

MINUTES

Council on Aging Age Friendly Committee

January 30, 2020

Senior Center 230 Webster St., Marshfield, Ma 02050

ATTENDANCE: Marilee Comerford, Carol Hamilton Maureen Rosenberg, Maureen Saunders and Barbara Van Houten.

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 10:02 am

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: There were no previous minutes as this was the first meeting.

DISCUSSION: Marilee led the discussion and explained the history and chronology of the Dementia Friendly Marshfield Committee thus far. Marilee brought a sample pamphlet from the Dementia Friendly Committee. She discussed the make-up and accomplishments of the committee and talked about the relationship between the Dementia Friendly Movement and the Age Friendly Emerging Community movement. The Dementia Friendly Committee meets the last Tuesday of every other month at 1:00. AARP has been promoting the Age Friendly Movement for some time and has developed 8 domains. There is detailed information about each domain on their website.

Marilee is piloting a brain gym activity twice a month starting in February it will take place before lunch from 11:15 to 11:45 and will include word games, puzzles and other activities. Marilee is hoping to recruit a few volunteers to help lead the activity. Marilee also took the UCLA memory training course through MCOA. The Council on Aging has also continued to offer the Memory Café and more recently planning a “train the trainer” session with local businesses. We have also trained town hall employees, public safety, and COA staff and volunteers on identifying, recognizing and dealing with people with dementia and Alzheimer's disease. It is the goal of the training to improve the lives of people living with dementia and Alzheimer's.

Marilee has put together a notebook with each domain and has started to add documents that pertain to each area which she went over with the committee.

Domain # 1 - Creating Parks and Public Spaces for People of all Ages:

For example, the Chamber of Commerce has been working on walkability in the town which fits under this domain. For each category we should think about what is being done or what we would like to change or work on. What are other people or groups doing regarding making the parks and public spaces more livable? The COA had the 2nd annual “Go for Life Walk” at Harbor Park. This event helped to demonstrate the walkability of the town. The COA also has a walking group that travels to various trails, parks and beaches in town. The COA is in the process of creating an outdoor recreation area that is for the community and is age friendly. The Beach Department has put down mats to make the beaches more accessible and has applied for a grant/funding for special handicapped beach chairs.

The idea is to update the town periodically on what steps we are taking to make this a more livable community. We could develop a brochure and a logo if we wanted. This would be a promotional tool to

engage other individuals, groups or organizations. It would help to brand our efforts and we could interface with the dementia friendly movement.

Domain 2 - Transportation

Under this section we have a COA Bus schedule and a Gatra Schedule. We also have a new transportation brochure that needs to be put in the book. This is an overview of all the local transportation options. We also offer an AARP Driver Safety program a couple times a year at the Senior Center. Should we talk with the high school about their driver education program? We should also talk with the safety officer about transportation issues in our town. Issues such as traffic lights or lack of them, speed bumps, cross walks and signage are all related issues. The Building department, Planning Department, and DPW are some of the town departments that may play a role in this domain.

Domain 3 - Housing

We need to include a list of senior housing complexes in the book. One of the goals of this domain would be to help people age in place. Being age friendly under the housing category could mean help at home, home repairs, affordability, creating more accessible units or modifying units. Housing managers should be part of the discussion and so should the Elected Officials such as Senators, Reps and Congressmen. A joint meeting of housing manager's public officials and COA's would be useful. Finding out what the wait lists are for various housing complexes would help to determine the need. What is the regulation in Marshfield regarding accessory apartments? Could restrictions be lifted to allow for this type of housing and in turn would it create additional and or alternative housing? Some of these questions might be related to regulations in the building and planning departments.

Domain 4 - Social Participation

The Senior Center provides many opportunities for social participation such as for Lifelong Learning and many other activities. There are also many other departments like the Library and Recreation Department that also offer those opportunities through their activities.

Domain 5 - Respect and Social Inclusion

Social inclusion means that we are trying to reach out to many diverse groups in our community. One example would be to hold an LGBT event or offer a group. An inclusive activity could mean reaching out to a person or group from a different culture, religion or different language. We could address social inclusion issues through a letter to the editor. The Marshfield Council on Aging had Bob Lindscott, from the Fenway Institute come and shows the Gen Silent Film and do an update on events since the film was first released over 10 years ago. This film illustrated the LGBT community and the difficulties they had as they aged. Currently the COA is working with other COA's on a Gay Pride event in June of 2020. The COA's have chosen to take a regional approach in order to offer this service. We are also working with Old Colony Elder Services on this project.

Domain 6 - Work and Civic Engagement

The Council on Aging offers the "50 Plus Job Seekers Networking Group". The work portion could relate to helping elders seek employment. There could also be age friendly training to potential employers. How can we connect elders to age friendly businesses? Employers can get the designation of being "certified age friendly" but we are not sure how many businesses have taken advantage of this training. Another part of this domain is Civic Engagement. The Council on Aging has a strong volunteer program but is always trying to advertise and recruit volunteers. A new software program and website called Club Express are being developed in order to promote and attract more volunteers. Volunteers will sign up electronically for assignments once enrolled in this program.

Domain 7 - Communications and Information

We have been collaborating with TIC radio on a support group and dispersing information to those that are sight impaired. This is in coordination with WATD radio which we also use to promote our activities. The local Mariner is not as well read or distributed as it used to be. The online information from the Mariner is limited so it is not going to reach as many people as we would like. The other sources of getting out information are social media, local cable television, South Shore Living Magazine or South Shore News. We should also do more press releases to insure the information gets out. The COA has a website, a Facebook page and the newsletter which are effective ways to get the word out. Marketing is something that the COA is working to improve.

Domain 8 - Community and Health Services

Judy Caldas, Social Service Coordinator would be a great resource for this category. How do we make a more viable connection to some of the health care and medical facilities and organizations? "Marshfield Helping Marshfield" was a grouping of local organizations and town departments that met twice per year to identify and discuss social service issues. They were also going to update a resource book of local organizations originally completed by the Rotary Club. Marshfield Helping Marshfield are connected to Sowing Seeds have not met for quite some time. The COA will contact Sowing Seeds to check on the status of the group. Simple Gesture is another organization that helps collect food for the food pantry. Their effort has increased over time.

Conclusion: The Age Friendly Committee will think about the Domains and what documents to add to the book. The committee will also consider priorities within the domains and possible next steps. The committee acknowledged that the "Age Friendly Designation" is a multi-year process and will take time.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting is scheduled for May 7, 2020 @ 10:00 am.

ADJOURNMENT The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 am

Respectfully Submitted,
Carol Hamilton, Director Council on Aging