



Town of Swampscott

Select Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 22, 2020

Swampscott Senior Center, 200R Essex St. Swampscott, MA

MEMBERS PRESENT

Peter Spellios (Chair), Naomi Dreeben (Vice Chair), Donald Hause, Polly Titcomb, Laura Spathanas

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Sean Fitzgerald (Town Administrator), Allie Fiske (Assistant to the Town Administrator), Marzie Galazka (Director of Community Development), Ron Mendes (Assistant Town Administrator – Admin & Finance), Marilyn Hurwitz (Director, Senior Center)

Mr. Spellios called the Select Board meeting to order at 3:05pm.

Senior Center Director Marilyn Hurwitz introduced the staff of the Senior Center, the members of the Council on Aging, the Friends of the Senior Center, and the All Ages Committee.

Chairman Spellios provided a brief overview of the progress of the Town budget and the Town's investment in ensuring that the budget address a need for increased services for the aging community.

Marilyn Hurwitz provided an overview of the current Senior Center program. (ex. 13 exercise classes, 12 games and lectures, 6 hobby groups, lunch 5 days a week, etc.) Marilyn expressed that the current footprint of the Senior Center is not adequate for the seniors in the community. She emphasized the importance of collaboration between different groups all providing services.

Marilyn outlined several budget requests such as 4 full-time staff added to the budget, and a full-time bus driver operating five days a week. She also requested clarification on who is responsible for the grounds of the Senior Center, expressing that the shoveling and plowing around the Senior Center is problematic.

The Senior Center would like to expand services and have a gymnasium and exercise equipment. Marilyn expressed the need for day services for families dealing with dementia and Alzheimers. They would like to appeal to men by expanding their services and organizing their space with more activities directed at men.

Gina Bush, Outreach Coordinator at the Senior Center, commented that they would like to pilot new programs and have a volunteer coordinator. There could be the potential for doing this hand-in-hand with the Senior Abatement program. Gina stated that they need an improved food service and ideally a full-time chef. Chairmen Spellios stated that the Town needs to look into shared infrastructure such as kitchens.

Ann Quagrello (Administrative Assistant/Activities) states that collaboration with the schools is key (for instance, emergency preparedness training).

There was a discussion about snow removal assistance. A resident stated that high schoolers could be incentivized to offer shoveling services. There was a conversation about the importance of growing a volunteer program in the Senior Center and Town in general.

Select Board Member Polly Titcomb asked for information about the transportation services and what the needs are. The Senior Center has vans to take people shopping and some medical vans as well. They would be able to expand these services and the transportation hours by having a full-time driver. The medical van program has been successful.

Peter provided information about the Senior/Veterans Abatement Work-off program, where Seniors or Veterans can work for \$15/hour up to \$1,500 off their taxes. The Town needs to think more about the types of jobs that can benefit from this program.

Mr. Hause suggested that college students during break volunteer at the Senior Center. Spellios asked if there are times when the vans are not being utilized could they be used for other non-Senior Center programs. Marilyn stated that this is possible.

Co-Chair of the All Ages Committee Bob Powell provided an overview of the All Ages Committee which has 8 domains (transportation, housing, etc.) each with 8 goals – 64 goals for year one. He invited more people to join as desired. By 2030, 5,000 residents in Swampscott will be 60 years or older which is 1 in 3 residents. When asked in a survey if people use the Senior Center, 4/5 seniors stated they don't use the Senior Center because they feel too young and are not compelled by the programs.

Some of the goals the All Ages Committee would like to complete in year one are: improvement in communication to senior community (a website, Facebook page, informational booklet); transportation and walkability for all ages (traffic, fixed route shuttle service); expanding adult day care services. Heidi Weare announced that on June 13 there will be a resource fair.

Heidi introduced the concept of the Swampscott Village. The Village concept is national/international and supports members to remain in their home safely and affordably and encourage social connections promoting healthy, vibrant, and meaningful living. She also discussed the committee's efforts to develop a Dementia-Friendly group and starting a memory café to allow people with a loved one living with dementia to have support and community. They are also looking into a Purple Reservation Program which trains staff in restaurants to help accommodate people with dementia (location, preparing food, timing, etc.). They asked the Select Board and Town Administrator Sean Fitzgerald to sign off on pledge to be dementia friendly and train town staff in dementia.

Marzie Galazka spoke about housing issues presented to residents as they age. They are looking into grant applications and requested feedback from residents about what programs would be helpful to them.

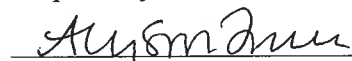
Marilyn Hurwitz expressed concerns about seniors living in destitute situations with the Housing Authority lacking repairs and that the Town has become complacent. Spellios explained that Marzie and Molly are seeking grant funding to assist with these low-income neighborhoods. The Affordable Housing Trust is receiving funding and seeks to bring affordable housing opportunities in Swampscott. The Machon School construction will also begin soon for affordable housing.

A resident raised a question about the operations of the Housing Authority and Spellios clarified that it is a state-funded entity but there is room for partnership and shared resources with the Town.

The Select Board decided to reschedule the February 5 meeting to February 6 at 6:00pm.

On **MOTION** (Titcomb) **SECONDED** (Dreeben) it was **VOTED** (unanimous) to adjourn.
Meeting adjourned 4:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Allie Fiske, Assistant to the Town Administrator

Minutes APPROVED by vote of the Select Board 2/6/20