

Minutes of the Bar Harbor Age-Friendly Committee

Wed., May 15, 2019

Municipal Building

Present: Ron Greenberg, Jan Varnum, Judie Noonan, Allie Bodge, and Lee Bonta

Absent: Doreen Willett and Martha Searchfield

Guests: Dwayne Bartlett and Suzanne Hopkins

In the absence of our Chair, Vice Chair Ron Greenberg called the meeting to order. The minutes of the April 17, 2019, meeting was approved as written. The financial report was accepted, and we gave approval to Doreen's request for funding to attend the AARP National Rural Livability Conference on June 19-21, 2019, at USM.

Ron introduced Dwayne Bartlett, MDI & Ellsworth Housing, and Suzanne Hopkins, Birch Bay Village. Each gave their perspectives about what they offered for housing.

Dwayne explained that the Housing Authority covers Ellsworth and MDI subsidized housing. There are approximately 123 units in Bar Harbor. He suggested that we are looking for housing for those who "fall through a donut hole," as they don't fit into the housing or BBV. Grants to provide such housing are available through ME Housing, but they are highly competitive. The income guidelines for the Housing Authority are an individual earning \$38,000 or a couple earning \$43,800.

Suzanne stated that a one-bedroom apartment with utilities at MDI Housing runs \$670 a month, while independent living in a cottage at BBV can run up to \$3200. She emphasized the big gap between BBV and subsidized housing. She also stated that there are 90 people living in cottages, independent living, assisted living and Straus Center day care service. They are 55 years and up, but the average age is 84. There is a potential expansion of Birch Bay Village farther up the Crooked Rd. in the future, as there is no room to expand at the current site.

There was much discussion. The town of Bar Harbor will be conducting a major housing study. Dwayne said that he could invite someone from ME Housing to meet with us, although they work more with low income, rather than the segment of the population that we were discussing. We also discussed how to find developers and land.

Suzanne also shared that BBV has two vans, one that they utilize in their Day Program, and one that is used by residents for trips to the grocery, etc. In the future, they hope to get an SUV so that they can expand this transportation feature as they have a need for more transportation. They also offer many programs for socialization, such as speakers, music groups, etc., and host outside groups such as the Rotary, Senior College, etc. They also have the Straus Center day program and take those folks on regular outings, up to ten people per day.

Jan reported on the socialization plan, the "Aging and Loss" workshop sponsored by Hospice of Hancock County. We have a tentative date of the second week of October

in 2019. Linda Smith will be the facilitator. Jan will be meeting with Linda soon to determine a site for the six-week workshop and learn more details. She was unable to attend one of the Ellsworth sessions due to the confidentiality issue.

Judy moved to close the meeting; Lee seconded the motion. Unanimous.

The next meeting will be Wed., June 19, 2019, at 3:00 PM in the Municipal Building.

Respectfully submitted,
Jan Varnum
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