

DATE: June 17, 2024
TO: Commission on Elder Affairs & Interested Parties
FROM: Frances Langille, Chair
SUBJECT: Meeting Notice and Agenda for June 24, 2024, 4:00 p.m.

The Commission on Elder Affairs is meeting on **Monday, June 24, 2024, 4 p.m. at the Worcester Senior Center, 128 Providence Street.**

Members who are unable to attend should contact Amy: watersa@worcesterma.gov.

BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA

- I. Commission on Elder Affairs Chair
 - a. Call to Order/Roll Call
 - b. Approval of Commission Meeting Minutes of May 21, 2024
 - c. Approval of Senior Center Committee meeting report of June 11, 2024

- II. **Presentation on current proposal process for development of vacant part of senior center: Peter Dunn, Chief Development Officer & Paul Morano, Assistant Chief Development Officer-Special Projects, Executive Office of Economic Development**

- III. Elder Affairs Staff Reports
 - a. Director Report - Strategic Plan Goal and Objectives

 - b. Senior Center Operations Director Report
 1. Developing and Offered Programs
 2. Facility and Grounds

 - c. Manager of Senior Services & Education Report
 1. Outreach, Information, Referral and Advocacy
 2. Multi-cultural Programs & more

- IV. Commission on Elder Affairs Chair

-comments &/or questions from Commission members
-comments from others-up to 2 minutes each
-confirm next meeting- **September 23, 2024 at 4 pm, in person at the Worcester Senior Center-front of the lunchroom** (no meeting July and August)
-Adjourn

The City of Worcester/ Division of Elder Affairs does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to access to, or operation of its programs, services or activities. The City does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its hiring or employment practices. Auxiliary aids and services, written materials in alternative formats, and reasonable modifications in policies and procedures to persons with disabilities will be provided upon advance request. Please contact Amy Vogel Waters at 508-799-1232 or watersa@worcesterma.gov or the ADA Coordinator at disabilities@worcesterma.gov.

Commission on Elder Affairs - May 21, 2024 Minutes

Present: Fran Langille-Chair; Shonee Austriaco, Facely Henriquez, Noreen Shea, Richard Shea, Roxana Gomez Vargas, Sarah Faucher, Tamara Cullen, Ted Biba, Thuha Le, Linda Wincek-Moore, Patty Hainsworth, Amy Waters, Keith Durant, Leah Bradley.

Fran called the meeting to order at the Worcester Senior Center at 4:00 p.m. The minutes of the Commission on Elder Affairs meeting on April 29, 2024 were approved (m/s/a). The Report on the Senior Center Committee May 14, 2024 meeting was approved (m/s/a). Fran introduced the speakers from Central MA Housing Alliance (CMHA): Leah Bradley-CEO and Keith Durant-Elder Home Maintenance Program Manager.

Leah thanked the Commission for the ongoing financial support for the Elder Home Maintenance (EHM) program and reviewed the major initiatives of CMHA. She emphasized their focus on the prevention of homelessness. Keith reviewed the power point which contained the following information:

Elder Home Repair was established in 1976 to target the needs of senior homeowners by correcting unsafe housing conditions that could threaten the immediate health and safety of elders in their homes. The program was expanded in 1994 to include routine maintenance tasks such as snow removal, gutter cleaning, and AC installation. Program recipients are responsible for the cost of materials only; labor is provided at no cost to the homeowner. No low-income elder is denied service for inability to pay. EHRM prioritizes issues that pose an immediate risk to the elder's ability stay in their home, including installing apparatus to prevent falls. The Program Coordinator speaks with an average of 60 seniors per month who need services. Monthly, an average of 35 households requires repairs, and 22 need safety apparatus installed. EHRM performed 343 projects in FY '23 and served 136 unduplicated clients. The number of minority clients served accounted for 6% of the requests for service. 64% are non-minority, and 30% preferred not to disclose. 62% of households served are low income, living below the poverty line. 6 % of participants consider themselves to be frail or disabled. 75% of all projects are safety related. Our data shows that seniors are becoming the fastest growing population facing homelessness today. EHRM helps to:

- *Preserve the health and safety of elder homeowners*
- *Prevent displacement and homelessness of the low-to-moderate income elderly population*
- *Stimulate housing rehabilitation for elder homeowners*
- *Prevent falls in the elderly population*

Commission members discussed various related issues and potential resources to support older homeowners.

Amy reviewed progress on the goals/objectives including: City budget hearing will be the next day; Both the State House and Senate have approved a \$1/elder increase in the COA Formula grant; we've reached 79% of our goal for a 3% increase in the number of different programs provided; The Fitness Center has 766 registered members; the senior center committee report contains allocations for FY'25 funding; working with Human Resources dept. to pilot a property tax work off program; thanked Shonee, Commission member, for helping to organize the information from the recent participant survey; staff received training on "Communicating in Difficult Situations;" a presentation will be made at the June meeting re: the bid process which has started to develop the vacant space at the senior center; Amy interviewed on radio by

Hank Stolz; and, assisting state Executive Office of Elder Affairs to obtain input into refreshing their 5 year plan as well as to create a marketing campaign.

Patty reported on the following: carpet project finished; air-conditioning is on; kitchen received good inspection; community gardens ready to plant when seedlings arrive; May has been very busy for programming; upcoming programs include-LGBTQIA flag raising and new group; Oral Health; Artist reception; AARP driver safety, calligraphy, history of the bicycle; summer concert series; new exercise classes and the Dementia Friendly Worcester event June 11th.

Linda reported on the following: Senior Services has been very busy with housing/trying to prevent homelessness, also MA Health and transportation; Outreach to Brazilian seniors has begun; Falls Prevention & Wellness series has been well received and continues; and she participated in a panel regarding the housing crisis at a recent MCOA symposium.

The meeting adjourned at 4:58 pm (m/s/a).

Report to the Commission on Elder Affairs - Senior Center Committee June 11, 2024

Present: Richard Shea-Chair; Noreen Shea; Kathan Horne; Fran Langille; Facely Henriquez; Patty Hainsworth; Amy Waters

Richard called the meeting to order at 1:02 pm at the Senior Center and hybrid on Teams. The minutes of May 14, 2024 were approved (m/s/a). The next meeting was confirmed for September 10, 2024 at noon on Teams.

Amy reported on and the committee discussed the following: FY'25 city and state budgets are still pending but our funding is looking good; Slight adjustments to the FY'25 allocations were reviewed; tenants' license renewals are progressing; tours are being given to prospective developers for the vacant space in the hope they will respond to the city's request for proposals by June 26th. A presentation on the RFP process will be made at the Commission meeting on June 24th.

Patty reported on and the committee discussed the following: Excellent Dementia Friendly Worcester event today; 3 Upward Bound students placed here in July, and possibly another high school student will be helping with the respite program; most of the community gardens are planted; and many programs coming up including the summer concert series.

There was discussion on the recent use of the senior center as an emergency shelter for 5 days for 40 people who were victims of the fire at Washington Heights. It was noted that while it is good that we were able to make this important contribution as a community resource, there are issues to be addressed in the "after action" meeting such as: balancing the needs of 40 people with the approximately 400 people/day who depend on the senior center for food, socialization, fitness and much more; the importance of pre-planning, perhaps establishing MOU's with other organizations which can serve as shelters in various circumstances; and looking towards planning for more frequent extreme weather events which are likely to occur. Amy and Patty will convey these concerns as well as other logistical feedback.

The meeting adjourned at 2:06 p.m. (m/s/a).