

AGING IN PLACE COMMITTEE

MINUTES 03-18-2021 (virtual meeting)



Mission: The AIP mission is to provide advocacy for changes in Eliot's physical, economic, and social environment that enable Eliot residents, especially older residents, to live in their homes for as long as possible and that foster the creation of services and programs geared to keeping all residents active and engaged in the community.

Present: Ellen Ceppetelli, Melissa Layman, Gail Licciardello, Ann Lukejord, Nedra Sahr, Melissa Albert

Absent: Michele Meyer

Guests: none

Meeting called to order at: 4:00 pm

Check-in:

Ellen announced the need for an agenda change as the Select Board meeting will start early at 5:15pm and as such, asked that the presentation on volunteers be moved to next week. All agreed. Melissa L volunteered to serve as timekeeper. As the discussion on the Planning Board's ADU meeting was shorter than anticipated, Ellen replaced the ADU agenda item with discussion on benches and celebration.

Review of Minutes of 2-18-2021 meeting:

The Committee accepted the Minutes from the 2-18-2021 meeting without change. Ann to submit the Minutes to the Town Clerk.

MOTION: Gail moved to accept the Minutes. Melissa L seconded the motion. Ellen, Melissa L, Gail, Ann, and Nedra. All approved. No one opposed.

Chair Update:

Ellen reported on the Tuesday, March 16, 2021, meeting held by the Planning Commission on ADUs (accessible dwelling units). Ellen, Melissa L, and Gail attended the virtual meeting and were the only attendees in addition to the commission members. Ellen thought conversations had been happening outside formal meetings as specifics about ADUs had changed since the earlier meeting. Ellen reported the amendment raises the ADU size to 1,000 square feet and does not include a 30-day rental minimum clause. Thoughts were shared about what this means for short-term home-rentals (Airbnbs, etc.) in Eliot. Melissa L added that the Planning Commission meeting went much smoother than she expected and credited that to the removal of the rental time minimum.

Ellen shared that the Maine Community Fund has granted AIP \$2,100.00 for two benches to be installed in town. This news was received with enthusiasm. The two new benches will bring the total number of public AIP benches to seven. The funds are scheduled to be approved by the Select Board on March 25, 2021, and once approved should be available to AIP.

Ellen said she was hoping to discuss bike safety in town as Gail attended a webinar on the topic. If there is not time, the topic will be added to a later meeting.

Treasurer's Report:

Gail presented the Treasurer's Report (which is attached) and discussion followed.

MOTION: Nedra moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. Ann seconded the motion. Ellen, Melissa L, Gail, Ann, and Nedra all approved. No one opposed. The Treasurer's Report was approved.

Information and Communication Committee:

The discussion on volunteers was moved to April, given the shortened meeting time. Nedra welcomed this as it also gives her more time to work on her presentation.

Foundation for Arts and Healing:

Discussion focused on funds in the AIP account for Foundation for Arts and Healing/AIP initiatives, specifically the Creativity Circle. Funds in the account are \$1740.00 with an anticipated payment of \$1000.00 to the manager of the Creativity Club, Deborah Lloyd. Ellen reported that once the program is over (first week of April), she will send the Foundation for Arts and Healing an invoice and the Foundation will send AIP \$1000.00 in funding, which will be made in two half payments. Once AIP pays Deborah Lloyd \$1000 and then receives the additional \$1000 honorarium from the Foundation, AIP will have \$1740.00 in its account to use as AIP sees fit.

Discussion turned to paying Deborah Lloyd more than the \$1000.00 as she has done such a great job setting up the meetings virtually and running the Creativity Circle. Additionally, Ms. Lloyd would like to continue to do so in the future, continuing in the fall. Everyone applauded Ms. Lloyd's efforts and success: the first group from the fall, the Creativity Club, is running itself after Ms. Lloyd got it going, and the second group started this winter, the Creativity Circle, is doing great with members forming friendships beyond the Circle. The Foundation for Arts and Healing has asked if the two groups could be combined to further enhance their success and engagement. All agreed that would be a great idea.

Nedra suggested paying Deborah Lloyd a good-faith \$1250.00 to keep her for future activities. Ann suggested paying Deborah Lloyd the \$1000.00 and then having the remaining funds to pay her for future groups. The Board decided to pay Deb the agreed-upon \$1000.00 and see how best to use the remaining funds for future summer or fall offerings. Nedra shared that planning for October and November is best as everyone is out and about during the warm summer months.

Ellen reported that the Foundation for Arts and Healing is considering new avenues to pay for this creativity program in the future. Ellen asked Gail to report on her findings. Gail reported that her Medicare provider is Martin's Point in Maine and that she had read in the most recent Martin's Point newsletter that Medicare is partnering with the Foundation for Arts and Healing to continue the creativity groups. All agreed that would be terrific. Gail shared the newsletter with Melissa A to scan and share with the committee members, which Melissa A will do.

MOTION: Gail moved that AIP pay Deborah Lloyd \$1000.00 to continue this period's work on the Creative Club. Ann seconded the motion. Nedra added that it would be great to interview the participants and put on a video to promote the program and share their stories in the Sentinel and Eliot Strong and other avenues. Ellen shared AIP can certainly get that feedback. All approved, no one opposed. Ellen will direct Jordan Miles, Eliot town treasurer, to send one check to Deborah Lloyd for \$1000.00.

Report for the NE Grassroots Fund

Ellen spoke about the report for the NE Grassroots Fund and asked for feedback and ideas, as the report's preference is that not just one person write the report but that others are involved. Additionally, Ellen wanted to hear and include everyone's ideas and thoughts.

Ellen reminded everyone that AIP received the funds on the 8th of April 2020 and has until the 8th of April 2021 to get the report in. Ellen reported that there remains \$571.78 in AIP's NE Grassroots Fund. Ellen directed members to consider if AIP can spend those funds in the next two and a half weeks. A second question is does NE Grassroots Fund want the unused funds back or could we propose that we keep and use them for something that might be related to the consequences of the pandemic. Ellen reported that AIP brought in \$12,150.00 since the NE Grassroots Fund, not because of the NE Grassroots Fund, but since it.

The first question asks, "How is your project progressing and describe its evolution?" Discussion centered around AIP's goal to provide funds for those in need of food, medicine, and other necessities. Ellen said AIP partnered with Eliot Strong which was already delivering food to people and AIP proposed using the NE Grassroots Fund money to reimburse food-delivery people for mileage. Gail shared that there were one or two residents who ran into home mechanical or appliance problems and AIP paid for the repairs from the fund. The Eliot residents had called into the Town to see if help was available and the Town had directed them to AIP. Melissa L reported that AIP found an outpouring of people helping others, and as such, AIP funds were not needed as anticipated. Ellen said she called around to see who needed help and contacted Amanda Ouellette at the Southern Maine Agency on Aging and Karen Brown at Eliot's Footprints Pantry every month to see how AIP could help. Gail said the food pantry hired local restaurants to prepare food for residents in need, which helped those in need and supported now out of work local restaurant workers. Nedra said the Eliot Baptist Church's Thursday food pantry was another organization that did a great job meeting the need. Ellen said through AIP's Eliot Strong connection, AIP was able to help a woman who had a water heater problem with NE Grassroots Fund money. AIP also helped a woman who received food stamps assistance after her husband died but then received a notice that she received more than she was eligible for so she was charged for those food stamps; AIP supported the woman by giving her \$200 toward that charge.

The next question asks, "What factors helped move your project forward?" Members shared that key elements to moving the project forward included generosity of Eliot residents, leadership of Eliot Strong and others, and the sense of trust that developed and lead to deeper conversations to understand an individual's need which was the only way to identify individual need. Nedra noted that the emotional and mental strain on seniors and all citizens has been difficult and wondered if

there is an area for us to plug into to help heal some of that in the future. Ellen added that social isolation became a real issue which led to participating with the Foundation for Arts and Healing and the online Creativity Circle groups to combat feelings of isolation. Ellen added that through the grant AIP became much more aware of what was needed as the grant forced AIP to stop and consider need. Discussion turned to keeping the funds for continued and unforeseen challenges due to the pandemic. The members agreed the \$571.78 is not a lot of money but still could make a meaningful difference for someone in need. Nedra suggested expressing to NE Grassroots Fund that AIP would like to build on what has been done using the remaining funds to meet needs that are developing now but will not manifest until this period is over.

The next question is, "Have members of your group become more active in other groups as a result of your involvement?" The members pointed to partnering with Eliot Connects of which AIP member Melissa L is an active member and Eliot Strong. Additionally, grants provided to AIP for the benches led to AIP partnering with the local garden club, Eliot public works, and a talented volunteer Eliot carpenter who helped select the benches, all of which led to improved natural space in which to social distance. Additionally, this effort led to encouraging people to get outside and enjoy the natural beauty while practicing social distancing.

Ellen added that funds have been received from the Maine Community Fund to add two more benches. AIP members applauded this enthusiastically. Ellen added that the Successful Aging initiative served to reduce social isolation. From that work, AIP received \$3,000.00 and will receive another \$2,000.00. Ellen explained that connecting with other agencies from the start of the pandemic was essential and that, as a result, AIP has brought in more than \$12,000.00 in assistance into the community.

The next question asks about changes in the community, particularly environmental ones. The question seemed unclear and its meaning was discussed to answer it best. Gail shared AIP has increased knowledge on how ADUs work. Nedra shared AIP has also identified a lot of needs around the town. Melissa L highlighted her newly gained awareness about bike-ability and walkability around town. Ellen added that the work AIP has done has advanced the members' as well as the residents' awareness to these issues. Ellen shared that she wrote in the report that since AIP's inception in 2017 attention has been given to the senior tax credit, ADUs, and bike-ability and walkability.

The next question focused on environmentally based changes. All agreed the installation of the benches in open spaces has increased public use of these open spaces, advanced the town's collective appreciation for these spaces, and sparked more attention to the town's waterfront. In addition, everyone has become more aware of walkability issues in Eliot, members and others have an increased understanding of the challenges of walking and biking around town. Nedra shared that the walk around the Boat Basin could be improved. Such an effort would require funds and input from a knowledgeable expert but ultimately would add to people's interaction with a beautiful natural space. Ellen added that AIP could use both NE Grassroots Fund money and Town money for a plan to enhance the trail. Everyone agreed that calling the NE Grassroots Fund to see if the remaining AIP funds could be used to improve the trail is a good idea. Melissa L noted that there is an Eliot resident who is promoting via social media a spring clean-up around town and asking others

to join her to remove roadside trash. Melissa L said perhaps AIP could work with her as she is gathering people's emails. All agreed. Ellen suggested that improving the trail at Dead Duck/Eliot Boat Basin be an April agenda item.

The report final question is, "What additional skills or training would help?" All agreed trail maintenance. Melissa L asked if the trail is town property. Gail asked Melissa A who confirmed that Dead Duck/Eliot Boat Basin is state land that the Town of Eliot manages.

Bench Security and Celebration

Gail reported on her findings concerning bench security. She spoke with Tom O'Donnell who directed her to Steve Robinson about cement slabs. Mr. Robinson said five concrete slabs would cost \$3000.00. The other two non-cement options are Hellanker anchors that are attached and embedded in the ground and plywood attached to the feet of the benches and buried in the ground. Melissa L spoke from experience stating that the anchors are preferred over plywood as the plywood breaks down and may cause environmental issues. Gail agreed that the anchors seem the more straightforward way to secure them. The anchors cost \$222.00 and more research is needed to see if they will ensure the level of security needed to keep the benches in place. Ellen suggested speaking with Tracy Dunton, a former AIP board member, who had ideas in this area. Melissa L described a PVC technique that might also work. Melissa L will reach out to Tracy Dunton to see what information she might have for AIP.

A celebration for the new benches was discussed with concerns about asking people to gather with the pandemic still causing health concerns. While late May or April were desirable times, all thought, given the pandemic, aiming for a possible Saturday or Sunday date in July was best. It was noted that Eliot Festival Days take place the last Saturday in September traditionally. Planning a celebration will be put on the April agenda. Melissa L suggested having a raffle or prize as part of the celebration. Nedra said July might be a good time and that it is important to wait until the benches are secured. Nedra added a summer or early fall event would be best to use the event to help gather volunteers to work on the trail. Ellen shared that the Town's upcoming March 29th budget meeting will take place inside the Marshwood Middle School, given the governor's new rules that one hundred people can gather inside if they social distance. All agreed July would provide more time to get the benches in and get some gardening around them. The topic of the bench celebration will be put on the agenda for April. Talk turned to where to put the two new benches once the Select Board approves the funds. At Nedra's request, Gail will contact Heather Muzeroll-Roy, director of the Eliot Community Service Department about the trail.

Melissa L shared Bike Safety information from the recent webinar on the topic. She said that one thing is clear in every community: it is a challenge to identify and make changes that improve bike-ability and walkability. Gail added that there a lot of resources out there to create bike-ability and that it is not an easy subject. Ellen suggested rescheduling discussion on bike-ability to April, given the need to end the AIP meeting for the Select Board meeting. All agreed.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Check-out:

Gail motioned to adjourn the meeting, Nedra seconded. All in favor, no one opposed. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Lukejord

AIP TREASURER'S REPORT

March 15, 2021

Grass Roots Funds:

No expenses, balance remains	\$571.78
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Town Budget Funds:

No expenses, balance remains	\$2882.40
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Arts and Humanities Funds:

Previous Balance	\$740.03
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Additional grant money received.

(although not yet accepted by the select board)	\$1000.00
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New Balance =	\$1740.03
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Prepared by Gail Licciardello