

COMMISSION ON AGING

September 12, 2022

Present: Gayle Kataja, Denise Weeks, Susan Pearlman, Jennifer DiSette, Phil Markuszka, Beth Hillson

Liaisons Present: Lisa Zerio, Director of Parks and Recreation
Patti White, Senior Services Program Supervisor

Meeting called to order at 5:35 p.m.

Public Speaks: Francine Jowdy, Kathy Viani and Thelma Cirilli spoke at the meeting about a concern regarding a problem that they were experiencing with reading the Citizen newspaper. The stated that they and other older residents with vision impairments were having trouble reading the paper due to the small font size. They also said that they had reached out to the newspaper to request that it publish their paper online as well, so that people could enlarge the font and be able to read the publication and stay connected to the community. They are seeking support from the Commission.

Members of the Commission expressed support for their concerns and Lisa Zerio stated that she would call the Publisher of the Citizen and find out what might be possible to improve the situation. Lisa will report back at the next COA meeting on October 3.

MINUTES:

Minutes of the meetings held on June 6 & 27, 2022 were accepted as written.

COMMUNICATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: None

LIAISON REPORTS: Gayle reported that the local AARP chapter would be looking into recommending a representative from their group to serve as a liaison to the Commission.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS: Gayle thanked the staff for their reports and there were no questions raised.

OLD BUSINESS:

Age-Friendly Community Initiative:

The group discussed the outcomes of the June 27th joint meeting of the Commission on Aging and Age-Friendly Core Leadership Team. Three subcommittee reports were given on the three

priority Domains of Livability: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings, Transportation and Housing. Highlighted items included:

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings:

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.

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 have been posted around the town parks and trails this summer.

3. 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 Farms Market to become involved in this effort.

4.. 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.

5.. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

Transportation:

1. Planning is underway to begin a piloted fixed route transportation program to and from high density apartment/condo complexes and shopping areas and medical complexes in town.
2. The Transportation subcommittee is meeting with Dan Pennington, Town Engineer to assess both the quantity and location of handicap parking spaces in the Town Center area. The area is bordered by Welles street on the north side, New London Turnpike on the East Side, Rankin Street on the South side and Main Street on the West Side. Advocacy efforts to remedy any need for additional spaces or changes in location may occur once the research is complete.

3. Dan Pennington is assisting the transportation sub-committee with their efforts to improve pedestrian and bike safety measures in town. Dan is putting together criteria that might be used to determine the type and location of where flashing warning lights could be placed.

Housing:

1 –Alliances are being formed with other town influencers involved with affordable housing and zoning related changes that allow for sharing of goals and resources. For example: Town Council, Town Planning and Zoning, Affordable Housing Task Force, and the Building Zone Regulations Working Group.

2 – Information is being shared on AARP Livability Index criteria related to housing in an effort to improve factors driving our housing livability score.

Criteria include:

- Emphasis on Universal Design metrics such as ground floor bathrooms, single step entrance, wide doors and hallways.
- Housing affordability and existence of state and local Housing Trust Funds
- Housing options and state manufactured mobile home laws.
- Housing affordability and state foreclosure protections
- Housing Options – State Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) support

3 – AARP Affordable Housing resources are being shared as they relate to Accessory Dwelling Units and related zoning rules with an eye to simplifying the approval process and encouraging ADUs as one way to address the need for affordable housing.

4 –Research is being shared on Open Communities Alliance (OCA) which provides basic information on zoning process and resources to compare town ordinances with those of other towns.

5 –Efforts are underway to, explore the national [Housing Trust Fund Project website](#) to learn from the experiences of other towns and municipalities.

October 20th Community Conversation:

The group discussed plans for the event which will take place at 6pm at the Riverfront Community Center. Jennifer DiSette will chair the meeting and the group will break up into small groups to discuss the progress made on the three priority domains thus far and offer input on how to move forward. Lisa will check with the town IT department to determine if the meeting can be streamed. Staff will provide refreshments and the members agreed to wear their Age-Friendly shirts to the event. Plans for the event will be further defined at the COA October 3rd meeting.

Senior Center Reaccreditation

Patti White briefly reviewed a proposed timeline for the process and the plans to conduct a community survey. The group expressed support for the plan as follows:

- **September-October 2022**
 - Identify and Recruit Self-Assessment Committee Members
 - Disseminate Materials on Process and Standards
 - Develop Community Survey Draft/Process

- **November-January 2022/2023**
 - Joint COA/Self-Assessment Committee Meetings held: November 7th , December 5th, January 9 (Review (9) Standards)
 - Conduct/Tally/Analyze Survey
 - Compile Standard Lists and information obtained

- **February-March 2023**
 - Prepare submission of Application
 - Submit Application

- **April-June 2023**
 - Application reviewed by NISC

- **July 2023**
 - Reaccreditation Obtained

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Accessibility to Town Athletic Fields**

Denise Weeks suggested that the group advocate with the Board of Education to improve handicap accessibility to Glastonbury High School fields.

Lisa Zerio informed the members that the town is aware of the issue and efforts were underway to improve the situation.

- **Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance**

Denise Weeks recommended that the group support the Building Zone Regulations Working Group's proposed Inclusionary Zoning changes.

The members agreed that it would be best to work with the town's planning staff to advocate for this zoning change.

- **Oak Tree on Tryon Street**

Lisa informed the group that efforts are underway to both beautify and protect the space around the tree to ensure its continued good health.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm.

