

MINUTES
Committee on Elderly and Needy Citizens
Tuesday, May 24, 2022, 8:30 a.m.

The Committee on Elderly and Needy Citizens met on Tuesday, May 24, 2022, at Bel Air United Methodist Church.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Fran Johnson, Chair
Debra Hanley, Brightview Senior Living
Greg LaCour, Bel Air United Methodist Church

IN ATTENDANCE: L. Jesse Bane, Town Administrator
Paula Etting, Town Commissioner
Rowan Glidden, Senior Planner
Charles Moore, Chief of Police
Sue Niewenhous, Town Resident
Jane Sudbrink, Recording Secretary
Karen Winkowski, Administrator, Harford County Office on Aging

ABSENT: Len Parrish, Director, Community & Economic Development, Harford County Government
Peggy Mannone, Town Resident

I. Call to Order – Roll Call

Ms. Johnson called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

II. Meeting Minutes – March 22, 2022

Ms. Niewenhous asked that the minutes be revised to reflect that she was present at the March meeting. Ms. Niewenhous motioned to accept the minutes with this revision. Ms. Hanley seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

III. Member Resignation/Vacancy

Mr. Bane announced that Peggy Mannone resigned from the committee, leaving a vacancy. Mr. Bane said that if he does not get any candidates expressing interest, he will make inquiries. Once he receives applications, he will share them with committee members before presenting the applicant to the town board. Ms. Johnson asked to receive this information before the committee's next meeting in July. Mr. Bane also noted that this will be his last meeting due to his impending retirement.

IV. Report – Senior Healthcare Resources

Mr. Bane asked Ms. Winkowski for her feedback on the healthcare nonprofit that wants to have a link on the town's website. Ms. Winkowski said she researched this organization via the resource Maryland Access Point, a statewide website that provides information on health and support services. She also asked her Medicare contact person about this organization. Ms. Winkowski likened this organization to

a headhunter, wherein it has a contract with providers to draw people to their healthcare plans. These plans may not provide the necessary services they advertise. Ms. Winkowski said the best option would be to go to Maryland Access Point. Mr. Bane said he gets numerous emails from organizations that want to post on the town's website. Mr. Bane decided that going forward he would say that it is town policy to not provide links on the town's website.

Ms. Winkowski discussed plans for a quarterly newsletter for the town. Currently, the Office on Aging posts a quarterly newsletter with Medicare information online, however many people are still not active online. Consequently, a pilot program has launched wherein a condensed, two-page paper newsletter will be distributed quarterly in town. Information on the senior centers will be printed on the back page. Medicare information will comprise the rest of the newsletter. Ms. Johnson said signup for this newsletter would be a better option to be posted on the town's website. Mr. Bane told Ms. Winkowski to contact Patti Parker, who maintains the town's website.

Ms. Winkowski also briefly described Harford G.A.I.N., Harford Geriatric Assistance and Information Network. This organization meets monthly and is comprised of all types of senior service providers. It provides networking opportunities, has education presentations, and conducts fundraising that is senior-related. It also sponsored a caregivers conference in the past, though that has been put on hold because of the pandemic. Ms. Hanley noted that the website is being overhauled and is already showing signs of improvement. Ms. Johnson said that this website is important because many people do not know where to go when they are looking for resources.

V. Status Report – Outdoor Exercise Equipment

Mr. Bane said that much work still needs to be done to determine whether the town can provide this equipment. Mr. Bane said he will inform his successor as to the status. A report should be prepared outlining the costs and contact should be made with senior housing to see if there is an interest. A holistic program should be put together that does not just include equipment. The commissioners were concerned about liability and whether seniors, with their different abilities, would be able to use the equipment. Members discussed possible locations of the equipment (Shamrock and Plumtree Parks) and whether walking areas would be a lower-cost, less liable option. Mr. Bane said the concern is if we make the investment, put in the equipment with available grant money, and assume the liability, will the facilities even be used. More time and effort will need to be put into this proposal.

VI. 2020 Census Update

Mr. Glidden reported that the next scheduled release of data will be in June, so he expects to provide more information at July's meeting.

VII. Future Staff Liaison Position

Mr. Bane said that it will be up to his successor whether this person will stay on as the staff liaison for this committee or whether another staff person will be designated. Mr. Bane noted that when he started as administrator, this committee was not active, so he committed to get it back up and running. He has appreciated his experience on this committee, as well as the cooperation and assistance from members. This committee has potential, and he expressed hope that whoever follows him will appreciate its value.

VIII. Other Business

A. Village Movement

Ms. Johnson stated that a future activity for this committee should be the implementation of the Village Movement. She said the program would be good for everyone, not just seniors. It will be difficult to get started and to keep going, but it is important for the town. She asked Mr. Bane to provide links to information on the Village Movement, so that members can review it and be prepared for discussion at the next meeting. She would like to make the Village Movement her next recommendation to the commissioners. Ms. Johnson said that in order to set up the movement in town, it would have to be its own nonprofit entity similar to the Bel Air Town Alliance and Rockfield Manor. It would need its own money, a coordinator, and volunteers. She noted that the movement is more a one-on-one service as compared to the services provided by the Office on Aging. She noted for Ms. Winkowski that this service is not meant to replace but rather to support her office. Mr. Bane said that he will also send links to members of other municipalities in Maryland that already have the Village Movement.

B. Senior Housing Contacts

Ms. Johnson asked Mr. LeCour if he had any luck contacting senior housing facilities. He said that he only received formulaic replies that his information would be relayed to the proper person and place. He agreed with Ms. Winkowski to mutually share their contact information because contacting these facilities is not always an easy process.

C. Food Resources and the Loan Closet

Ms. Winkowski described a possible new program in Harford County through World Central Kitchen Direct. The program would involve a partnership with two to three restaurants. Participants would order food from these restaurants through a phone app and delivery would be provided by DoorDash. World Central Kitchen would handle the administration. Ms. Winkowski said other organizations like schools could also benefit from this program.

Ms. Winkowski also described her office's loan closet, which provides emergency supplies for short-term needs. It is an immediate answer in a crisis situation. The ultimate goal is to remove people from a crisis situation and assess for a solution to the problem based on income and need. Mr. Bane noted that we tend not to pay attention to the older population's needs, which also include emergency situations like suicide.

D. Homestead-Wakefield Elementary School Update

Mr. Glidden reported that the Board of Education filed a petition for review, meaning that the conflict will now be settled in court by a judge. Currently, we are at a stalemate.

IX. Next Meeting Date – July 26, 2022, 8:30 a.m.

X. Adjournment

Everyone thanked Mr. Bane for his service to the town. The meeting adjourned at 9:34 a.m.