

TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON
COMMISSION ON AGING
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, APRIL 7, 2021
ZOOM

Minutes

Present: Chairperson Robert Atherton, Vice Chairperson Sue Greeno, Commission members, Eric Rosenberg, Bonnie Berkovich, Mariann Mankowski, Pat Hamill and Senior Center Director JoAnn Ewing

Not Present: Carol McLaughlin

Call to Order

Chairperson Atherton called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

Add Budget Discussion

Letter of Support

Change of meeting time

A motion was made by Ms. Berkovich to amend the agenda as outlined above. Vice Chair Greeno seconded the motion. (Voted 4-0)

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Dr. Rosenberg to amend the March 11, 2021 minutes as follows:

Discussion with Housing Authority Staff Regarding Possible Collaboration

The members discussed options for working with the East Hampton Housing Authority (EHHA) to better serve the needs of older adults living in town. A survey 4 years ago by the COA showed lack of affordable, accessible housing to be one of three top concerns of the growing older adult population. 90% of senior housing run by EHHA is not handicap accessible or accessible to ambulance stretchers. Four landlocked acres could possibly be developed. Affordable senior housing could be negotiated by the town to accompany large scale developments. The committee requested that the Chair invite town planning and zoning official Jeremy DeCarli to its next meeting, and explored closer support for the EHHA.

New Business

The members discussed resurrecting the Round Table committee of 7 adjacent towns' Commissions on Aging. The Round Table encouraged improved programs through learning from each other and invited guests at quarterly meetings. The COA discussed holding the first meeting to kick off a new round of rotating meetings.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Greeno. Voted (5-0)

Public Comment

Sheryl Dougherty was in audience representing the Housing Authority.

Senior Services Report

Ms. Ewing reported the phone calls for Vaccine Clinics has levelled out. An occasional person will call to inquire and we refer them to the VAMS registration system unless it is apparent they need help getting registered. We will keep a wait list and forward that to Chatham Health District (CHD). CHD will contact and upload the information into VAMS. That is working very well. Ms. Ewing reported on the continued activities at the Senior Center, virtually. The Center will not introduce indoor group activities until there is approval from CHD. Outdoor activity will be offered at the end of April, yoga with masks. Hopefully with better weather we will provide more outdoor programming. The center purchased individual tables to be use outdoors to promote safe distance and successful programming. Chairperson Atherton shared his volunteering experience at the Senior Center. He is updating computer files to reflect correct cell phone numbers. He is impressed with the quality of work the staff are doing during that time and thanked them for their due diligence.

Old Business

Continuation of Housing Authority Discussion

Dr. Rosenberg met with the Director of the East Hampton Housing Authority, Jodi Brazal. She indicated there is a need to increase housing for older adults. She noted at present time the base rate for rentals of \$450.00/month is out of reach for many, particularly women, baby boomers, whose income is low. Present facilities are not adequate in regards to accessibility, not affordable, only 17 'RAP' apartments available. the rest are at fair market rental. Not a 501-C Hard to do fund-raising. EHHA pays \$7,000 taxes to the Town of East Hampton. She supports housing for older adults to benefit the entire town.

Change of meeting time

Vice Chair Greeno asked about last meeting and meeting time change. Chairperson Atherton said yes, extending the meeting time to 5:30pm. Vice Chair Greeno is unable to stay until 5:30 due to a prior commitment. Commissioners agreed to meet 4:00-5:15pm.

Letter of Support-tabled

New Business

Review Meeting with Planning and Zoning Official

Dr. Rosenberg and Ms. Berkovich met with the Town Planner, Jeremy DeCarli. Dr. Rosenberg reported that he found out the Housing process has many moving parts and is complicated. Demographics has changed.

1. People are significantly older.
2. New types of housing for Older Adults
 - a. Accessory Units ATU-(900 square ft) small separate units 2bdrm or less
 - b. Temporary HealthCare units (THC) Prefab units to purchase or rent. Return or sell when no longer needed. Allowed by special permit
3. Water access is problematic
 - a. More difficult to work with developers

4. Discussion Housing needs survey.

Vice Chair Greeno sees the need for education to the survey need prior to survey. She is also in favor of a non-scientific approach with the survey. A need for volunteers to help those without computers, use of Survey Monkey. Chairperson Atherton asked if this is the direction COA wants to go in? General consensus is yes, and Ms. Mankowski offered to assist in the development of a survey in mid-May. Survey possibility to look like after demographics, then choice of Housing/Healthcare/Transportation. Dr. Rosenberg will begin a draft survey.

Discussion of Senator Rockefeller Lecture

People who attended the lecture were impressed by the information shared. Vice Chair Greeno will check to see if the recording will be available for review.

Report on use of COA funds

Chairperson Atherton reported he received the go ahead to use future funds for mini-grants from Town Manager and Finance Director.

Senior Center Handbook Review - tabled

Budget - tabled

Housing Authority Report

Tabled due to lack of time

Public Comment

None

Adjournment

A motion was made by Ms. Berkovich, seconded by Ms. Mankowski to adjourn the meeting at 5:20 pm. Voted (5-0)

Respectfully submitted,

Jo Ann H. Ewing
Senior Service Coordinator