

Aging Well Whatcom Steering Committee

Friday, January 6, 2023

Chuckanut Health Foundation + Zoom

MINUTES

Attending:

Becky Kirkland, PeaceHealth Center for Senior Health
Bethany Chamberlin, Northwest Regional Council
Chris Orr, Whatcom Council on Aging
Heather Flaherty, Chuckanut Health Foundation
Heidi Bugbee, Generations Early Learning & Family Center
Janet Malley, Whatcom Transportation Authority
Kristin Hill, Opportunity Council
Marie Eaton, Palliative Care Institute, WWU
Mary Anderson, Whatcom Transportation Authority
Sarah Lane, Health Ministries Network
Tammy Bennett, YMCA
Tessa Whitlock, Chuckanut Health Foundation

Regrets:

Amy Hockenberry, Whatcom County Health Department
Barbara Juarez, NW Indian Health Board
Chao-ying Wu, Chuckanut Health Foundation Board/Family Care Network
Kenzie Nelson, VibrantUSA
Melinda Herrera, Rosewood Villa
Tonja Myers, Christian Health Care Center

Welcome and Introductions

Lara welcomed the group and committee members shared a “one word wish” – something they wish to see **more** or **less** of for older adults in Whatcom County in 2023.

More	Less
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intergenerational community/opportunity to be with other generations (x4)• Connection (x3)• Hope• Housing; accessible housing (x3)• Care, compassion• Accessible activities• Healthcare providers• Laughter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Silo-ing seniors• Shaming due to gaps in experiences & perspectives• Barriers to being outside• Homelessness• Chronic illness

Review and Approve Minutes

Minutes from the 12/2/22 Steering Committee meeting were approved as written.

Priorities – WHAT work to do

AWW work that is underway/ongoing

The group agreed that four areas of work that are already underway should continue, and discussed furthering the work (comments from meeting in green).

A. Advancing housing for older adults

- Senior Co-Living Discussion Group, 4th Fridays.
 - Lara shared that this informal discussion group has just started with a few people; anyone is welcome to join in.
 - Chris stated that Samya (City of Bellingham Housing Manager) contacted him regarding the WCOA possibly taking on a household matching function.
 - **ACTION** → Lara will contact Samya regarding what the City is seeking.
- League of Women Voters community education series - planning is underway with AWW as a partner for a few sessions.
- Whatcom Housing Alliance
- Increase intergenerational housing options for older adults who would like that; consider how housing can reduce silo-ing of older adults (a challenge since housing development funding streams are often siloed).

B. Elevate voices of older adults

- Art of Aging
 - Continue and expand showings
 - Possible opportunity for radio exposure – KMRE partnership
- Older adults' and/or their advocates' participation in community decision-making
 - Whatcom Resource Information Collaborative (WRIC). Sarah and Bethany both noted that WRIC tends to focus on children and families; they consistently remind the group to also consider older adults.
 - Health Department's last community health assessment included very little about older adults. How can we make sure older adults aren't overlooked in this process?
 - The Whatcom Council on Aging will be reviewing community advisory boards' membership to assess representation of older adults.

C. Data – Health Dept Health Indicators Platform, define Blueprint progress indicators

- Subcommittee will be meeting January-June 2023

D. Contribute to Whatcom Resource Information Collaborative

- NWRC, Bethany is participating
- Sarah is also participating in the WRIC development

Potential 2023 Priorities (on 2022 list but not completed and ideas that have emerged in the last year).

The group dot-voted on seven potential priorities, while recognizing that they are of very different scale and scope, making selection challenging.

E. Implement AWW member/supporter campaign – 4 votes

Comments:

- Maybe not the most important work, but seems “doable”
- Would increase community awareness around older adults and aging well
- Could lay the groundwork and build support for seeking Age-Friendly designation (next year?)
- It’s important that membership have “teeth” – a clear commitment, what members are committing to, how they will contribute to aging well through their organizations and businesses.

F. Address loneliness and isolation (10 votes)

Comments:

- Very large/broad undertaking
- Connects to other things like housing

G. Promote asset framing/reframing aging – training, awareness raising (0 votes)

Comments:

- Clarification needed about what this refers to: negative portrayals of older adults in language, images, etc; shifting to seeing older adults as resources rather than societal burdens.

H. Engage with Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB) (3 votes)

Comments:

- We don’t know if PHAB’s 2023 priorities include engaging with AWW, but we can push for engagement regardless.

I. Recruit older adults into early learning workforce (8 votes)

J. Pursue Whatcom County Age-Friendly designation (2 votes)

K. Contribute to addressing healthcare access issues (3 votes)

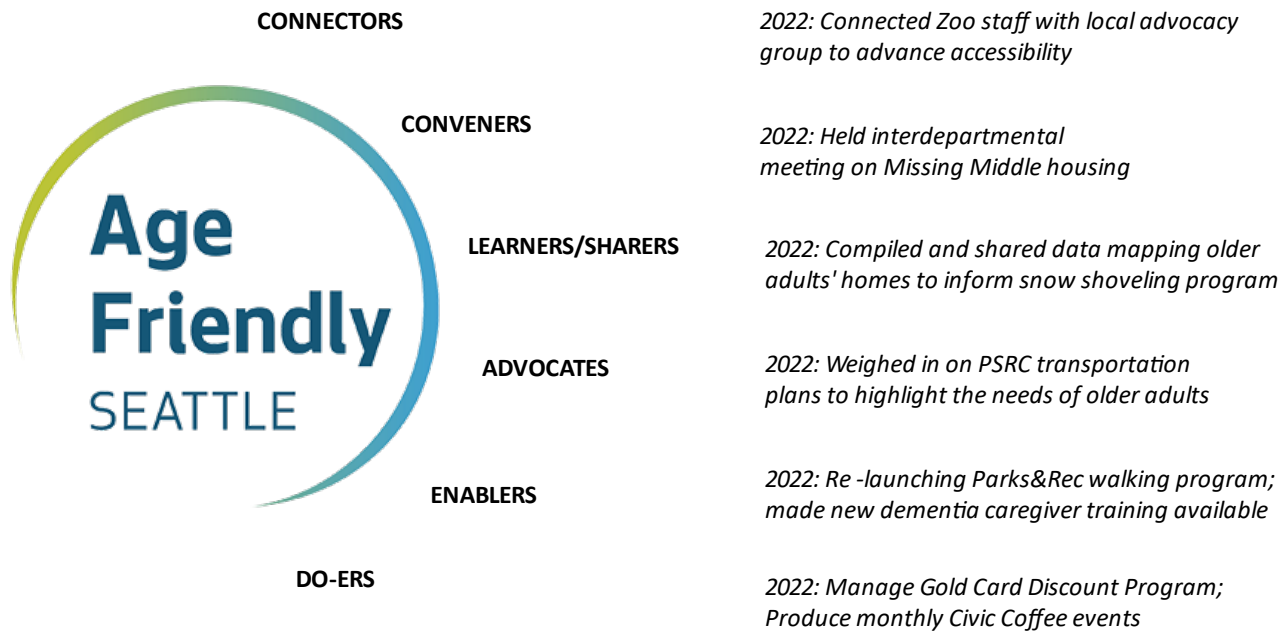
Comments:

- Seems like a huge undertaking – is this something AWW could really impact?

Structure and Resources - HOW to do the work:

- CHF sponsorship
 - Steering Committee, meeting 1.5 hrs/month in 2023
 - Ad hoc sub committees
 - Data Committee, meeting monthly Jan-June 2023
 - Partnerships
 - Coordinator (contract, part-time)
- The group reflected on AWW’s existing structure and resources, and considered what would strengthen them add capacity and energy to AWW’s work
 - Marie noted that CHF grant funds that support projects aligned with the blueprint, and grantees implementing these projects, are other important resources.
 - Lara stated she felt AWW would benefit from more coordinator time, which would increase the ability to do more proactive learning about existing work and the connecting and convening needed to bring more energy and action.

The group discussed a related question of AWW’s “right” role in advancing Blueprint implementation and promoting aging well. Age-Friendly Seattle’s graphic of its roles (below) provided an example of how AWW work could be articulated.



Discussion:

- **Connecting** and **convening** are definitely key roles for AWW -- bringing people together, providing space for conversations and discussion, connecting people and efforts to each other.
- Another important role is **celebrating** good work and the people and organizations doing it. Related roles: uplifting, highlighting, recognizing.
- **Listening** seems like another important function – perhaps that’s part of “Learner/sharer.”
- The meaning of “enabler” and “do-er” is not as clear. For Age-Friendly Seattle, enabling includes some funding they provide.
- Being an on-the-ground/”in the weeds” project implementer or service provider seems like a “**wrong** role” for AWW.
- There needs to be a balance of action and just discussing things.
- Connecting and convening IS “doing something,” as is work such as creating the Blueprint.
- This framework could be overlaid onto the priority areas to see what role(s) is playing in advancing each one.
- It was agreed that something that describes AWW’s roles would be helpful for the Steering Committee and the broader community.

ACTION → Lara will rework the graphic based on this discussion and add some Whatcom County examples for future Steering Committee discussion.

ACTION → Lara will think through today’s discussion, and draft an outline that reflects the voting.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

Next meeting: Friday, February 3, 9:00-10:30 AM at Chuckanut Health Foundation and via Zoom link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84714163447>.