in parking lots to make the fields more accessible to those in wheelchairs. Some sites have that have slopes and uneven surfaces that present challenges to accessibility.

***IV. 2. Expand Dial-a-Ride service to transport persons with disabilities from their homes to parks and athletic fields.***

This will be eventually coordinated through the Senior Services Dept.

## ***HOUSING***

Present: Carrie Andreoletti; Neil Griffin (lead); Gayle Kataja; Denise Weeks (scribe).

Absent: Bruce Bowman; Deb Carroll.

The group reviewed the action items related to the Housing Domain with the goal of identifying additional influencers/partners, next steps and who will so what, two-year horizon goals and setting up a meeting schedule for the group. The following is a summary of items discussed for each of the action items.

**Item 1 - Expand the scope of the Chores Program for seniors and disabled individuals, enabling them to age in their own homes.**

**Additional Partners/Influencers** –church mission groups, youth service groups, Key Club and Sports Teams. Non-profits such as Homefront, Inc., and UR Community Cares.

**Next steps** - consider outreach to church mission groups, youth service groups, Key Club and Sports Team as sources of volunteers that could be matched with seniors needing services.

**Two-Year Horizon Goals:** Explore ways to provide more substantial home repair assistance by involving above groups and possibly partnering with/referring out to Homefront, whose mission

is to provide material support for larger projects, or UR Community Cares which provides services similar to the Chores Program.

**Item 2 – Support Town’s effort to create a broad and comprehensive Affordable Housing Plan.**

**Additional Partners/Influencers** – Healthy Aging Data Reports/Tufts Health Plan Foundation

**Next Steps** - Using AARP’s Livability Index resource and the Healthy Aging Data Reports web resources to compare the town’s resources and performance with neighboring and peer towns to identify ways to improve housing livability index. Carrie is willing to participate in this research.

**Two-Year Horizon Goals** – Report data findings and recommend action steps to improve the livability of housing in the community

**Item 3 – Create and disseminate a Glastonbury Housing Resource Guide**

**Additional Partners/Influencers** – Connecticut Homecare Services for Seniors; Intergenerational House-Sharing services.

**Next Steps** – Identify what we think should be included in a Housing Resource Guide: Affordable housing only or a broader housing guide. Whether to limit it to resources as defined under 8.30g, expand it to include places like Carter Court and others that have income eligibility restrictions or expand it even further to include places like the Hearth. If the former, we could include locations, who to contact, what if any services are provided or available, etc. If the latter – the missing middle – it becomes more difficult to define.

**Year Two Horizon Goal** - Explore the possibility of Intergenerational House Sharing programs or Connecticut Homecare Services foster program to address senior housing needs, in particular those in the Missing Middle.

**METTING SCHEDULE** – Denise will create a doodle poll to establish the next meeting.

***TRANSPORTATION***

Present: Phil Markuszka, Jeff Stein, Wendy Mis, Beth Hillson, Patti White

The group reviewed the action items related to the Transportation Domain with the goal of identifying additional influencers/partners, next steps and who will do what, two-year horizon goals and setting up a meeting schedule for the group. The following is a summary of items discussed for each of the action items;

***Goal # 1 Support increased transportation coordination and expansion by providers servicing Glastonbury for older adults and individuals with disabilities.***

Action Step #1: Pilot fixed route transportation service, using Dial-A-Ride (DAR) service, from multi-housing complexes to high density medical and shopping areas.

**Additional Partners/Influencers** – Dial-A-Ride Consumers

**Next Steps** –

Senior Services Department will continue to assess best routes for pilot program to begin in fall Route schedule and signs will be created and widely publicized.

**Two-Year Horizon Goals** – Report data on usage and consumer satisfaction surveys and recommend action steps to improve the DAR service.

**Goal # 2** *Encourage the creation of a formal town plan to identify, assess and install more pedestrian safety and accessibility amenities.*

**Action Step:** Increase handicap parking in the Town Center area.

**Additional Partners/Influencers** – Dan Pennington, Town Engineer and Planning Department staff.

**Next Steps** –

Identify specific geographic area in Town center to audit for handicap parking.

Conduct Audit and work with town to develop a plan to increase handicap spaces if needed.

**Two-Year Horizon Goals** –

Begin advocacy efforts on possible policy changes based on audit findings.

**Goal # 3** *Support a formal town sponsored campaign for on-road safe biking and the implementation of the town's Bicycle Master Plan.*

**Action Step:** Expand on and off-road bicycling options.

**Additional Partners/Influencers** – Traffic unit of the police

**Next Steps** –

Set up meeting with Mike Magrey and Dan Pennington.

Continue to support Bike Walk Glastonbury and the town's Bicycle Master Plan.

**Two-Year Horizon Goals** – Assess possibility of the town sponsoring a Cycling without Age Trishaw Bike initiative.

The group agreed to meet at least once in the summer and once in the fall. Patti will reach out to discuss scheduling those meetings.

## **6. Process for Moving the Initiative Forward**

The group decided to meet twice a year with sub-groups meeting on separate domains as needed.

## **7. Informing the Public**

The Community meeting will be scheduled at the Riverfront Community Center on Thursday October 20<sup>th</sup> with the 27<sup>th</sup> as a back-up date.

The group will reach out to Kathryn Paquette, the town's Marketing and Communication Specialist for assistance in marketing the initiative and keeping the public updated on progress.

## **8. Other**

None

## **9. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

