

AGING IN PLACE COMMITTEE

MINUTES February 20, 2020

Mission: The AIP mission is to:

Provide advocacy for changes in Eliot's physical, economic, and social environment that enables Eliot residents, especially older residents, to live in their homes for as long as possible, and foster the creation of services and programs geared to keeping all residents active and engaged in the community.

Present: Ellen Ceppetelli, Ron Ceppetelli, Gail Licciardello, Jean Paulantonio (late), Francis Thomas, Liz Castillo (late)

Absent: Melissa Albert, Phil Lytle

Guests: none

Meeting called to order at: 4:00pm

Ellen appointed Fran as a voting member. (Once Jean arrived, this was rescinded).

Motion: Ron moved to approve the Jan 30, 2020 minutes as written., seconded by Nedra.

Discussion: There was a discussion that some of the information regarding the recipients of the State's Tax Fairness Credit (page 2 bullet #5) presented at that meeting was inaccurate. It was decided that the Feb 20, 2020 minutes would note the accurate information, which is as follows:

"97 credits were given to Eliot taxpayers who were 65 and older, for a total of \$65,008. There are 1094 residents between 65 and 85. Therefore approximately 9% of residents in this age group received credits".

Nedra Ron, Fran, Ellen and Gail all voted in favor of the motion. None opposed.

Chair Update:

- Ellen went to the select board and presented our budget. They requested an itemized budget, which she has subsequently submitted to them.

- On February 13th the select board approved and praised the AIP Action Plan. Our action plan will be used as a model by AARP (as they were impressed by it) and put on their Age Friendly web site as a model plan.
- Ellen, Ron, Nedra and Gail attended the planning board meeting regarding ADUs. The meeting was productive. They were very receptive to our input.
- Ellen has emailed to Kristina Goodwin how to access the AARP "ABCs of ADUs" for the planning board.
- Update on housing committee. Ellen and Liz planned to call Jean Hardy to discuss the ordinance, but Jean was reluctant to speak as she felt that may be a violation of committee rules. Subsequently Ellen clarified this with Dana. Since AIP is an advisory committee to the select board and not a quasi-judiciary or judiciary committee, we did not have to be concerned about committee members discussing issues in a conference call outside an official meeting.
- Ellen and Liz, the housing subcommittee decided that we should just present the ordinance as is. We should be prepared to discuss and answer questions, but also indicate that we are looking for the select board's and public's input and suggestions.
- Discussion of what age our ordinance would the ordinance address. Although this has not been decided, the consensus was 70 years may be the best age to recommend

Review March 2 Public Hearing Agenda:

- ✓ Discussion of the 3-2-2020 with the select board and residents. It was questioned if holding the meeting the day before Election Day, would limit the number of people attending. It was decided that probably it would not have too much of an impact, and, it was too late to change the date. We would not have enough time to get everything done on order to get the ordinance approved for, and on the June ballot.

Review of the potential Eliot Senior Tax Assistance Program Steps and Timeline

- The crucial date is April 9th as that is when the Select Board must give their final approval and certify the ordinance to be on the town ballot. No changes were made in the timeline.

- Once the ordinance is approved by the select board, we will have to have some community meetings to educate town residents about the ordinance.

Plan Content of AIP presentation for March Workshop with Select Board

It was announced that Melissa sent out the flyers promoting the AIP/select board workshop.

Ellen volunteered to lead the discussion with the select board with the rest of the committee agreeing that would be the best way to proceed.

Items to have available and discussions at the workshop Include:

- The results of the survey
- The action plan (Ellen will ask Melissa to also put this on the town web side)
- Application of the state property tax assistance program
- The process we used in looking at a variety of ordinances to come up with this suggested ordinance.
- The qualifications to receive tax assistance and the timeline of the ordinance in terms of when one applies and when receives the credit/rebate. (Applied in last year and given in next year)
- We are presenting that this is what we think is best, but we are looking for the select board and town citizens input. The housing committee will then incorporate these suggestions into the final ordinance.

It was suggested that we come up with a list of potential questions that citizens may ask and address those questions

Discussion: We need to have more data about the impact of the ordinance on property taxes of residents. An approximate number of people who would qualify at various ages, i.e. 65, 70, 75 etc. would then help clarify how much this ordinance would impact the budget. Ellen will ask Dana for that appropriate data so we can be prepared at the meeting. Questioned who determines what amount of money is allocated to this tax assistance program. It was decided that the committee would make a recommendation regarding the budgeted amount of money for tax relief, based on the data from Dana regarding the number of residents who might qualify. The program administrator (town manager) determines the amount of the rebate based upon the monies in the program

fund. Either matching what the state gave in tax fairness credit or prorating that amount to accommodate the town's budget.

Last year 97 households of residents over 65, received \$65,000 in tax assistance from the state. If we matched this, then it would be \$65,000 from the town budget. We do not believe the town can afford this. If we change the age to 70 this might make it more affordable to the town budget. Suggested that Dana give us data for residents who qualified for the State Tax Fairness Credit at age 70 and 75 so that we can have a better understanding of the impact on the budget. Ellen will follow up with Dana to see if he can provide this data

Committee members came up with questions, possible answers and, think about "what's in it for me?" to help understand what other Eliot residents may be concerned about. They are as follows:

- Why should people do this?
- To support elders, their neighbors, their family members and potentially themselves.
- Can the town afford to do it?
- Provide how much per household will this cost, i.e. addition to their property tax bill
- Give examples, stories, of how this tax credit would specifically impact someone. People have left Eliot because they couldn't afford to live here.
- Why did we choose Old Orchard Beach program as a model rather than others?
- How does it work?
- How do I apply?
- How much will it cost me as a taxpayer?
- What if person has lots of assets (house, etc) but little annual income?
- Suggested we offer rides to the program, can do email alert announcing workshop and that rides are available. Gail volunteered to provide rides.

AARP Community Challenge Grants for 2020:

The purpose of these grants is to increase community engagement. Ellen reported that the chairs of aging in place committees meet once a month via conference call to discuss issues/problems. At a recent meeting, Patricia Oh

announced the Community Challenge Grants. One of our AIP goals was to increase volunteer engagement which may fit into the AARP grant, Increasing Civil Engagement and Employment this. We may use this grant to help get people to volunteer. The challenge grant is up to \$5000 and application must be submitted by April 17th. Ellen has sense that our committee is held in high regard and we should submit a grant proposal

Ellen has talked with Wendy and Dana about this grant for increasing communication and discussion of how the town currently communicates. Currently the rec department sends out a brochure but there are questions about how effective this is in communicating with citizens. The library's newsletter and the rec departments brochure are expensive to produce and mail mail and may not be getting the response which is wanted. It was also suggested that Eliot residents be asked to provide their email address so that it can be used as an information sharing (not marketing) mechanism for the town. Perhaps we could look at getting a consultant via the grant. The grant may provide an opportunity to help us figure how to effectively communicate with town citizens.

The owner of Sweet Dirt has indicated that he would like to support the town in any way he can. It was suggested that he come to one of our meeting so that we can possibly suggest what we need.

During the presentation (on March 2nd) it is important for us to emphasize that this is just the beginning of our action plan. We also plan to work on transportation options, support the availability for affordable housing, create vibrant public spaces, etc.

Update of School Contact:

The graphics art teacher and printing class will do the logo project, but won't it be completed until the end of the school year.

Motion: Nedra moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by ron

Jean, Nedra, Ron, Ellen and Gail voted in favor, none opposed.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:31

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Licciardello