

Maine Medical Center Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC)
Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, April 12, 2023

Time: 12:00p.m.

Location: via Zoom

Recurrence: Monthly, 2nd Wednesday

Minutes Submitted by: Natalie Dubail

Minutes Edited by: NAC Members

Previous Meeting Minutes (March 2023) Status: Approved

Attendees

Anne Pringle (WPNA) co-chair

Steve Kolkhorst (WPNA)

Marie Gray (PNA)

Lin Parsons (WENA)

Steven Scharf (WENA)

Damon Yakovleff (LNA)

Moses Sabina (SJVNA)

Garry Bowcott (SJVNA)

Jennifer McCarthy (MMC)

Brian Batson (MMC)

Walter Pochebit (MMC)

Matt Wickenheiser (MMC)

Al Green (MMC)

Natalie Dubail (MMC)

Victoria Pelletier (City Council)

Nell Donaldson (CoP)

Dr. Dora Ann Mills, MH

Ann Tucker, GPH

1) **Minutes** The Minutes of March 8th, 2023 were **APPROVED** as presented.

2) **Construction Update (Provided in writing by Walter Pochebit prior to meeting)**

No scheduled/planned construction or project activities that could impact surrounding neighborhood vehicle traffic, pedestrian flow, noise, after hour work, etc. for the remainder of this month and during the first couple of weeks in May.

3) **Maine Med Update**

Discussion Summary: Jennifer expressed that there is nothing of new significance for the hospital update. As said before, the Federal government is lifting the Federal State of Emergency on May 11th. The hospital has slowly started to shed some of the practices that were implemented due to COVID and move forward with new processes. Such as testing every single patient for COVID. The hospital is seeing the lowest amount of COVID cases to date, about 10 currently. All of these COVID positive patients were hospitalized for co-morbidities ,as opposed to COVID symptoms.

After the lifting the Federal State of Emergency, the hospital will start to return back to a “normal”, pre-pandemic state.

A committee member asked if this means that masking will no longer be required in the hospital. Jennifer said that there has not been an official decision made regarding masking, although the hospital is having conversations about it.

Another committee member asked if the hospital was starting to see any movement on the nursing home side, as far as nursing homes taking in long-term care patients and freeing up hospital beds. Jennifer said the hospital is starting to see a little movement, at one time the hospital was holding 60-70 long-term care patients and now the number is in the 50s.

4) Recuperative Care Center Update discussion (see #8, below) Brian Batson (20 minutes)

Discussion summary: Ann Tucker will address the RCC later on in the meeting. It was noted that neighbors observe 8-10 people go out at times. This is not what was intended and will be addressed. In response to the ongoing issues around smoking, Brian announced that as of April 11th, MMC has implemented a designated smoking area on Gilman St.

Brian also suggested the option of a filtered smoking tent. NAC, CoP and MMC agreed that they will evaluate how the smoking area is doing first, before there are any other changes that may require permitting or further planning.

5) Old Business (10 Minutes)

- Neighborhood Parking Management – Jennifer McCarthy

Discussion summary: Jennifer relayed that the parking teams have taken an assessment to see what the hospital has available for parking and they are documenting who is parking in the neighborhoods. Jennifer has also taken it upon herself to rewrite the parking policy, reiterating that parking in neighborhoods is prohibited. Action is being taken against repeat offenders, as enforcement leaders and HR will be notified if it happens twice within 12 months.

A committee member asked how many people are actually employed at the hospital. Jennifer stated that there are about 7,500 people working at the hospital at any given time. There are 2,000-3,000 people parking at one time.

Action to be taken: Jennifer will send the new parking policy to Anne. This policy is **not** to be distributed outside of the group.

- Neighborhood Engagement – Brian Batson

Discussion summary: All of the neighborhoods have gotten the chance to speak with Brian about their specific neighborhood operations except SJVNA. Brian reiterated how valuable it is to have this on record to keep establishing a relationship between the NAC's & MMC to keep the conversations open. The question was asked if Brian could please share notes with the group.

A member from SJVNA asked what exactly Brian would be using this information for if they were to have a discussion. Brian stated that he uses these conversations as a benchmark on how to

communicate with each individual NAC and understand how they operate. A member from SJVNA stated that they were unsure if a meeting was necessary, because they feel like their concerns are not being heard or taken seriously. Jennifer assured that all reasonable concerns are taken seriously by MMC and that this group has made strides of progress since the meetings have been taking place; such as resolving smoking and parking issues. These meetings are about taking stock.

It was announced that a new committee member from SJVNA will be joining us for future meetings, as long-time member Tim McNamara steps back.

Action to be taken: Brian will share his meeting notes with the group. SJVNA may meet with Brian.

6) Food Pantry Update - discussion Dr. Dora Ann Mills, MH (@12:40, 20 Minutes)

Discussion summary: Dr. Dora Ann Mills presented on the new MaineHealth food pantry. Many facts were shared regarding the operation. Dr. Mill's care team members are onsite running the pantry on Tuesdays and Thursday's from 10:00am to 3:00pm. Monday's and Wednesday's are used for restocking days. For the pantry to function, there are at least 20 volunteers needed per week and 1.75 FTE's. While the pantry is intended for employees and patients of MMC, the connection is not something that is asked upon arrival. Word has gotten out to the community and the pantry does not turn anyone away. The pantry has no plan to expand hours in the near future, because the pantry is already over capacity. The food pantry is a very collaborative operation, between interpreters for people with a language barrier, HR helping people looking for jobs, and volunteers helping the community members anyway that they can. The pantry has supplied the community with 100,000 pounds of food since opening. As well as serving 1,607 households and 5,910 individuals. The pantry is stocked with all healthy food, aiming to provide healthy nutrition, bring a health organization. It is a tobacco free campus, monitored by PPD & 1st protection services. Longer term plans for the pantry include using it as a center for improving health and education on nutrition, ("Food as medicine") for people with food insecurity and diseases, such as diabetes. Much like the center at Franklin and Stephens, but with more diverse customers. The question was asked if the pantry is doing anything to address the parking issue. Dr. Mills said she was not aware of one, Brian stated he will follow up and circle back. Another member asked if they could do anything to help volunteer wise and they were advised to "get the word out". A committee member asked if there was anything MMC can do to prevent people from lining up for the pantry 5 hours early. MMC staff said they were aware of that – there were no suggestions made at this time. The Community Policing office will open shortly

Action to be taken: Brian will follow up about food pantry parking issues.

7) Reallocation of PNA Grant Funds – discussion, VOTE Marie Gray (5 minutes)

Discussion summary: A discussion surrounding the reallocation of grant funds was introduced. The Grant Subcommittee would be reviewing grant procedures, completion reports and make some late some later recommendations. PNA would like to use part of its existing grant for neighborhood planning to light up Bramhall Square after the end of MMC's 5 year commitment. The idea was also shared about looking into contracting with USM to have a student "intern" to help with the planning effort, but at the moment there are no current plans with the rest of the grant money. There was a vote taken for the \$1,500 relocation of PNA grant funds.

Vote All members with voting rights **approved**, with the exemption of one.

The comment was made that next year, the vote will possibly include the community.

8) RCC – further discussion Ann Tucker, GPH (@1:00, 10 minutes)

Discussion summary: Ann addressed the issues that the NAC had touched on earlier in the meeting. Security cameras were installed and she has not seen any issues regarding transients since. Ann confirmed that they now have the plan for smoking issues in place. A member of the SJVNA commented that the recent improvements to the smoking situation at the RCC are appreciated, but it should be noted that the SJVNA has been requesting a plan for smoking and trash for over two years, which was never produced.

Ann assured that she will look into the issue that was brought up around people transporting patients and parking up on the sidewalk.

The prior concern about cars arriving to the center and dropping things off was investigated and Ann found out this was due to patients ordering Door Dash. Ann worked to try to resolve this issue by working to improve the cafeteria food at the center. There is ongoing collaboration to on how improve the program “amenities”.

Ann reported that implementing the RCC has shown progress within the community. The average length of stay is 21 days, which is a week shorter than the hospital, about a week less than hospital stays for such treatment, allowing patients to heal faster. All of the patients in the center currently have unstable housing. A committee member asked how Ann capture’s and reports these issues. Ann stated she reports and captures these metrics through exit interviews and follow ups, as well as clinical measures and data. Readmissions and change in life style are also being tracked, with “amazing results”, according to Ann.

Action to be taken: Ann will follow up on individuals driving and parking on the curb and sidewalk.

9) New Business?

- Subcommittee for the new pantry mural has been created, first meeting on 4/28
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10) Adjourn 1:20pm

Next meeting: May 10, 2023 @ 12pm

Submitted by: Natalie Dubail

Acronym List:

CoP- City of Portland

LNA – Libbytown Neighborhood Association

MMC – Maine Medical Center

NAC – Neighborhood Advisory Committee

PNA- Parkside Neighborhood Association

SJVNA – Saint John Valley Neighborhood Association

SNF- Skilled Nursing Facility

WENA – West End Neighborhood Association

WPNA- Western Promenade Neighborhood Association

