

Groton Council on Aging

The Groton Center

163 W. Main Street

Groton, Massachusetts 01450

Date: April 11, 2022

Location: The Groton Center

Time: 1:03PM Meeting called to order by Chair, Jean Sheedy.

Attendance: Chair and Facilitator-Jean Sheedy, Secretary-Dottie Zale, Board members-Judy Palumbo O'Brien, Pascal Miller, Therese Keoseian, Mihran Keoseian, Helen Sienkiewicz, Director Ashley Shaheen and Community Engagement Specialist Lauren Marcello. Absent-Paula Martin and Peter Cunningham.

Minutes from March 14,2022-no additions or corrections.

Action: Minutes accepted.

A presentation on The Friends of Groton Elders by Mihran Keoseian a Board member of that group was very enlightening. Mihran explained how he hoped to reignite the group. The Friends of Groton Elders was founded in 1989. The group has donated \$400,000 to individual elder programs that are educational, culturally informative, promote health and well being and promote civic engagement of all Groton elders. The Friends of Groton Elders is working toward collaborating with the other groups that serve Groton elders, such as The Council on Aging, The Groton Neighbors, Board of Health, Police, the Fire Department and Groton Churches. The COA board

members were excited and very supportive of this initiative. A motion was made to endorse supporting the Friends of Groton Elders. **Action:** Motion passed.

Director's Report:

*COVID UPDATE: A mask mandate was put into effect on 4/11 until 4/21. All serving of food was suspended until 4/21. A successful vaccine clinic was held on 4/7, 148 vaccines were administered. The next clinic will be 5/5.

Therese felt that The Center should have given members the option to eat or not to eat, let them make their own decisions. Ashley explained their feelings were to “break the possibility of spread” until 2 weeks after the vaccination clinic. Caregivers of those possibly exposed, were concerned. Jean felt that the programs were for seniors and as such, it was handled well. The health of the seniors comes first. These are always difficult decisions and there are always disappointments. Judy agreed with Therese but could see both sides of the situation. Pascal asked, “If going forward 3 to 5 years, is there a policy for closing?” Mihran felt it was possibly an over reaction to just 3 cases. People are going out to dinner, shopping, buying groceries, there are cases out there and we are not shutting down. We do not shut down for flu cases. In the future we should turn to the Board of Health for advice. Helen said, “we all should be smart about COVID and how we personally handle it.”

*MEMBERSHIP: Ashley reported we had 26 new members sign on in March.

*My Active Center: Goes live on April 26th.

*Extended Hours: Starting on April 25th.

*Outreach: We have had many more talented applicants on this second round. Interviews are in progress. Tina Maeder continues to help with Outreach, but she is moving in 2 weeks.

*Transportation: Eddie Wenzell continues to do an excellent job.

*Updates: Friends of Groton Elders has expressed interest in helping those in need with gas gift cards. Pascal mentioned that people will need help with heating fuel this winter, there are organizations that will help but the senior must fill out a lot of paperwork. Mihran said Friends of Groton Elders will try to help but they do have limited resources. Mihran said they are planning to donate \$500 dollars for garden tools, seeds, plants etc.

*Volunteer Appreciation is on April 21 at 4PM.

*Art Display: Peg McWade's artwork will be displayed for 3 months. Next year we will try and collaborate with the schools to display some of their work.

*Odds and Ends: Tour of Groton Hill Music will be held on Saturday 4/23 at 10AM.

At this time there was a question regarding the length of Board member terms. Ashley clarified that Board members can serve (2) three-year terms, then wait a year, reapply for an additional term.

Lauren's report:

The number of programs has greatly increased going from 10 to 20 to 30 to 40! More activities and programs.

Trips will be starting with a trip to the Health Museum in Tewksbury, MA. Other offers may Isabell Stewart Museum, The Boston Pops etc.

Volunteer Report: More applications and calls every day.

Fitness Center: As of today, we are 100% up to date with all our paperwork for Fitness Center members.

Next meeting will be held at The Center on May 9th at 1PM.
Meeting adjourned at 2:45PM.

Respectfully submitted by Dottie Zale