

Eliot Aging in Place Committee Public Meeting Summary

May 22, 2019

Present: Ellen Ceppetelli, Ron Ceppetelli (arrived late), Jan Cerabona, Gail

Licciardello, Jean Paulantonio, Helen Sullivan, Nancy Shapleigh and Phyl Lytle (AIP select board liaison)

Public: 11 members of the public attended and participated

After committee members and residents introduced themselves, Ellen then reviewed the AARP definition of Livable Communities, which is:

- Safe and secure
- Affordable/appropriate house and transportation options
- Offers supportive community features & services
- Once in place those resources enhance personal independence
- Allows residents to age in place and fosters their engagement in the community's civic, economic, and social life. (These are Age Friendly Communities)

Ellen then indicated that the Eliot Aging in Place Committee is committed to building on Eliot's strength to enhance resident's ability to age in place regardless of age. She then reviewed the Eight Domains of Livability for an Age Friendly Community. They are as follows:

1. Housing (property tax relief and accessory dwelling ordinances)
2. Transportation (lack of public transportation)
3. Communication/Information (regarding local events, services, activities, not easy to find)
4. Outdoor spaces/buildings: (walkability, pedestrian & bike safety)
5. Social participation
6. Community support and health services
7. Respect and social inclusion
8. Civic Participation and Employment

The plan was to split into groups of 4 and then look at the top 4 domains that were identified in the Eliot survey; reviewing what works in Eliot, what needs

were identified in survey and to select 2 specific goals. The participants then opted to discuss each of those domains as a group, rather than splitting up.

In looking at each domain the plan was to look at strategies to meet goals, obstacles /solutions, partners, actions steps (start/finish) and evaluation. The discussion on each domain is as follows:

HOUSING:

Obstacles identified were questions about building codes, property taxes, additional dwelling units (ADU) are now limited to 650'

Partners: the planning board

Actions Steps: possibly incentivize people with codes to build cluster housing

New Ideas: For Property tax relief and affordable housing, the following was suggested: a graduated tax plan, need for economic development to help with tax burden. Limits on how much taxes can go up. It was also noted that property tax reduction will bring in less revenue to maintain the town budget: competition between services for children and elders, a complex issue when there are scarce financial resources and thus may be a long-term project.

Assistance with Property Maintenance for seniors. It was reported that the Eliot Baptist Church offers some of these services for their church members via volunteers.

TRANSPORTATION: The problem is lack of public transportation

What works in Eliot: UBER, LIFT, Taxis are available, and York and Wentworth Douglas hospitals provide transportation for medical appointments to (their facilities), the recreation department van does provide transport to scheduled events for the elderly (but feedback as been that it is not easy for some to enter and get off the van).

Strategies: volunteer drivers, neighbors helping out

Obstacles: no local grocery store, thus further transport is needed. No water/sewer to support local businesses, how to get volunteers, Some solutions may be to look for soft ware support to organize volunteer drivers, check into coastal transport, and in the not too distant future there may be driverless cars,

and many stores will be providing delivery of groceries. Another obstacle is that there is no water/sewer to support new businesses that may want to come into town.

Possible Partners: South Berwick volunteer transportation program, and organizations that provide computer access and/or training, the community services department, Maine Age Friendly communities who have similar volunteer programs, The iTN website may be a good resource.

Outdoor spaces and Buildings:

Goal is pedestrian safety and recreational space for people in Eliot. Taking back and /or utilizing existing space

What works in Eliot: The sidewalk from the elementary school to the library is safe for children to walk (approx. 1/2mile), there is a trail behind the Eliot Elementary School. There is a book walk (story boards) in the Douglas woods, the Boat basin is available, but underutilized. There is a growing interest in pickle ball in Eliot, the tennis courts may provide some space for pickle ball. The current skate park is not being used. The cost of removing the skate park is unknown.

Some strategies: community gardens, need for senior/community center, and need to find volunteers

Obstacles/solutions. Who owns the skate park? Who owns the land? Crystal volunteered to research this with Heather at the community services department. Possibility of expanding sidewalks would be costly: question whether property owners would want their land used for sidewalks, how to determine what areas of town would be selected for sidewalks, at the AIP committee has obtained

The current sidewalk is limited to State Road, speeding on roads in town is a safety issue for bikers and walkers.

Partners: Select Board, Planning Board, University of Maine, "fellow," Darryll Tattua from the Great Works Land trust has expressed interest in partnering to create a walking path on their Savage property in Eliot/S Berwick. The Maine DOT has a bicycle and pedestrian initiative: Americawalks.org, AARP walkability audit tool.

Action step: talk with the town to take down the skate park.

Pedestrian/ Bike safety:

Goal: to explore the possibility of expanding areas of strength

Strategies: explore funding, consider one-way roads

Obstacles/Solutions: Question the legality of using pipelines and electric lines as walking paths, whose property is involved, who will pay for it? Concerning utilizing Spinney Creek, there is potential for public access, but currently there is none, possibly utilize TIF money

Possible partners: Green Acres, Great works land trust. The Maine DOT has bicycle and pedestrian initiative. America walks.org., possibly developing walking pathways in the area, not specifically sidewalks

Communication and Information:

What works in Eliot: Lots of people in Eliot want to volunteer, the library, community services newsletter, church bulletins, historical society newsletter, The Sentinel

The goal is that community events, services and activities need to be better communicated

Strategies: obstacles/solutions: Partner with the town website with links to services, websites. Partner with the faith community, collect the emails of volunteers and/or people who want to be kept informed of AIP's activities. Develop a directory.

Needs identified in survey: improving the website, e.g. where to volunteers and resources, Eliot online could be used to communicate. Someone from AIP committee needs to communicate with the TIF committee

Final Comments

Ellen indicated that the AARP of Maine had recently approved a grant of \$2500 that will be used to hire a consultant to assist in writing the Eliot AIP action plan that will then be presented to the select board. Additionally the town of Eliot has been assigned a Lifelong Communities Fellow (LFC) to assist the town in implementing the action plan. The LCF program was developed as a partnership between the University of Maine Center on Aging's Encore Leadership Corps and Maine Community Foundation.

Ellen thanked all the participants for attending and actively participating.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55pm

Respectfully submitted

Gail Licciardello