

Harvard Council on Aging  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Tuesday, September 15, 2015  
Minutes

Present: Sue Guswa, Bruce Dolimount, Hank Fitek, Fran Nickerson, Deb Thomson, Beth Williams, Pam Frederick, Katie Petrossi  
COA Director Debbie Thompson, Recorder Connie Larrabee, BOS liaison Lucy Wallace, FCOA liaison Sharon Briggs  
Absent: Suzanne Roberts  
Guest: Harvard Historical Commission Chairman Joe Theriault  
Press reporter Joan Eliyesil

Co-Chairwoman Fran Nickerson called the meeting to order at 4 p.m.

The minutes of the August 28, 2015 planning meeting were approved as submitted.

Treasurer's Report: Bruce explained the various accounts and provided balances for the gift account (\$15,070.15) and the revolving account (\$13,616.32). Income from other sources, such as the state Formula Grant, has not yet been posted to the town accounts.

### **Committee Reports**

- Buildings and Grounds - Hank Fitek

Hank and Bill Barton from the Town Hall-Hildreth House Construction Committee will install a heavy-duty plastic tarp at the top of the attic stairs to keep debris from falling down the stairway in the event of a further ceiling collapse. That should make it safe to use the back stairway again.

- Housing Committee – no report

- Program Committee – Katie Petrossi

The program committee will focus on housing issues this year, as will the League of Women Voters. The league is planning a housing program in October, so COA programs will likely start in November. Possible topics include: Elements involved in the decision to stay in town or go; Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (such as the one on Beacon Hill); or speakers from Harvard University's Center for Housing Studies.

### **Building project update – Connie Larrabee**

The windows are expected to be delivered by mid-October and will be stored at Moore Lumber Company's warehouse prior to delivery. The HHIC will meet with the Community Preservation Committee on September 23 to discuss whether the current CPC funding will cover installation of the window replacing the French door in the outreach office and four or five new windows in the new addition. An extension of the June 30, 2016 spending deadline would be required and must be approved at Town Meeting.

The RFP for design development services should go out soon and construction is expected to start in late April. The COA will have to relocate for at least two months and should start looking for alternative office space and meal locations.. The board will discuss it at the October 20 meeting.

### **Director's Report – Debbie Thompson**

The program coordinator position has been posted and resumes are due by September 25. Three applications are already in.

The outreach department has worked with at least 36 clients since the fiscal year began July 1, including some who require a lot of help. Joan and Maria have scheduled their time to provide full coverage Tuesday through Thursday and five hours on Mondays.

The final porch event of the year is a supper from 4 to 5 p.m. on September 16. A swing trio will provide the music, and the Boy Scouts will make the desserts.

The MCOA conference is October 7 to 9 in Sturbridge. Debbie will attend Wednesday and Thursday, accompanied by Maria on Wednesday and Joan on Thursday. Cathy will keep things running at Hildreth House.

The COA annual report has been sent to the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. The numbers are similar to last year's, but we expect an increase in services provided this year.

Tim Bragan says a capital request should be submitted for a lightning rod on the roof. Debbie will check with Tim to find out who should submit the request.

### **New Business**

Deb Thomson pointed out that it's difficult to see the edge of the steps in the front stairway, especially when you're coming down. She suggested that a contrasting strip and/or better lighting could prevent falls. Hank and Bruce will see what they can do to improve visibility on the stairs.

Traffic - Sue Guswa reported on the progress of the MRPC traffic study. Sue is primarily concerned with creating safe walking paths. Katie suggested that bike lanes should also be considered.

Publicity – Board members agreed that the co-chairwomen should be responsible for coordinating press releases and other publicity pertaining to board activities.

### **Harvard Historical Commission presentation – Joe Theriault**

Joe summarized the commission's proposal to expand the Town Center Historic District to include Hildreth House and Bromfield House. He said both houses were of significant historical and architectural value and that the HHC wants to help preserve them for future generations.

Inclusion in the district would qualify these properties for Community Preservation funding and for state and federal restoration grants. It would also ensure protection against future development of the house and/or property in a manner not consistent with its present character.

Board members asked a number of questions about restrictions that might be imposed on the property. Joe's response included the following points:

1. If the town voted this year to include Hildreth House in the historic district, it would have no impact on the upcoming construction project.
2. The HHC would place no restrictions on safety and accessibility improvements, such as ramps, railings, adequate parking and lighting
3. The HHC would not prevent construction of senior housing on the Hildreth property, but would work with the builder to encourage a compatible design.
4. Any addition to the house would have to conform to certain guidelines; it has to appear somewhat different from the existing building and cannot overwhelm it.
5. The HHC would consider excluding part of the 5.5-acre property from the district if there was a good reason to do so, such as facilitating senior housing; it is mainly interested in preserving the house and the grounds around it.

The board will continue its discussion of the HHC proposal at the October 20 meeting.

The next Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 20, 2015 from 4 to 5:30 p.m. at Hildreth House.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m..

Respectfully submitted, Connie Larrabee, recorder