

**MINUTES**  
**Committee on Elderly and Needy Citizens**  
**Tuesday, March 22, 2022, 8:30 a.m.**

The Committee on Elderly and Needy Citizens met on Tuesday, March 22, 2022, at Bel Air United Methodist Church.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Fran Johnson, Chair  
Greg LaCour, Bel Air United Methodist Church  
Len Parrish, Director, Community & Economic  
Development, Harford County Government

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

L. Jesse Bane, Town Administrator  
Chip Carter, LEAD Program  
Paula Etting, Town Commissioner  
Rowan Glidden, Senior Planner  
Rev. Matthew Gullion, Oak Grove Baptist Church  
Sue Niewenhaus, Town Resident  
Jane Sudbrink, Recording Secretary

**ABSENT:**

Debra Hanley, Brightview Senior Living  
Peggy Mannone, Town Resident  
Karen Winkowski, Administrator, Harford County Office on  
Aging

**I. Call to Order – Roll Call**

Ms. Johnson called the meeting to order at 8:36 a.m.

**II. Meeting Minutes – February 1, 2022**

Ms. Johnson asked to add an update to the agenda from Mr. Glidden regarding Homestead-Wakefield Elementary. No members had corrections or additions to the minutes, so Ms. Niewenhaus moved to accept the minutes, and Mr. Gullion seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

**III. LEAD Presentation**

Mr. Carter presented on the LEAD program in the police department. He said that it is a nationally recognized program for low-level violators who grapple with addictions, mental illness, homelessness, etc. Rather than charge these citizens and take them to court, the program works to find services for them, such as provision of medicines, mental health counseling, and addiction treatment. In Bel Air, the LEAD program partners with the county through the health department, the office of drug control policy, and the office on aging. Mr. Carter noted that even those citizens who have extensive criminal histories may benefit from this program. When a police officer works with a citizen through LEAD, this person can be referred to Springboard Community Services where there are social workers and case managers on staff to direct this person to the correct agency. Unfortunately, the service is not available on weekends. Ms. Johnson asked about funding and history. Mr. Carter said the state funds Springboard through a grant. Mr. Gullion said the LEAD program had a soft launch in August 2020 with social

referrals. Since then, more officers have been trained, particularly in management of community issues. Ms. Johnson asked about the involvement of the court system in this program. Mr. Carter said that Harford County judges have been strong supporters. Mr. Gullion further added that before the LEAD program was started in Bel Air, the police made it a practice to do followup after opioid overdoses and work with that person to get into treatment. This resulted in a 37% reduction in overdoses in the town. The state government took notice, and asked Bel Air to initiate the LEAD program, along with the town of Westminster. Mr. Carter said other municipalities have taken notice of Bel Air's success and may want to institute the program as well.

Mr. Carter said the program maintains a roster of clients via personal identification photos. Mr. Carter provided moving stories regarding addiction, poverty, and the needy. In particular, he noted the difficulty in getting people to accept help. Mr. LeCour asked how this committee can interact with LEAD. Ms. Johnson stated that the most this committee can do is go to leaders in the local government as representatives of the elderly and needy and bring attention to their needs and endorse programs that provide the necessary services. Mr. Bane reminded the group that Mr. Carter was making a presentation to introduce LEAD to the committee and explain what it offers and what resources are available.

#### **IV. Fran Johnson – Report to Commissioners**

Ms. Johnson stated that the draft presentation she sent to committee members was what she presented to the town commissioners. She summarized her presentation, including that she suggested funding for a part-time position in the town's economic development department. This position would involve coordination of the potential village movement, oversight of organizations that are providing for the elderly and needy, and work with volunteers. This position would assist the office on aging. She also suggested bringing back a paper version of the Bel Air Bond for the elderly. On behalf of the commissioners, Ms. Etting stated that the primary challenge is the budget. The commissioners are all in support of providing for the elderly and needy. Mr. Bane again reminded the group that this committee's mandate is to make recommendations only. Ms. Johnson provided the example that this committee can identify a need, determine the group or organization that is fulfilling this need, and recommend that money and staff be directed to this entity. Mr. Bane noted that the town does not have an office on aging, and it should not be looking to the county to provide these services.

#### **V. Committee Appointments**

Mr. Bane said that it is too early to discuss these appointments, and this topic will be taken up at a future meeting.

#### **VI. Senior Healthcare Resources**

Mr. Bane reminded members about the nonprofit group that wants to have a link on the town's website. Because he wanted to have Ms. Winkowski's input and she was not present, Mr. Bane elected to discuss this issue at the next meeting. He passed out an email from Ms. Winkowski to members, which detailed food delivery updates, a Medicare information newsletter, and the Decisions That Determine Your Destiny program.

## **VII. Harford County Consolidated Plan**

Mr. Bane said that in last month's meeting, Ms. Richardson, Office of Community and Economic Development, offered to check if there is a volunteer coordinator on staff who could assist in getting out information to seniors. Mr. Parrish said he had not spoken to Ms. Richardson regarding this request. He said that the Department of Community Services provides coordination of volunteer services, and a website is being created to consolidate this information.

## **VIII. Senior Housing and Assisted Living Facilities**

Mr. Bane handed out two lists, one that listed senior housing locations and the other assisted living facilities in Bel Air and the surrounding area. He noted that nearly all senior housing is managed by MRA Property Management. He also noted that this organization provides maintenance management services only and no direct physical help for the residents. Mr. LeCour offered to contact these senior housing facilities, through an introductory letter first, to determine how best to get information to the residents. Mr. Bane offered to assist Mr. LeCour.

## **IX. Outdoor Exercise Equipment**

Mr. Bane said the town is moving toward purchasing exercise equipment for seniors. The commissioners are in support of this concept, and there have been preliminary discussions. Ms. Johnson asked the committee if they, too, were in support of this equipment, and, if so, where best to place it. The exercise equipment could be placed in town parks or in senior housing common areas. After discussion, members determined that it would be best to place this equipment where the seniors are living. This equipment is geared to a certain population, it is expensive, and there are liability issues. Ms. Johnson said she would be willing to present this idea to the commissioners. She said she would be willing to go in front of the board once a month with needs and endorsements if necessary.

## **X. 2020 Census Update**

Mr. Glidden said that in the next few weeks he will attend a conference call with the Maryland Department of Planning. In that call, he will receive a status report on the census, and will then provide more information at the next meeting. He is expecting a release of additional data in June 2022.

## **XI. Other Business**

Mr. Glidden presented on the Homestead-Wakefield Elementary School project. Beginning in July/August 2022 HCPS will start to redevelop this site. He presented a district map that showed the attendance area of the elementary school. He also presented a map that showed the current campus and then he described the demolition and rebuilding phases of the school. Modularity will be put in use while the Wakefield building is demolished and rebuilt into a two-story structure. Afterward, the Homestead building will be demolished and new playing fields will be installed. He stated that the concern for the town was represented in the shaded area on the map, the area northeast of route 924. Since 1959, there has been discussion regarding the creation of a road that would connect East and West MacPhail Roads. Mr. Glidden touched on how a drive-through would increase the welfare and safety of residents who now have to drive around this area. For the interests of this committee, seniors would gain easier access to the hospital, the DMV, and the MacFaul Center. Drivetime for ambulances to the hospital would decrease by 1 to 3 minutes. Furthermore, there are currently only two ways in and

out of this campus. The school population will increase from 2,200 students to 2,400 students, and Mr. Glidden strongly felt that a third way in and out of the campus will be needed. Mr. Glidden said that he would press the issue at a meeting on April 7. Mr. Glidden stated that though there has not been polling of the community, the through road is part of the comprehensive master plan. He also reminded the committee that this area is composed of parkland as well as the school and playing fields, and that the property is there for the public to use. Mr. Bane said that he felt confident that Cornell Brown and Sean Bulson, HCPS, were amenable to this direction. Ms. Johnson put the item out to the committee for feedback and possible support. After some discussion, the committee agreed to support the road proposal.

#### **XII. Next Meeting Date – May 24, 2022**

Mr. Bane corrected the agenda and changed the meeting date from April 19, 2022, to May 24, 2022, to abide by the decision to have bi-monthly meetings.

Mr. Bane set a goal for the committee. AARP conducted a nationwide ranking of municipalities based on what that municipality provides for seniors. Out of a total of 100 points, Bel Air received 50 points, so the town is half way there.

#### **XIII. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 10:11 a.m.