

Draft
Mayor's Senior Advisory Committee
June 24, 2019, 1:30 pm
Saratoga Springs Recreation Center (Interim City Hall)
15 Vanderbilt Avenue, Saratoga Springs, 12866

Attended by members: Susan Brennan, Celeste Caruso, Phil Diamond, Jared Littleboy, Chuck Meagher, Jay Portnoy, Barb Thomas, Anne Trainor, Mayor Meg Kelly (briefly, towards end of meeting), Ann Sheppard, Dee Sarno

Also present: Lois Celeste (Senior Center), Denise Yannaci (OFA), M. Lynn Bachner (Executive Assistant to the Mayor)

Excused / Absent: Cliff Ammon, Tammy D'Ercole, Nancy Cameron,

Minutes of 4-19-19 (Celeste, Jared) were unanimously accepted as written.

Resignation received from Nedra Stimpfle on 6-20-19:

Good Morning, Barbara. Certainly with regret, I need to leave the Committee. I support all you are doing and wish you well as you go forward.

Arts and Recreation Committee Report (Jay, Dee, Cliff) - John Hirliman, Director of the Recreation Center, had met with the members of the A. and R. Committee to discuss available space and possibilities for activities. Those in charge of the Center are open to different types of activities, some focusing particularly on Senior Citizens. Ti-Chi was mentioned as a possible program for seniors, as well as Arts and Crafts. While not wanting to duplicate other programs and activities in the community, the Rec Center is envisioning having space for local artists to perform and/or exhibit their act.

Clergy Advisory Committee Report (Barb, Nancy) - This committee had met with the clergy and were primarily concerned with the plight of the homeless population in Saratoga and the need for shelter especially during the winter months. The Mayor arrived later in the meeting and was able to give more information about this issue.

The Clergy in Saratoga has been looking into getting funds from the state regarding shelter for the homeless. The Mayor has been involved, looking for a "permanent code blue shelter." The interest now is looking to purchase land at the edge of the city. There already seems to be a piece of land already identified which may be a possibility. It is important that the proposed shelter not be disruptive to a neighborhood so a location in the urban center is virtually ruled out. It is also important that the convenience and availability of transportation be part of the plan.

Report of Transportation Committee (Chuck, Jared, Ann T, Ann S, Susan, Tammy) - This committee met several times and learned what a complicated issue this is with many

facets. They researched the methods of transportation available for seniors. CDTA, the area mass transit system, is understandably limited due to the size of Saratoga and the physical inconvenience for many seniors. Office for Aging provides some assistance with transportation but is clearly "topped out" due to the volume of the need. The Senior Center does have a service that can provide rides to and from the Center for those attending programs at the Center. But here the growing need for transportation is clearly affected by the availability of volunteers at the same time that the population of seniors is growing.

The available cab services, including Uber and Lift, can be expensive and unpredictable (sometimes unexpected wait times) can be inconvenient and disconcerting for seniors with physical and other problems. Limited hours for doctors and other specialists can only add to complications for seniors who are trying to negotiate travel arrangements on a daily basis.

The committee plans to continue their research to better understand the issues and to explore possible routes to address this issue. Phil Diamond did mention that he would talk to Angelo (?) some official in some transportation agency (?) regarding the transportation of seniors to and from their apartments.

The Committee on Housing Options for Seniors (Celeste, Barb, Tammy) was reported by Celeste, who talked again on the issue of "co-housing". She thinks that this is probably not viable in the city of Saratoga due to the costs of land.

She thinks that it will be more fruitful to pursue senior rooming houses - a group of unrelated seniors living together, sharing some common spaces. It seems to be becoming popular in larger cities in the country. She believes that this trend is growing because of two common issues of seniors - isolation and loneliness.

Mental Health. Discussion of isolation and loneliness reminded Denise Yannaci and Ann Sheppard of an issue that came up during a recent meeting of the N.Y. Statewide Senior Issues Assn. The Director of the Office for Aging, Sandi Cross, had expressed her concern about the lack of concern and the poor attention given to the issue of Mental Illness in the senior population in Saratoga County. The need for a better understanding of mental illness as well as the need for more and better services had been discussed at that meeting. Sandi had suggested that the Statewide Senior Issues Assn. meet with the Mayor's Seniors Advisory Committee to focus on this issue. The group discussed this as a possible plan for the future.

We were reminded of the celebration being planned to honor the Year of the Senior, a designation by the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors. This is to take place at Congress Park on June 26th.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ann Sheppard.

See attached reports from specific committees.

Next meeting: Monday, September 23, 1:30pm

Multi-purpose Room, at the Recreation Center, 15 Vanderbilt Ave, or Raymond Watkins

Saratoga Springs

Our webpage <http://www.saratoga-springs.org/261/Senior-Advisory-Committee>

Attachments (distributed prior to the meeting):

Non Emergency Medical Transport Committee Meeting Minutes

Committee met at the Kaffee House on June 13th 2019.

Susan reported on Senior Center contract with A&H Taxi- Service is 9-2 and the company does not want to expand the hours. A&H was the only company that bid on the contract. Service issues were discussed. The company only has 4 cars on the road at present. Lots of players in the medical transport field (pay for service) more research is needed.

Shortage of Volunteers in most organizations precludes expansion of many such programs (VA, VFW, Saratoga Hospital)

Lyft and Uber were discussed as alternatives to cabs due to cost. Lyft/Uber can be negotiated.

Alternative options were discussed (i.e. approaching major companies and organizations in the community to fund expansion of senior center programs or start new approaches)

Committee will be meeting again following our 6/24 meeting with Office of Aging .

**Meeting with Recreation Director John Hirliman
Tuesday, June 11 at 2:15 PM (Rec Center)**

Dee Sarno and Jay Portnoy attended.

John discussed the facility:

- Recreation Center is more heavily used after 4 PM than during the morning and afternoon. Gym is open during the day beginning at 8am for walkers, Seniors tend to use it more in the morning and early afternoon. Seniors do walking around periphery.
- The Recreation Center offers many activities for all: A few options are, among others, are: Pickle Ball, M, W, F, 9-11AM; Tai Chi on Thursdays at 10 AM, Zumba Wednesday night.

If an individual is enthusiastic about a particular activity, and can encourage others to join in, the Rec Center could be available. Pickle ball was is an example of someone starting an event.

John is interested in partnering with the Senior Center, YMCA, and the Library; but not to compete for participants or overlap with their activities.

- The meeting room that we have our meetings in and the room next to it would be good spaces for Art activities and Art Exhibits. There is a lot of wall space for art in the rooms and the building as-a-whole.
- The City Rec unit has a staff of only 5, and so volunteers are greatly needed. If we were to begin any activities or events we would most likely have to oversee the activities.

The Center has an extensive land “footprint” and John envisions much greater use of the outdoor space for activities such as horseshoes, bocce ball, soccer, walking trails, etc. Art activities can also be done outdoors – weather permitting.

John welcomes any suggestions and ideas that our Senior Committee can offer.

Note: The Rec Center could use senior volunteers for kid’s activities 5:30 to 7:30pm. Keep time and Keep score of games.

Clergy Advisory Committee

12:30 pm, Tuesday, June 11, 2019

Pine Grove Community Church

Attended and reported by BarbThomas, MSAC

Present: Asst. Pastor _____ Riley (PNECC); Rabbis Johnathan & Linda Rubenstein; Joe Cleveland (Unitarian Universalist); _____ (Bethesda Episcopal) Hosted by Mark Care and his wife Jody (Pine Grove Community Church, formerly Revelation Church); Also, Supervisors Tara Gaston and Mike Veitch. I have missed some.

Mark Care is new the pastor of the Pine Grove Community Church which was just spun off from the Revelation Church. He showed us around the newly renovated facility (not finished yet, but functional) and explained the transition process. It turns out that the lands to the rear of the Church are too legally encumbered to serve as a site for a permanent Code Blue Shelter.

The priest from Bethesda reported that they are progressing with plans for their addition, which will include residences on the 3rd & 4th floors for needy individuals. They have received two big gifts for this effort.

Riley reported that PNECC is planning to host Code Blue in Nolan House for the upcoming winter. They are also exploring becoming a permanent site for Code Blue (at Nolan House), but are postponing a decision while dealing with neighbors concerns regarding that.

Joe Cleveland reported that they are still looking for a new building (either to build or remodel).

Rabbis Johnathan & Linda Rubenstein reported that their congregation continues its normal activities.

Tara Gaston and Mike Veitch spoke about their role as Supervisors; how the county functions. They pledged to listen and bring appropriate concerns from the clergy group to the Board of Supervisors,

Next meeting will be at the _____, on Tuesday, Sept 10 at 12:30pm
The topic will be _____

Housing

Report on Planning Board Meeting May 16, 6pm

by Barbara Thomas

The main purpose of this meeting was to hear and perhaps advance applications for subdivisions and development of land, as related to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).

The most controversial item was in regard to Saratoga Hospital's plan to develop a large area of land for medical offices, which requires rezoning from residential to institutional.

However, when the board got to discussing emerging uses, I put in a word for consideration of co-housing or senior boarding houses as something that should be considered as an emerging use, and was assured that this will be considered.

Housing 5-22-19

UDO (Unified Development Ordinance) Technical Review Meeting May 22, 11 am

By Celeste Caruso

The purpose of this meeting was to inform the public about the progress made by the consulting firm Camiros hired by the City to define and make changes to the current UDO.

They did a power point presentation and went over the tentative outline of the things they were hoping to include in the ordinance.

The attendees were encourage to write the Building Dept. and the City Planner as well as the City Council with our suggestions.

I sent them the following letter as an individual resident and not a member of the MSAC because the suggestions I made were not voted on by the committee to endorse.

Dear Council Members

I am a 23 year resident and business owner in Saratoga Springs. I attended the UDO tech meeting this past Wednesday and have recommendations to make for your consideration to be included in the next UDO.

As an advocate for the past 20 years for affordable/workforce housing as part of a citywide sustainability plan, I would like, at this time, to turn my attention to and advocate for senior housing for middle income seniors.

The seniors in this economic bracket have assets and incomes that do not qualify them for public assistance toward the cost of certain independent living facilities. On the other hand, they cannot afford the high rents in upscale places like Prestwick Chase. One option for them to consider is co-living.

Co living is simply a housing choice allowing unrelated people to occupy the same dwelling while sharing expenses, common spaces and household tasks.

Co living is a nationwide affordable housing trend taking place in cities throughout the country. There are senior co living households and intergenerational households. It is, most importantly, an option available to seniors who choose to **Age in Place**. It allows them to rent rooms in their homes to defray expenses and have available other available to help out with meals and other chores and, as important, combat isolation and loneliness. Isolation and loneliness which has been revealed in epidemic proportions in America and is the cause of major mental health issues among seniors as reported by the health service company Cigna.

<https://www.multivu.com/players/English/8294451-cigna-us-loneliness-survey>.

Also please keeping mind that co living is also an affordable housing option for senior veterans who are alone and need housing assistance.

In light of this information, I propose the following for your consideration:

SENIOR ROOMING HOUSES:

It is proposed that the City create a new “Neighborhood Senior Rooming House” and a new “Corridor Senior Rooming House” land use category.

The existing zoning ordinance does have a “Neighborhood Rooming House” and a “Corridor Rooming House” use that is permitted upon the issuance of a special use permit and site plan review by the City Planning Board. This approval process requires a public hearing and notifications mailed to the immediate neighbors.

There is a perception that there would be fewer neighborhood concerns if these types of rooming houses were limited to only senior citizens (55 years of age or older). Seniors living in a rooming housing may tend to have a more mature life style, have few cars and less daily trips in and out than those occupants of an all-age rooming house.

Possible Definitions:

- **NEIGHBORHOOD SENIOR ROOMING HOUSE:** A single-family or two-family residential structure, owner-occupied or under the supervision of a resident manager, in which one to four rooms are made available to lodgers who are at least 55 years old for compensation for a rental period of no less than twenty-eight consecutive days. A common kitchen facility may be available to lodgers but shall have no kitchen facilities in any guestroom. Meals and other services (such a transportation, housecleaning, etc.) may be provided to the lodgers.
- **CORRIDOR SENIOR ROOMING HOUSE:** A single or two-family residential structure, owner-occupied or under the supervision of a resident manager, in which five to ten rooms are made available to lodgers who are at least 55 years old for compensation for a rental period of no less than twenty-eight consecutive days. A common kitchen facility may be available to lodgers but shall have no kitchen facilities in any guestroom. Meals and other services (such a transportation, housecleaning, etc.) may be provided to the lodgers.

Possible Locations:

- A Neighborhood Senior Rooming House should be permitted in the same residential zoning districts in the core area of the City and by the same process (special use permit and site plan review) as that of the existing Neighborhood Rooming House.
- A Corridor Senior Rooming House should be permitted along the major street arterials in City's Corridor Lodging District and by the same process (special use permit and site plan review) as that of the existing Corridor Rooming House.

Thank you.

Best regards,
Celeste Caruso