

Concord COA Board Meeting minutes  
January 28, 2021

The Board Meeting took place using Zoom. The meeting was recorded.

Present: Andrea Zall, Rod Riedel, Ginger Quarles, Susan Bates (Select Board Liaison), Patty Keane, Carole Cushing, Carol Ann Hannan (Chair), Kristin Nelson, Michael Rudd, Teri Stokes, Christina Kendrick, Margaret Hoag (Minuteman Liaison). Also present was guest speaker Gary Kleiman.

The meeting was called to order at 4:30p.m.

Approval of Minutes. The minutes were approved by a roll call vote.

Rod Riedel: yes

Carole Cushing: yes

Kristin Nelson: yes

Michael Rudd: yes

Christina Kendrick: yes

Teri Stokes: yes

Patty Keane: yes

Carol Ann Hannan: yes

NMI/Starmet Reuse Planning Committee. Gary Kleiman spoke to the Board about the plans for the former Starmet site in West Concord. The development would occur in 2-3 years. The committee is recommending a plan which would include trails, nature viewing, and three potential uses for the largest part of the parcel. Concept 1 is indoor multipurpose community space. Concept 2 is office/medical complex, housing and limited recreational use. Concept 3 is mixed use with housing, recreation, retail/office spaces. The committee would like to see housing included in the use of the space. Ginger does not feel it is the best place for a senior center although it might work to hold certain classes at the location. The link to the report is on the NMI/Starmet page on the Town website. They committee is seeking feedback ideally before their next meeting (Friday February 5). The report will then be finalized by March.

Minuteman Report (Margaret Hoag). Margaret reported that although Minuteman has a budget surplus, it has to be returned to the State. Home care usage has been down but constant. Usage tends to go down in the winter every year. Only about 50% of home care workers have taken the vaccine but 85% of residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities have taken it. Education is needed to show the workers that the vaccine is safe. Minuteman has joined with the other Aging Service Access Points so they can all jointly contract with other health care companies to provide services to their members.

Concord Housing Authority (Rod Riedel). Rod reported that there is a search for a replacement director. The CHA is building a new residence at 365 Commonwealth Avenue in the next few years. There are multiple vacancies coming up on the board. A key challenge in 2020 was filling vacancies in units. It

takes a long time to vet the candidates, and then candidates decline the units because they are not close to public transportation. Nine Concord citizens have been waiting for a unit for a year; other cases have jumped ahead as they were designated emergencies.

Disability Commission. We have no liaison at this time. Ginger reported that COA Assistant director Lauren Beretta is providing some support to the Commission and so it may not be necessary for the board to send a liaison.

Concord after 60 (Teri Stokes). Teri reported that Jayne Gordon was the speaker concerning local history.

Concord Housing Development Corp. (Michael Rudd) Michael reported that Christopher Heights is the name of the housing project in Junction Village on Commonwealth Avenue. They have a major investor but because of COVID everything is delayed. The original plan is for 83 units for low income/elderly that will come available in 2023. Teri Stokes asked about access to the site which will be on Winthrop Street. There was concern over how it would cross the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. Susan Bates clarified that the portion of the site which is not occupied by Christopher Heights will be developed in other ways. Because the project is not providing transportation for its residents, there will be a significant burden on the COA van.

NMI/Starmet (Kristin Nelson). Pass.

Board of Health (Patty Keane). Patty reported that a resident appeared in front of the Board and was concerned about his inability to visit his father at Newbury Court. The chair explained that the restrictions were due to CDC rules. COVID was the main topic of conversation. They vaccinated all the first responders at the high school and it went smoothly. They were expecting many more doses than they received. They are hoping the vaccine will be available for everyone over 75 soon but the lack of doses has pushed back the plan. They are hiring nurses to administer the vaccine.

Public Works (Rod Riedel). Pass.

PEG Access (Carole Cushing). Carole reported that PEG will be showing a cooking show from the Mass COA every month. Concord's contract with Comcast will be renewed in 2026 and they are already working on a needs assessment. Other towns are looking into wireless access in addition to cable.

AARP Tax Program (Carole Cushing). Carole reported that when individuals apply for benefits, the prior year's tax return is often required. As a result, the COA is getting a lot of calls from residents asking how to get a copy of their return. The COA is not able to access prior tax returns; instead, individuals must call the IRS directly. **People with very simple returns can have a ½ hour call with a tax person at AARP.**

Transportation. Ginger reported that Kate Hodges will be on this committee. Kate will let us know if anything comes up that is relevant for this board.

Chair Report. Carol mentioned that we need additional members now that Grazia is not eligible and has withdrawn her candidacy.

Select Board Report (Susan Bates). Susan mentioned that the Town Caucus was virtual using a very innovative method. Every position has at least one person running with three people running for two Select Board positions.

Finance Committee (Andrea Zall). Pass.

Director's Report. Ginger reported:

- The Community Chest grant has been submitted. That grant partially supports three staff positions.
- The COA Budget has been submitted. Ginger is asking for increased hours for the social service worker. She is also asking for some wage increases.
- There is concern about state funding for the COA, known as the formula grant. This grant gives the COA about \$56,000, based on a rate of \$12 per senior. The new census has resulted in a large increase in the number of seniors. Therefore, the governor has recommended a funding rate of \$9 per senior. The legislature may come up with their own number which could be higher or lower. It could have a big financial impact on the COA depending on the number of seniors reported in census.
- The Annual Report has been submitted.
- There will be a giveaway event in March involving Concord Friends of the Aging. They will give a small daffodil plant to each senior. There will be 150 given via drive through; 50 given to social workers to bring to shut ins. This is the COA's first joint venture with the Friends.
- The vaccine situation changes every day. The state decided that people over 75 can register. There are 2400 people in Concord over 75. The sites have limited doses so it was very frustrating to book an appointment. In addition, you can only make an appointment with the internet. People are calling the COA because they don't have internet or can't get an appointment. The Town has been told it will get 100 doses per week. There might be a dedicated phone line in the COA to register for an appointment. Seniors should try to get a vaccine from their doctor or another source. The State is giving most of the vaccine they obtain to the mega sites such as Fenway Park and Gillette Stadium. There is a Town COVID phone line at 978-318-3033 to get information.

Motion to adjourn. The motion to adjourn was made by Teri Stokes. The motion was approved by a roll call vote.

Rod Riedel: yes

Carole Cushing: yes

Kristin Nelson: yes

Michael Rudd: yes

Christina Kendrick: yes

Teri Stokes: yes

Patty Keane: yes

Carol Ann Hannan: yes