

Northampton Council on Aging Meeting Minutes DRAFT 2/14/19

At the Northampton Senior Center, 67 Conz Street, Northampton

Present: Gerriann Butler, Kathie Bredin, Deborah Epstein, Michael Ford, Casey Fowler, Dennis Helmus, Jeanne Henry Hoose, Cynthia Langley, Donna Park, Kathy Pekala Service, Jean Petty, Marie Westburg, Kim Park.

Excused: Mary Lastowski, Bob Montague

Absent: Mark NeJame

- Gerriann Butler called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM.

Public Session – There were five people from the Tap Class present to comment on the floor in the Activity Room. They handed out their talking points to the Council and made a presentation. The Council took it under advisement.

Review and approval of minutes from the previous meeting

- A motion was made by Dennis Helmus and seconded by Cindy Langley, to approve the 1/10/19 minutes as written. The minutes were unanimously approved as written.

Announcements: Bob Montague resigned from the Council. Council members were asked to refer potential members to the Mayor's Office or apply online to be a member.

Old Business

1. **Policy on guests under 55:** It was discussed that the Senior Center will have events that are open to the public or intergenerational activities. However, all programming is for those 55 and up. We do have some programs or activities that are for other age groups like Brown Bag, PVTa, etc., but these are specific programs. Otherwise, outside of these programs, a person under the age of 55 can be permitted to be at the senior center **only** if they are a care-provider for the senior. It is important for people to understand service limits. The Code of Conduct states very clearly our mission and the ages we serve. One suggestion included having visitor passes or badges with guests signing in, much like happens in the public schools. Marie reminded members that our funding, both from the City such as the community Development Block Grants (CDBG), and from the State is specifically for seniors.
2. **Golden Age Meal Tax Exemption:** Marie said they require that we have a Treasurer sign the application for this tax exemption. Marie will have the Financial Officer for the City sign this application.

New Business

1. **Increasing COA member visibility, introduction of COA members through Conz Street Chronicle articles, mechanisms for public feedback.:** Gerriann Butler and Dennis Helmus put an article in the Conz Street Chronicle to give seniors information on Council Members and how they can contact them through a new email, which goes to Gerriann. Dennis wanted to have information in the next few chronicles so the Council Members are introduced to the public. Cindy Langley suggested having a format to ask Council

members the same questions and then put the answers into the Chronicle. Cindy Langley and Dennis Helmus will coordinate this for the Council.

2. **COA Membership Orientation Packet Materials:** Dennis Helmus, Marie Westburg, Gerriann Butler and Kim Park worked on an orientation packet for new Council members specific to Northampton. The packet

was handed out to everyone. A suggestion was made to add a sheet about the Office of Elder Affairs. Dennis will send replacement pages about EOEAA.

3. **Assistant Director's Report: Volunteer Recruitment, Focus Group progress:** Kim Park said there was an Arts & Culture focus group on Wednesday Jan. 9th at 1pm. She has added six or seven new volunteers. There is currently a need for a dispatch volunteer. The bistro and coffee shop need more volunteers and substitutes as well. All reception blocks are filled. The Arts and Culture group will be meeting again on Wednesday, March 6th. The movie committee has eight members also. They meet the last Thursday of every month at

12:30. They are picking the movies we show. They will be having discussion groups on some movies; e.g., there will be two showings of “A Star is Born” which will be followed by a discussion of the differences in the two versions. Kim is updating the volunteer manual and having trainings in the next few weeks.

- 4. Director’s Report: New programs and initiatives, Capital Improvement Request, etc.:**
1. The Mayor sent the capital improvement request to the City Council. They will vote on the 21st. There is a request for more technology and an architect to do a study of the use of space. Marie would like to have laptops for use here. Donna Park suggested asking some of the seniors to give suggestions about the lobby space.
 2. Marie had asked for more furniture for outside, but that did not get approved. It may be that Elder Vision can assist with this. This would enable seniors to have lunch or sit outside, etc. A request was made for higher toilets in the restrooms. Possibly an herb garden could be cultivated with bounty being used in cooking meals.
 3. We are adding a lot of new programming, so we are short on space. There will be many new classes in the Workshop such as silk scarf painting and other creative classes because of popularity.

Other Business

1. Northampton Neighbors is looking for a new site.
2. Marie provided information for the reason for the replacement (i.e., damage due to taps, etc.) and costs including the “refinishing” of the wood floor in the activity room which was severely damaged after its active use since building was opened. There was a research done on the additional flooring before ordering it. The instructor was informed and agreed to it. The senior center purchased Marley flooring through a company called Stage Step that is made for tap dancing. Kathie Bredin and Casey Fowler questioned whether it was the correct flooring. Safety issues were brought up. Possibilities were generated as this current location is temporary until a room is ready for holding the tap class. Marie also talked about installing the flooring in another temporary way so we can move it if it is determined that it needs to be moved in the future. Marie agreed to send the link to the company site and flooring purchased. Gerriann Butler and Dennis Helmus will respond to the patrons from the public session in writing.
3. Regarding meals, although those under 55 can purchase meals at \$7 (vs. \$3) it is only take-out meals, as all eating areas including the dining room are reserved seating for those over 55, meaning those under 55 are not included. Marie noted that there would be activities in the future which would be intergenerational and would be advertised as such.

Adjourning the meeting

Dennis Helmus made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Donna Park seconded it at 5:07 PM. The motion was unanimously approved.

- **Next NCOA Council Meeting:** Thursday, March 14th, 2019, at 3:30 at the Northampton Senior Center.

Respectfully submitted by _____

Linda R. DeMercurio