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

**Staff**: Jason Lamoreau (via zoom)

**Guests**: Sue Stableford, Plain language expert

**I CALL TO ORDER**

Maureen established a quorum and called the meeting to order

**II APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The Agenda was approved as distributed.

**III APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the June 12, 2023 meeting were approved as distributed.

**IV Universal Design Project**

Maureen welcomed Sue Stableford, a member of the UD project team with specific expertise in plain language. Maureen reported that the project team( Jason, Grace, Maureen, Sue Stableford, and Alpha One disability experts Jill Johanning and Jessica Russell) have been meeting every two weeks since the project was approved by AARP in late June. Maureen reminded members that the primary audience for the guide is residents who know nothing or little about universal design. Contractors are a secondary audience for focus after publication of the guide. The goal of the guide is to build awareness about the concept and to motivate residents to further explore how universal design can be applied to make homes safer and easier to use by everyone regardless of age and ability. Another major feature of the guide is that it will be written in plain language to attract the broadest possible audience.

Rough mock-up guides were distributed for members to privately review for 5 minutes. Afterwards, each member expressed what they liked and disliked about the brochure. A summary of these comments follows:

* Without exception, members felt positive about the brochure. Positive remarks included: simple, clear text; reference to friends and families who may visit your home as a motivation to consider UD; use of local examples and individuals; the concept of “update, remodel and build” helped to differentiate the degree of difficulty and cost in implementing UD; the resource list may motivate residents to look further into ideas.
* Major general areas of concern focused on: the cost of implementing UD; the length of the brochure as an environmental issue
* Recommendations for changing the current text included:

P.3 – term “lever” is not readily understood

P. 4 – terms “keyless lock” and “grade level” i not readily understood

P. 8 – the description and/or picture of no step shower should include a bench.

P.10 – “1 or 2” should be written out; the term “products” is not readily understood; ‘great design” should be changed to “universal design” to be consistent.

P. 11- Numbers should be converted to bullets to be consistent; #1 should be revised to read: “Can you or a person …”

* Thoughts about items not currently addressed within the draft brochure included: the newly built Sanford home was designed with universal principles and could be featured; opportunities for bulk purchasing or partnerships with other communities should be considered to help bring down the cost; many safety issues impede access even with the installation of UD ideas, such as plowing of sidewalks and driveways; reference to accessory dwelling units (ADUs) would help connect the project to other Town initiatives.

Sue thanked members for their review and ideas for improving the brochure while acknowledging that not all recommendations can be incorporated. It was agreed that some of the ideas, such as working with the Age Friendly network, should be pursued as approaches for potentially reducing costs to residents.

The next phase of work, after considering Committee comments and making edits, is graphic design and layout. After completion of the brochure but before printing, several beta tests are planned to solicit feedback from residents who have no knowledge of the project. The suggestion was made to test the brochure at one of the luncheons; Maureen hesitated given the size of the group compared to a normal beta test with 6.-8 individuals.

Follow-up:

1. The Project Team will consider the comments from the Committee and make edits.

**V Jason’s Staff Report**

Jason reported that with the passage of the Town budget he was now working full time, splitting his time between recreation and age friendly. Everyone applauded. Other items included:

* New LED lighting has been installed throughout the Town Office and eventually in streetlights.
* A DOT application has been submitted to extend Town sidewalks along Main Street to the Post Road
* Noel Bonam, the new Maine director for AARP, requested a meeting with Town officials and co-chairs of the Age Friendly Committee to discuss the integration of age friendly activities within Town government. Jason expects this meeting to occur in early Fall.
* Although the Property Tax Stabilization Act was canceled after this year, Jason described property tax deferral programs which remain in effect, such as deferral of taxes till the time of death or the sale of a house.

A lengthy discussion took place regarding an issue that has come to the Town’s attention involving an older resident who has been hospitalized multiple times in the past 6 months due to falls. His physician has authorized a referral for a lift chair to Medicare. However, it was learned that Medicare only pays for the cost of the motor and requires full payment on a chair from a Durable Medical Equipment supplier prior to approving the reimbursement. Cost for lift chairs range from $200 to $1000+. Maureen noted that Catholic Charities has offered to contribute $200 toward the purchase of a chair.

The question raised to the Committee was whether it was an appropriate use of our reserve funds to help purchase the chair which we estimate to cost $500-$1000. The following points were discussed:

* Once funds are used for one person, additional requests are likely to follow. On what basis would we decide?
* Are we sure the lift chair would be helpful to this person? Have efforts been made to find other ways to help with his transfer out of chair? Is he cognitively capable of using the chair? Could the life chair itself be dangerous to use?
* What responsibility is the family taking to help pay for the Chair? The full burden should not fall on others.
* Is this the best use of our reserve fund? Funds could be used to help more people than just one.
* This issue is complex and beyond the ability of our Committee to solve. Systems problems mean that Medicare/Medicaid funds expensive nursing facility care while not reimbursing the costs for simple items that allow older people to stay in their own homes. The Committee should bring the issue to the attention of Sally Cluchey and Cabinet on Aging.
* This is not an isolated need. The Committee should consider developing an emergency fund through a donor drive.

The Committee could not reach a consensus. A vote was taken on whether to use the Age Friendly reserve to supplement funds from Catholic Charities to purchase a lift chair. By a vote of 5 to 2 (with Grace absent at this point in the meetin), the decision was made to use the Age Friendly reserve to help purchase a lift chair. It was generally decided that this should be considered a pilot and that more thought should be given to the creation of an emergency fund.

Follow-up:

1. Jason and Maureen will follow up with the resident to select appropriate options.
2. Working with Catholic Charities, a lift chair will be purchased with reserve funds.
3. Consider creating an emergency fund at future Committee meeting.
4. Maureen will communicate with Rep Cluchey and the Cabinet on Aging regarding this issue.

**VI Coalition Meeting**

The Committee reviewed a proposal for moving forward on hosting an initial Coalition meeting. There was agreement that the first Coalition meeting should be focused on two programs of the Sagadahoc Sherriff’s Office: an alert system for adults who wander and a call-back program. Many of the same stakeholders who were part of last September’s Listening Sessions would be invited to learn about the programs and discuss whether there is value in continuing to meet on other shared concerns and interests. Given all else that was going on, the decision was made to schedule the meeting in January 2024, although invitations should be sent out far in advance.

Follow-up:

1. Jason will work with Sherriff Huntington to find a suitable date and invite stakeholders.

**VII Luncheons**

Peggy raised the question on whether we wish to reschedule the September 14 luncheon since it falls right before Celebrate Bowdoinham. Since the date has already been publicized and Jenn Stonebaker has agreed to speak, members agreed that the date should not be changed.

Follow-up:

1. Peggy will work with the Luncheon Committee to finalize plans for the September luncheon.

**VIII Celebrate Bowdoinham**

Peggy noted that she will take the lead on Age Friendly’s participation in Celebrate. She suggested a presence in the parade and it was agreed that some members would walk together representing the Committee. Peggy passed around a clipboard on which members signed up for two-hour shifts at the Age Friendly table during Celebrate.

Follow up:

1. Peggy will follow up with Jason and Committee members about plans for the parade and the booth.

**IX Freedom of Information Training and Certificate**

Prior to the meeting, members received slides on the Freedom of Information Act that pertains to public access to materials generated by the Committee. Given the lateness of the hour and the complexity of the topic, Maureen suggested that the discussion be postponed until the September meeting when more time can be devoted to the topic and Jason could be physically present to answer questions regarding Committee member responsibilities.

Follow up:

1. Freedom of Information Training and Certificate will be included on the agenda for the September meeting.

**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 |
| --- | --- | --- |