

MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 28, 2022 SENIOR ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Chairman Ken Miller called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM at the Little Egg Harbor (“LEH”) Community Center.

There was a Flag salute and a moment of silence for our military and world peace.

Roll call was taken. Board members in attendance were: Ken Miller, Ann Mikos, Linda Cicco, Nancy Cotter, Diane Coyle, Richard Dutton, Donna O’Brien, Maryann O’Neill and Lisa Stevens. Dan Maxwell, Liaison to the Township Committee, was also in attendance.

The minutes of the last meeting of the Board on November 29, 2021 were then approved by motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried (and although those minutes did not state it, the minutes of the Board’s October 25, 2021 meeting were similarly approved at the November 29, 2021 meeting).

The first speaker was Chief James Hawkins of the LEH Police Department, who gave the customary update on police-related matters affecting the community. He began by introducing Troy Bezak of his Department, who has been involved in law enforcement for 25+ years, 22 in LEH, and has been promoted from Lieutenant to Captain, and Tom Thornton, who has been in law enforcement for 23+ years in LEH and has been promoted to Lieutenant. The Chief then spoke about the partnership between his Department and On Point, an Ocean Mental Health program that is available to assist the Department with non-law enforcement related calls, of which it receives more than 100 each year, typically involving such things as a dispute between neighbors or a student refusing to comply when told to leave a school building. He then reported that the Department’s three-man Street Crimes Unit continues to combat the drug problem and that drug sales in LEH are primarily made from residences, and arrests often result from information provided by neighbors. He then said that a Special Needs Registry website will be created which will help his Department by identifying people with mobility issues, oxygen dependency, etc.; a resident with such needs or a member of his or her family will be able to add the resident’s name and information to the Registry. Finally, he said that his Department supports Firewise, a fire prevention program mentioned at previous meetings, and the Department is also still working on locating a new site for its shooting range.

The next speaker was Heather deJong, a representative of Meals on Wheels of Ocean County, which delivers complete and nutritious hot meals to County residents 60 years of age or older who are homebound and unable to prepare their own meals, and have no one available to assist them with meal preparation. She said that her organization started in 1973 at a church in Toms River, began delivering meals and expanded its operations after receiving a large grant from the County, and now serves 1,600 people including 67 in LEH, to whom it delivered 7,777 meals during the past year. She said that a very important component of the meal delivery is a wellness and safety check performed by the driver, who is required to see the resident personally at the time of the delivery. Residents are typically provided meals five days per week and the most vulnerable are also given a Saturday meal. Drivers are paid employees and each driver serves 50-60 meals on his or her route. A \$2 voluntary donation per meal is requested but only about 58% of the recipients pay this and the balance of the organization’s expenses comes from grants and donations. It is reopening its “community café” at the Southern Ocean Resources Center at the intersection of Routes 9 and 72 in Manahawkin, to which seniors who are able may come for meals and socialization. It also runs an educational program, “Take Control of Your Health”,

for residents with chronic health conditions, especially diabetes. Those wishing further information are urged to call Meals on Wheels at 609-978-6869 or visit info@csimow.org.

The next speakers were Kristine Field, the Director of Community Outreach at Community Medical Center in Toms River, which is a “primary stroke center”, and Lindsay Smith, a nurse who oversees the stroke center there. Ms. Smith began by noting that the volume of strokes has increased and they are now the fifth leading cause of death nationally and fourth in New Jersey. She reviewed risk factors for strokes--high blood pressure, atrial fibrillation, smoking, diabetes, high cholesterol and excessive alcohol use--and said that if someone has had what is suspected to be a stroke he or she should not drive or be driven to the hospital, but rather 911 should be called right away, EMS will notify the hospital’s stroke team and the patient will be taken for a cat scan immediately upon arrival, because there will be a different course of treatment if bleeding is found. She added that strokes can be treated with blood clotting reducers and now by thrombectomy--Community is the only hospital in New Jersey at which this is available--in which a blood clot can be treated even after 24 hours using a stent, in a procedure similar to cardiac catheterization. She further noted that Community offers teleneurology, a virtual neurological consultation, 24 hours a day 7 days a week. She also reviewed a mnemonic device for determining whether someone has had a stroke, “BE FAST”: B stands for “balance” (Someone who has had a stroke can have nausea, dizziness or bad balance), E is for “eyes” (Do the eyes look normal?), F is for “face” (Is the face symmetrical, or does one side droop?), A is for “arms” (Stroke often affects one side of the body and thus arm use), S is for “speech” (Stroke can produce slurred speech) and T is for “time” (Time is of the essence in treating stroke). Ms. Field then added that Community can arrange for health professionals (such as a podiatrist or a pharmacist) to come to senior groups to make presentations regarding their specialties.

It was then announced that AARP is once again providing free income tax preparation services at St. Theresa’s in LEH on Wednesdays and St. Mary’s in Manahawkin on Thursdays; April 9 will be “Community Cleanup Day” in LEH, at which free trees will be given out; on April 30 or maybe on both that date and May 9 an Environmental or “Green” Fair will be held in LEH at which a shredding truck will be available; plastic bags will no longer be supplied at stores in LEH as of May 1 and it will be necessary to bring your own bags for grocery shopping; and the annual LEH Senior Expo is currently scheduled for May 4 at the LEH Community Center.

Board President Ken Miller introduced new Township Committee member Dan Maxwell, who will be a liaison to the Board in place of Bobbie Jo Crea, who has now been elected to a position at the County level, and new Board members Donna O’Brien and Lisa Stevens.

The next meeting of the Board will be on Monday, March 28, 2022 at 10:00 AM at the LEH Community Center. All seniors are welcome and urged to attend.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:30 A.M.

*Respectfully submitted,
Richard Dutton, Acting Secretary, LEH Senior Citizens’ Advisory Board*