

**AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 15, 2018
5:00 P.M.**

ATTENDEES: Leroy Walker, Belinda Gerry, Frank Pippin, Peter Letourneau, Tizz Crowley, Dana Morrell, Barry Schmieks, Jim Horn, Larry Pelletier, Peter Ceprano and Jan Biron

Guest Speaker: Patricia Oh from AARP

Leroy Walker brought the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

Everyone introduced themselves around the table, as new people were present.

The actual committee has not been appointed at this point. The manager asked if the committee was going to be appointed tonight, but co-chair, Leroy Walker, stated that we just wanted to hear from our guest speaker, Patricia Oh from AARP.

We have had some great speakers who have given us a lot of information to move forward with.

Patricia Oh stated that she is a grandmother and feels that an Age Friendly Community is about youth as well. Schools, after school programs, etc. are what are needed for children. The program she will talk about won't take away from that, however, she wants to live in a community where she can be healthy and engage as an adult. Everyone should be included in that. She worked with the town of Bowdoinham and has a lot of experience with Bowdoinham and Bill Post who has spoken to us previously. She stated that our approach couldn't be better. Resources, local organizations, regional organizations, etc. is impressive.

In 2007 World Health Organization did some research. They asked, what do you need to stay active, engaged and healthy in your community? The answers were about the same throughout the U.S. What is needed to help seniors to be able to enjoy an Age Friendly Community? Affordability, Communication with the public, advertising, transportation, and variety of programs are needed. People don't know where things are happening. When people start to get the information through an event calendar, more details should be included in the information to include resources for meals on wheels, emergency contacts, Seniors Plus, etc. with phone/contact numbers.

Leroy asked what the "211" number is for. It is a statewide number that can give people information about transportation, and other social service information. Our group can be listed on 211 at some point. Patricia asked Peter Ceprano what he needs to age in the community. He responded that he would like to have a variety of educational options, i.e. Charter School, Catholic schools, public schools, etc.

Larry Pelletier stated that he likes the feeling of a sense of community living in New Auburn. We all need to feel respected in the world that we live in. To combat social isolation, the United New Auburn Association is a group that brings the community together.

Barry Schmieks is an elder services officer. He grew up in Auburn and moved away, but he came back. What is important is having a sense of community, knowing your neighbors, trust the services that are

offered to you in that community and feel that the people who offer services are offering them to help YOU.

Up north, one community has been having ice cream socials and bringing in children to promote socialization. Many changes have occurred at the neighborhood level.

Jim Horn stated that when people retire there is a disconnect with what they were. He would like to see more seasoned adults do more work with the schools. Retirees have a lot of experience to bring to the classroom. The more the entire community engages, the less people will feel cast aside. Many people live alone and in isolation. Kids and adults should be doing community service 365 days a year.

Patricia stated that we should develop a logo for our group.

The after school program in Bowdoinham lost all their funding for their arts programs. Children now participate in after school elective programs: fly tying, etc.

Frank Pippin talked with Jane at Seniors Plus about going over to see the meals on wheels kitchen. He invited Belinda, Leroy and Jan to go initially, on Thursday, May 17th, 2018 to visit the kitchen and see how the meals are assembled.

Security is included in the needs of elders, as well as heat assistance, housing and outdoor spaces, etc. Leroy stated that a lot more affordable housing is needed for the young, middle age people and seniors. There is a lot of old stock housing available, but good stock is needed. They were homes for people to live in, but no one was proud to live there. Today, people are expected to pay \$800 or \$900 per month to live in local apartments. Maine has the oldest housing stock in the nation. One of the Age Friendly goals is how to bring affordable quality housing into the community. The most popular initiative is the home chore and home repair program which will install grab bars, new locks, putting in and taking out air conditioners, and do other repairs, etc. for those who need the help. They also raise funds to pay for the things that the elders can't afford to pay for, like the new lock.

Tizz has walked neighborhoods and seen some well maintained homes and some that were trashed. People may just need to know who to call to get help to make needed repairs.

There are 53 communities in Maine that are affiliated with the AARP Age Friendly Community program. The community can't be a gated community of retirees only. We have to have a variety of ages in the community to thrive. Many people who are moving into a city will find out that it is an Age Friendly Community, and will want to live there.

Other Age Friendly Communities want other communities to ask to share what they are doing in their community. These programs should work together. It is not necessarily the best choice for all communities to join the AARP Age Friendly Community Program. Patricia works with non members as well. To become a member, there is an application with 5 questions. A letter of commitment must also be submitted by the city council. This indicates that they support the program.

Initiatives should be either low cost or no cost.

Patricia will send us 30 "Roadmap to Livability" brochures. She will send us more when requested. There are also free publications for home repair, making your home accessible, etc. The Maine Guide is available electronically.

Leroy stated that he was invited to the Poland Senior Citizens meeting on Saturday. They are now under the recreation department, and meet in the basement of the town hall. They meet on Saturdays. Meeting on Saturdays is a good idea for people who are considered seniors (55+) who can't go to a meeting during the week. Poland has a lot of programs for their seniors. Peter Ceprano explained that Poland's senior group is specifically for their own town residents.

AARP age is 50 and over. If we expand the vision of programs, we will attract more people. Leroy stated that the Hermon senior center raises money through bake sales, etc. to raise money for everyone to participate in each program. This defrays the cost of all their programs. Little towns are able to provide pool tables, 50" TVs, furniture, kitchens, etc. but a city as large as Auburn can't appropriate funds for what is needed for the senior center and its programs. Perhaps we need to get people on board to work together and bring a lot of people in the two cities together.

Leroy stated that we truly believe that we can do something great in this community and we want the help of AARP and Seniors Plus to help us get where we want to go. He feels that the city manager wants the City of Auburn to become an AARP member and follow the Roadmap to Livability.

Larry Pelletier is talking with ELHS about Taking a Veteran to School to reestablish the program.

Jim Horn said that Friday is EL's Community Service Day. Shawn Rice will interview John Jenkins at 9:00 a.m. and Mr. Footer, a local painter and taxidermist will do videos at 10:00 a.m. They need two females to do videos as well.

Larry is going to set up a date for the "Take a Veteran to School" day.

Meeting adjourned at 6:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Jan Biron

NOTE: Co-chair, Leroy Walker wants the minutes to be examined and accepted at the next meeting. Copies will be sent to all attendees electronically so that they can be reviewed in advance, but acceptance will be done at the next scheduled meeting.