

Minutes of the Age Friendly Community Committee
February 10, 2016

Present: **Frank Caro, Nancy Daly, Roberta Winitzer, Henry Winkelman, Chris Chanyasulkip, Saralynn Allaire, Shirley Selhub, and Pam Zelnick; Others Present: Andrew Pappasturgeon, Peter Ditto, Kevin Johnson, and Daniel Martin**

The meeting commenced at 9:30 A.M. in Room 400 of Town Hall.

Saralynn Allaire took notes for the meeting.

The Minutes for January 6, 2016 were approved as amended unanimously.

The Department of Public Works Commissioner and other personnel had been invited to this meeting to discuss pedestrian-related issues. The first was use of mechanisms to delay the pedestrian phase of traffic signals to accommodate slower walkers. The possibility of a pilot project to test such a mechanism in the north Harvard St. area was raised. The technical difficulties of doing this were discussed; the lights on Beacon St., and probably on Harvard St., are synchronized and any delay would disrupt the pattern. It was suggested that this idea was within the purview of Complete Streets policy drafters.

Discussions have been going on with Peter Ditto about having the Coolidge Corner area become a pedestrian zone. This has been moving forward.

Lastly, there was extensive discussion about the placement of benches on sidewalks. In addition to the commercial areas, benches are needed on major streets, e.g., Beacon St., between commercial areas to facilitate walking. Some benches already placed on Beacon St. in the Coolidge Corner area have disappeared. This is most likely due to damage from snow plows. This is a major issue with placement. The possibility of benches being removed seasonally was suggested and discussed. This requires personnel time, and also there is evidence that benches are used in the winter. Need for fundraising for benches from local merchants was raised, but thought not needed presently. Another placement issue is that benches, as well as bicycle racks and tree well decoration, can block access to the passenger side of parked cars by persons using wheelchairs, baby carriages, etc. DPW has created a map of current bench placement. It was thought that suitable areas could be identified for additional placement.

Two activities listed in the Age Friendly Cities project proposal that have not been accomplished were then discussed. The first is accessory dwelling issues. A warrant article on this was not passed by Town meeting. The article could be re-formulated and support for it sought from the Housing Advisory Board. However, HAB has not shown interest in the idea. A 5 year permit type of plan was discussed. The town of Hopkinton, MA has approved an accessory dwelling program along this line. Frank Caro will obtain the bylaws for this program and send them to Nancy Daly. Written information about home sharing that was developed is not being used much. Possible reasons for the evident reluctance of town residents to address this issue were discussed and include concerns about possible long term implications and desire

to keep current illegal practices secret. The second unfinished activity was creation of a pedestrian committee. Pedestrian issues have been seen as a part of the purview of various committees, but there is now more recognition of the need for a separate committee for this. Discussion centered on where such a committee would be organizationally based, e.g., a Selectmen's Committee or a subcommittee under the Transportation Board. Frank Caro will get people together to discuss placement further.

BIG: Because scheduling has been difficult for the BIG programs, it has been decided to schedule them every other month, rather than monthly. Chris has been very helpful to the BIG programs. The next program will air on Thursday February 18 and is on library resources for seniors. The program after that will air in April.

Housing: There is some positive movement on the idea of senior housing over parking lots. There will be more discussion at the Match meeting.

Health: Chris gave out flyers about a walk in opposition to sexual assault and gender violence that will be held on April 3rd. She reported that flu season is occurring now and that help is available to facilitate enrolment into various benefit programs.

Library: The process of the re-development of the Coolidge Corner library is underway; it will take 7-8 years. An internet technology expert is available to help patrons better utilize internet resources. The annual fundraising gala will be held on April 30th at the Putterham Library in part to celebrate the renewal of its adjacent garden. Roberta is looking for volunteers to participate in a focus group on how to enhance use of large print materials; it will be held in March.

Bocce update: An article published in the BCAN newsletter on bocce drew some interest. Frank is looking now or someone to organize and run a bocce program.

Saralynn suggested creating a checklist of things to consider when planning for benches and will draft a proposal.

The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday March 8, 2016 at 10:00 AM. The draft of Age Friendly Cities project 2014-2015 accomplishments will be reviewed in detail.