

The Swampscott for all Ages Committee held their first meeting on January 23rd. Co-Chairs Robert Powell and Heidi Whear were able to attract over 2 dozen people from a wide variety of positions in town, members of existing boards, as well as community members who have experience in the field and have a vested interest in Swampscott becoming Age Friendly certified. Marzie Galazka, Director of Community and Economic Development, has since joined the committee as a chair.

Highlights include:

- By 2030, the 60 and older population is projected to comprise more than one-third of the town's population, up from 25 percent in 2010, according to U.S. Census Data and projections generated by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council.
- The age-friendly assessment aligns with Gov. Charlie Baker's goal to make Massachusetts the most age-friendly state in the nation. AARP has formally designated Massachusetts as one of only two age-friendly states in the country — New York is the other.
- The needs assessment survey that was developed by UMass Boston Gerontology Institute and Center for Social & Demographic Research in Aging, had more than 1,500 responses. This is 32% out of our town of 14,600! The survey was mailed to those 55+ and was available online for those under 55.

Accomplishments so far:

- Antron Watson, Age Friendly Director of AARP, did a presentation to the committee and will be an on-going resource as we move forward.
- UMass has worked with the committee to accomplish the following: conducted a needs assessment, held a community forum that provided residents with a detailed understanding of the committee, created and distributed the online survey, conducted stakeholder interviews and held several focus groups.
At the town wide community forum held in March, Antron Watson from AARP presented, as well as Dr. Caitlyn Coyle, research fellow and adjunct assistant professor from UMass. Community members were able to ask questions and give feedback on their concerns.
- Patricia Zaido, co-chair and founder of the Salem For All Ages Committee, came to a recent committee meeting where she presented the steps Salem took to become age friendly certified. Salem's plan is now in its 3rd year of execution and Patricia gave us many 'keys to success.'

In Progress:

- The development of our mission statement is in progress and a draft will be presented to the group for review and discussion.
- The domains we are focusing on are being decided and sub-committee members are being finalized. The domains include - outdoor spaces & buildings, transportation, social participation, housing, respect & social inclusion, civic participation & employment, community support & health services, communications & information.