

Minutes of Board Meeting of December 9, 2013

Board Members Present: Ethel Ampey, Elizabeth Cadigan, Lois Carra, Carole Feeney-Withrow, Miranda Heibel, Kenneth Hebert, Benjamin Horner, Ismail Laher, and Jeanne Ryde

Absent: William Cobham, Pearl Hines

Staff Present: Lisa Castagna, Alicia Johnson, Vincent McCarthy, Susan Pacheco and Emma Watkins

Meeting was called to order at 11:05 a.m. by Lois Carra

1. Review/acceptance of November 4, 2013 meetings

Lois Carra requested approval of minutes of the November meeting. Ethel Ampey made a motion to accept minutes. Minutes unanimously approved.

2. Presentation

- Presentation by Ellen Kokinda, Intern, Cambridge Community Development Department – Aging in Cambridge: Housing Survey Residents 55+
- The results from this survey indicate that residents aged 55+ living in the City of Cambridge are a unique, educated, healthy and wealthy group of citizens. And, on the surface at least, they exhibit a sense of stability when it comes to their future housing options. For example, fully three of four (75%) “strongly agree” that they plan to stay in their home as long as they can. And, seven in ten (70%) say they are “very likely” to be able to afford living in their current residence as long as they’d like. Also, 41% say they expect to stay in their current home more than 10 years.
- However, the survey also found that a certain degree of uncertainty comes into play when residents 55+ are confronted with key variables—particularly surrounding possible changes in health status for themselves or their spouse/partner. In fact, among a list of reasons that might make them consider moving, “change in health” topped the list (20% of total responses). And, when pressed about what they would do if health reasons kept them from living independently, 42% said they were “unsure” about what they’d do. Interestingly, only about one of five respondents (18%) would consider moving out of their home—while a little over one-third (37%) would look to stay in their homes with some assistance. But, only about one in five of those who would want to stay in their homes (20%) say they could not provide space for a caregiver or relative.
- Generally, most respondents see the need for only “cosmetic” repairs (77%) to their existing home to help them continue living there. Only 16% see needed accommodations for “mobility” reasons—despite the fact that 75% also told us they need to climb stairs in their daily routine. About four in ten (38%) said they’d need “major” (roof, exterior painting) repairs to stay in their home. People saw the greatest degree of difficulty in performing “heavy lifting tasks” by themselves (42% “very difficult”), while snow shoveling came in second place on the difficulty scale (22% “very difficult”).
- Among a range of factors that might apply in a search for new housing, having a kitchen in the unit is the single most important (91% “very important”). Next on the importance list are: being within walking distance of retail (70%), being able to stay in Cambridge (65%) and having access to outdoor space (64%). In line with these findings is the fact that fully 46% of respondents say they’d be “not at all likely” to accept a living situation with a “shared” kitchen.
- When provided with a list of reasons why people might consider a shared living situation, the most important centered on being able to share maintenance and upkeep costs—like errands, yard work and snow removal (39% “very important”). Continuing with the theme of “stability”, we found that fully 81% of our sample of residents 55+ has lived in their current household more than 10 years—47%

for more than 25 years. And, 70% have lived in Cambridge more than 25 years—90% more than 10 years. And, despite the preoccupation with health-related concerns, we found that 83% of the sample perceives themselves to be in either “excellent” (41%) or “good” (42%) health.

- All in all, these findings suggest that while Cambridge residents 55+ demonstrate a strong sense of stability on housing options, they also express a fair degree of uncertainty—particularly with regard to health concerns. They also have strong ideas about what they want in their next housing situation—a place in Cambridge, with a private kitchen, within walking distance to retail and some access to outdoor space. These data indicate that the City of Cambridge has an excellent opportunity to provide information resources on next housing options that meet these clear desires expressed in the survey.

3. Reports

COA Executive Director

- The building is 18 years old and showing signs of its age. Susan reported the HVAC has malfunctioned resulting in extreme heat and cold affecting the refrigeration units to the point where food had to be dumped due to temperature.
- The city has a green grant, some of which will fund roof repair, revamp of the HVAC system. In the spring the parking lot will be resurfaced and the drainage updated a 3 week construction.
- Thanks to the board for the return of the conflict of interest agreement.

Citywide Senior Center

- The City of Cambridge is planning a memorial for Nelson Mandela. Transitions within the center: Betty Paige is now the Activities Assistant. We have a new person from Cambridge Works, Kensley David in Food Services. Eve Flochild our Computer Instructor is retiring and computer room monitor David Anderson is leaving on 12/31. Emma stated we will have to scramble with a skeleton staff.
- In programming the Native American pottery class would like to continue as a club. The Women’s group is in development to define their scope and the Men’s group continues meet biweekly. There has been increased demand for space and programming.

North Cambridge Senior Center

- Alicia has completed her first month at 2050, working on SHINE through open enrollment. Marybeth and Margret extended their hours to help out. The Fall Bazaar was very successful netting \$800 and the volunteers enjoyed lunch at the bazaar.
- The Fitzgerald Community School kids plan to come caroling and help with holiday window décor. Programming this month includes a Museum of Fine Arts trip and a Holiday Party.
- The North Cambridge Senior Center is currently seeking members to serve on a five person advisory council. To serve on the North Cambridge Senior Center Advisory Council, you must be: A Cambridge resident, sixty years or older, representative of Cambridge’s diverse geographical, economic, and ethnic factors. Applications must be received by Friday February 14, 2014.

Client Services

- Vincent is no longer going to 2050 on Thursday afternoons and is here in Central Square every day. He is building up his case load and has taken on some of existing cases as well as some new cases. People are beginning to know who he is and are seeking him out for assistance. Client Services has been very busy, specifically with calls around Health Care Insurance issues.
- Open Enrollment ended on December 7th, so he expects things to slow down a little bit. He and Liz have been handling whatever Health Insurance questions that they are able to and Alicia has been continuing to provide SHINE counseling for those cases that are more complex. They have also referred

some cases to the Regional Shine office. Vincent hopes to post the open position of Information and Referral Specialist in the near future. In the mean time there is a request for SHINE volunteer.

- **Snow Exemption:** The city requires that home owners shovel the walkway in front of their property. Cambridge has a “Snow Exemption” program for seniors and persons with disabilities who are unable to shovel their sidewalk and also meet the program’s financial guidelines. On mornings of a snow storm the recreation department staff shovels all households that our Snow Exemption list. To date there are 60 participants on the list. Client Services maintains updates to the list and forwards it to the recreation department.
- For those who are not eligible or require additional shoveling services, we maintain a list of private Snow removal companies as well as a list of students who may be available to shovel. The list of students is compiled with the help of the Office of Work Force Development. Over 900 letters went out to student participants of the Mayors Youth Summer Employment Program. So far 14 completed applications from students who have agreed to participate have been received.

4. New Business none

5. Old Business none

Meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Next Meeting: Monday, January 13, 2014@ 11:00 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Lisa Castagna