**Committee Members Present**: Maureen Booth, Ann Hartzler, Grace McCarthy, Peggy Muir, Barbara Rollins and Deb Smith

**Absent**: Mary Kelley and Karen Mayo

**Staff**: Jason Lamoreau

**Guests**: Debbie Atwood, Donor& Volunteer Engagement Specialist, Habitat for Humanity

Yvette Meunier, Bowdoinham Director of Planning & Development

**I CALL TO ORDER**

Maureen established a quorum.

**II APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The Agenda was approved as distributed.

**III APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the May 8, 2023 meeting were approved as distributed.

**IV Critical Home Repair, Habitat for Humanity**

Jason welcomed Debbie Atwood, Volunteer Engagement Director for Habitat for Humanity in Topsham, to provide an overview of Habitat’s programs for home repair. Ms. Atwood indicated that Habitat has a current hiatus in home building given the high costs of materials which have more than doubled over the past few years. Instead Habitat is focusing on home repair and their Restore operations. Ms. Atwood noted that the Restore program is relocating to the old CVS building on Route 1 in Bath and that it should open in several weeks.

Habitat has created two teams of volunteers to work on home repair: a formal partnership with Aging at Home provides repair services in Harpswell and a second team covers Brunswick, Sagadahoc and Lincoln counties. Repairs include ramps, minor electrical and plumbing and general repairs but does not include roofs, window weatherization or major electrical and plumbing work. There is a $1500 limit to materials per project, which does not include materials available through Restore. Labor is covered by volunteers who are covered by liability insurance through Habitat.

The program is restricted to homeowners who must complete the application on the Habitat website and meet their income guidelines. Once a homeowner and project are determined eligible, a home assessment is conducted to confirm the scope of the project. Generally there is a lead time of a few weeks before a project is initiated. Jason questioned if assistance is available to help homeowners who do not use the internet; the committee volunteered to offer assistance as needed.

Ms. Atwood distributed flyers and encouraged the Committee to get the word out. Peggy suggested that Habitat join the Age Friendly table at Celebrate Bowdoinham and also approach Voc 10 about engaging students as volunteers. Peggy also noted that there is likely to be future demand for building accessory dwelling units both within and outside homes.

Follow-up Action

1. Peggy will take the lead on planning for Celebrate Bowdoinham and will contact Ms. Atwood about being a part of the Age Friendly table.
2. Jason will display the flyers in the Town Office

**V. Expansion of Town Sidewalks**

Maureen welcomed Yvette, the Town’s Planning & Development Director, to discuss an upcoming grant opportunity through DOT to expand the Town’s sidewalks. Yvette explained that the grant request, which is due on July 14, focuses on improving access to critical resources. Bowdoinham will be requesting funds to install sidewalks from the corner of School and up the west side of Main Street toward Post Road. If approved, this will be a 3-year project involving 9-10 right of ways from neighbors affected by the sidewalks.

Ann noted that she was part of Committee work when the current sidewalks were installed and reinforced the importance of communication with the affected neighbors. Without exception, the Committee expressed support for the proposal, noting that the project would help address the most dangerous curve in the Town. Maureen offered to assist Yvette in making the case for the benefits of sidewalks for older residents to both improve safety and to provide greater access to essential Town services and recreational opportunities at the Waterfront.

Follow-up Action

1. Yvette will let Jason know if further information is needed from the Committee.

**VI. Staff Report**

Jason reported on activities during the past month:

* Major budget decisions will be part of the June 14 Town Meeting, including changing the Recreation/Age Friendly position from part time to full time. This increase, along with others such as ambulance service and public works will increase the total budget by 11% over last year
* The Committee has spent only $635 of its $3300 budget due in large part to donations and grant funds.
* New Town Office hours for the public will be 11am – 6 pm on Wednesday only; all other days it will remain at 8:30 am – 4:00 pm.
* Jason attended a meeting of Maine’s Lifelong Communities to share resources and learn from one another on priority issues. Maureen attended the morning session and noted that Jason is one of a handful of town employees supporting age friendly activities and that, by comparison, Bowdoinham was especially fortunate to have someone with his background and skills.
* Kathryn Harnish will be our Fellow for the small dementia grant we received to evaluate how to make the Waterfront Trails more accessible to everyone, including the use of improved signage for easy understanding.

**VII Coalition Building**

Maureen noted that Peggy, Jason and she met to discuss a proposal for bringing Coalition partners together for a first meeting. However, through a mis-communication on her part, the group’s recommendation is not available at this time.

Follow-up Action

1. A discussion on coalition building will take place at the July meeting

**VIII Universal Design Project**

To orient members to the concept of universal design, Jason showed a brief video on the 7 principles of UD and how they apply in housing. The principles include:

* Equitable use: design is useful and beneficial to people with diverse abilities
* Flexibility in Use: accommodates wide range of preferences (e.g., a museum that offers reading or listening options for descriptions of exhibits.
* Simple and intuitive. Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge & language skills (e.g., control buttons rather than digital screens).
* Perceptible information. The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of user's sensory abilities (e.g, use of waterfalls to guide someone with visual impairments).
* Tolerance for error. The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions (e.g., signage that gently reorients someone who makes a wrong turn).
* Low physical effort. The design can be used efficiently and comfortably, and with a minimum of fatigue (e.g., doors that open automatically).
* Size and space for approach and use. The design provides appropriate size and space for approach, reach, manipulation, and use, regardless of the user's body size, posture, or mobility (e.g., a desk that can be lowered or raised).

With reference to housing, UD makes it accessible for a wide range of people to live in, and for individuals at varying stages of life. Jason noted that the first meeting of the UD Project Team is scheduled for June 20. Ann and Grace expressed interest in attending the meeting and becoming part of the project team. Peggy questioned whether builders, contractors and individuals with disabilities should be part of the project from the beginning to assure its relevance. Maureen noted that a beta test was planned with contractors, homeowners and other users and that adding additional voices upfront would make meeting the November deadline impossible. Jason further noted that the Guide would not be creating new knowledge but rather putting it in a format to be easily accessible to a broader group of users. Jason also noted that he is a contractor and can represent that group during development stages.

**IX Updates**

* *Resource Directory and Flyer:* Jason handed out laminated flyers to members. More are being developed for distribution at the following locations: town office, food pantry, library, Bowdoinham Estates and for distribution at Celebrate Bowdoinham, by Rides in Neighbors’ Cars, Age Friendly luncheons, and other events. The Resource Directory is finished but must still be placed on the website in a manner that includes a search function.
* *Waterfront Trail Accessibility:* Jason reported that a small group met with Enoch Glidden, a consultant brought in by the Committee, to review options for making the trails more accessible to a broad range of people. Enoch confirmed the challenge of making the yellow trail accessible given that multiple boardwalks would be required to allow passage over large rocks and water. He suggested focusing on a new trail off the blue trail could go to the water over grasslands that would still require modifications but not as extensive as with the yellow trail. Enoch measured the slope of the blue trail and found that it is within range of being considered accessible for wheelchairs. There was also talk of a placing an accessible picnic table on a trail. Enoch will submit a report within a month, including recommendations that will also address ways to improve signage.
* *August 13 Concert Supper.* Maureen confirmed that George has agreed to help plan and execute a dinner menu. Deb, Grace and Barbara offered to join the team for planning, prepping, serving and clean up. Peggy suggested adding tables on the lawn to make eating easier for older attendees.
* *Luncheons:* Barbara reported that all was going well with the luncheons and that none were planned for July or August. Peggy reported that she has confirmed speakers for September and October: Jenn Stonebaker and a woman who does house clean-outs. Better promotion for the luncheons was discussed. Peggy proposed developing “campaign like” signs that could be put up the week before a luncheon reminding folks of the upcoming lunch. She will contact Banana Banners about developing signs.
* *Summer Meeting Schedule:* After initial thoughts to cancel the August meeting, it was decided that there were too many pressing issues to skip a month.

*Follow-up Action:*

1. Jason will place racks for the Resource Flyer in the locations mentioned above.
2. Maureen will contact Jenn Stonebaker about use of her facilities for the August 13 concert.
3. Maureen will set up a meeting with George and members of the committee who volunteered to assist with the August 13 concert supper.
4. Peggy will finalize luncheon speakers for September and October.
5. Peggy will contact Banana Banners about making signs that could be used repeatedly advertising Age Friendly luncheons.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for July 10, 2023.

| **Approved by:** |  |  |
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| Peggy Muir, Co-Chair |  | Date |
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Maureen Booth, Co-Chair Date

| Jason Lamoreau, Age-Friendly Coordinator |  | Date |
| --- | --- | --- |