

Commission on Elder Affairs

Minutes of April 23, 2014

MEMBERS PRESENT: Robin Bahr Casey, Chair; Margaret Coffin; Thomas Cullinane; Theresa Eckstrom; Christopher Evans; Stephen Greenberg; Paul Johnson; Victor Ortiz; Gail Schuyler; Steven Smajkiewicz; Elaine Wrubel

MEMBERS ABSENT: Carolyn Grenier; Nicholas Kaltsas; Gail Smith; EXCUSED – Ursula Hanus

STAFF & GUESTS PRESENT: Amy Vogel Waters; Patty Hainsworth; Linda Wincek-Moore; City Manager Augustus; Ron Motta, Vice President of Friends of Worcester’s Senior Center

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. The Commission minutes of March 24, 2014 were approved as mailed. m/s/a The Senior Center Committee Report of 4/8/14, including a draft letter to the Friends of Worcester’s Senior Center, Inc., was approved as mailed. m/s/a

Robin Bahr Casey welcomed the City Manager and everyone introduced themselves.

The City Manager thanked members for serving on the Commission and for the invitation to attend today. He discussed his prior positive experience with the Senior Center and his concern for seniors and the neighborhood. Tom Cullinane asked about the status of the parking lot, the vacant wing of the building and the Anderson Building. The City Manager reported on his initial meeting with the new President of St. Vincent Hospital and his plans for follow-up. He stated that one idea would be for the City to become the owners of both the parking lot and the Anderson Building, as a bigger footprint may be attractive to developers interested in the vacant building for a use compatible with the Senior Center.

Amy reviewed the April report on goals and objectives, including: The State has awarded \$9,500 in Service Incentive Grant funding to the Senior Center for professional development and falls prevention; The Greater Worcester Community Foundation has awarded \$7,000 from the Fallon/OrNda Community Health Fund to continue support of the Evidence Based programs such as Strength & Balance training, Healthy Eating, Chronic Pain Management, Chronic Disease Self-Management, Your Health is Golden and Powerful Tools for Caregivers. Central Mass Agency on Aging continues to support the osteoporosis prevention program; The Elder Affairs FY 15 budget request and the status of the State COA line item-At this point, the City Manager apprised the Commission of the impact of state funding on FY’15 tax levy budget planning; Three focus groups (English/Vietnamese/Spanish) were organized for a group from UMass Lowell that is studying elders needs and how senior centers meet those needs; One part-time Senior Aide receptionist has gone on to another workplace, so the front desk is now covered by a part time temporary worker and a Senior Aide; The updated Senior Center Guidebook was distributed to members; Linda is being trained as a Master Trainer for the Matter of Balance program with the \$1500 fee waived; Student interns from Clark, Worc. State Univ., and Boston College who were very helpful will be leaving in May- Tom and Victor made suggestions about

maintaining continuity with student work; The Athena Active Physical Therapy will no longer be renting here because they couldn't get a license to operate; Lease renewals for 4 tenants are being worked on; Information and tours of the 4th floor have been given to city personnel looking at potential development; and, Various collaboration and marketing efforts were discussed.

Patty reported on programs, including the Volunteer Recognition, Earth Day clean up, Stand Against Racism event/mural, Polish Independence Day event at the Senior Center and a Polish flag raising at City Hall; The Walking Club kick-off; An intergenerational fire safety program will be held with Union Hill students in June; The Summer Concert Series is starting at the end of June; The Community Gardens and REC Mobile Market will be returning this summer. The Variety Show was very successful and Friends was thanked for the funding for the special programs this spring such as pottery, dancing, the chef, etc. Robin was thanked for her series, "Poetry is not a dirty word."

Linda reported on outreach efforts at the School of Pharmacy and Elder Care, transportation, the Senior Support Team, the Elder Abuse Roundtable "Bullying – It's Not Just for Kids" conference. She also shared a human interest story about a Senior Support Team referral. Commission members encouraged publicizing such stories.

Ron reported on the activities of the Friends, including Bingo continues to be successful; the trips coordinator will be retiring in the next few months and a new person has been appointed to learn how it works now and how to possibly grow it; and the new project to develop their own 12-page publication.

The next meeting was confirmed for Monday June 2nd and this meeting adjourned at 5:30 pm.
(m/s/a)