Montpelier Senior Activity Center (MSAC)
Advisory Council (AC) Meeting Minutes  (DRAFT 1)
Online Zoom Session:  July 13, 2020 (11:30 am – 1:00 pm)

Advisory Council (AC) members attending:  Chair Bob Barrett, Mary Alice Bisbee, Renea Bordeau, Mary Carlson, Barbara Dall, Bill Doelger, Dianne Maccario, Laura Morse and Suzi Swanson.  Not attending: Robert Youngberg

The quorum requirement (6) was met.

Others present: MSAC Director Janna Clar, Assistant City Manager Cameron Niedermayer, and Community Services Office Manager Norma Maurice.

**Action on AC Meeting Minutes:**
- The AC voted to accept draft 2 of the June 16, 2020 minutes as provided before the meeting.

**Discussions:**
- **Orientation:** The Governance Policies & Procedures document is an informational resource. Janna described how the AC functions, explaining that it differs from a board of directors governing other nonprofit organizations because MSAC is part of municipal government. MSAC joins the Recreation and Parks & Trees divisions in comprising the City's Community Service Department (CSD). Harry Divack, Norma Maurice and Becca Jordan work for all three CSD divisions, whereas FEAST manager Jessica Sanderson works only for MSAC. Eric White, Recreation Program Coordinator, whose duties included City pool coordination, just resigned from his Rec division position.

- **Funding:** Each CSD division has its own budget that must be written in the fall preceding the fiscal year that starts July 1. Therefore, the City is operating on budgets developed long before the Covid pandemic. Cameron noted that this challenge has delayed projects but so far no staff have been let go, only furloughed while federal unemployment benefits are available. MSAC has received or is expecting about $25,000 worth of federal financial and equipment aid from the Central VT Council on Aging (CVCOA), mainly to support FEAST. MSAC's diverse funding stream supplements the City tax appropriation (about 21% of MSAC revenue) with funds raised from appeals, events, sponsorships, member revenue, and sales. Janna highlighted some revenue and expense items in the current (FY21) budget and offered to forward the budget spreadsheet. She noted that MSAC is close to breaking even financially because the pandemic closure reduced costs at the same time it choked off the flow of income from fundraising events, facility rentals and class fees. The plan early in 2020 had been to increase dues and class fees slightly, but instead, the annual membership renewal and dues collection process was postponed. None of the supporting towns has reneged on their Town Meeting Day decisions to fund MSAC, but this may become an issue next year. It is unclear how much revenue will be generated by restarting classes in the fall. MSAC needs to look at the size of online classes, and instructors are leery of people showing up for online movement classes, where there is little or no opportunity for training and supervision to ensure all participants use techniques designed to protect them from harm.
• Committee Assignments: Part C of the Governance describes MSAC committees. The Program Committee is meeting July 15. The Fundraising and Membership/Hospitality committees have been dormant. It was suggested that the role of the ad hoc Safety Committee be considered as the AC discusses the MSAC reopening process at its August meeting.

• Reopening MSAC: Janna tentatively plans a "soft" reopening on August 10. She had given AC members the "Fall 2020 Class Restarting Guidelines & Information for Program Instructors" dated 7/10/20. The "soft" strategy calls for a very gradual reopening of the Center, starting with just a few small groups on the ground floor only, with their timing staggered to minimize the number of people in the facility. There was discussion about facemasks and how/whether a mask requirement could be enforced. MSAC keeps logs tracking the name and phone number of each individual in the building and is communicating with legislators and community partners about the lack of equipment and broadband access to online programming. Janna posed the important question: "Does MSAC really need to open?" This generated a lively discussion about balancing the health risks of social isolation against those of in-person socialization, a risk that may increase as other states are reopening. It would be unsafe for MSAC to allow people to drop in randomly, but how does one judge whether an individual really needs to be there.

• Survey and Summer/Fall Programming: MSAC has a list of members sorted by age to facilitate a phone "survey" to do wellness checks on members age 80 and older. Janna is still seeking someone to work with staff in coordinating that effort, and perhaps the Membership/Hospitality committee could be involved. Mary Alice stressed the importance of elders being able to "hang out" with each other, suggesting that some way be found for people to sit down together to eat a FEAST meal or chat. The pros, cons and availability, or lack thereof, of venues like Hubbard Park, VCFA lawn, River Rock School and the MSAC parking lot were discussed.

• New Americorps Position: The position starts September 9, dividing hours between supporting the FEAST program and working with the Village Project and other partners. It comes with a $250/month rental subsidy. The VISTA position formerly held by Becky Johnson and now by Chet Cienkowski is being restructured to explore childcare, youth and intergenerational programming, and future Recreation Center programming. It is unclear where the Americorps member will sit, perhaps in the Resource Room because it is too small to hold a properly socially-distanced class. The VISTA member will continue to use office space across the street.

Next Advisory Council Meeting
• Time/Place: 2:00 pm on Wednesday, August 5, 2020, via Zoom. (The meeting had been set for August 10, but that is the date planned for MSAC's soft reopening.)
• August 5 Agenda: MSAC reopening process and timeline. Safety and other committee assignments.

Respectfully submitted: Mary Carlson, scribe du jour