AARP Livable Communities Application for Jamestown

Section 1: Community Details
Application Submission Date: September 16, 2021
State: NC
Community Name: Jamestown
Total Population: 4,148
Percentage of Residents Age 60 or Older: 29.5%
Community Governance Structure: Town
Community Type: Suburban (mostly residential)

Elected Official Signing the Community’s Letter of Commitment: Lynn Montgomery, Mayor, 301 East Main Street, Jamestown, NC 27282

Please describe the named person’s role in the community’s age-friendly initiative (100 words minimum)
Anna is a town planner with Jamestown and also serves as a staff liaison to the Livable Communities Committee. As an employee with the planning department, Anna is involved in all areas of planning and zoning, including code enforcement, permitting, working with the Planning Board and Board of Adjustments, and other areas that overlap with key goals for the Livable Communities Committee. Anna will help us connect with departments within the town’s government, as well as serve as a resource for the committee on planning and zoning issues. Her background working with municipal steering committees, strategic planning, streetscape and greenway planning, and environmental programs for the public make her a real asset to the Livable Communities Committee.

Section 2: Community Activities, Engagements, and Collaborations
Briefly describe your existing community policies, programs and services that are targeted toward older people. Please identify how your community plans to become more age-friendly. (250-300 words required)

Existing: The town of Jamestown hosts events such as Movies and Music in the Park, and partners with local organizations for annual parades and events (such as working with the Rotary Club and YMCA for the Christmas Parade, and the Jamestown Veterans Association for flag-raisings and memorials on holidays). The Jamestown Public Library, which the town owns and is run by a nonprofit organization, offers volunteer opportunities, book clubs, group activities, and computer access that appeal to older citizens. Local resources include: Meals on Wheels, community gardens, a Memory Café program, exercise classes including Silver Sneakers (YWCA), caregivers’ support group, book clubs (with the library and neighborhood groups), Yoga in the Park (YWCA), a smoke alarm program (with our local fire department), Adding Health to Our
Years, and other informal programs benefitting seniors. Senior Centers in Greensboro and High Point offer programming nearby. The main campus of Guilford Technical Community College is located in Jamestown, and seniors are able to audit courses there free of charge. A variety of medical offices including family and general medicine and urgent care are within town limits. Pennybyrn at Maryfield, a well-regarded retirement community with a five star-rated transitional rehab, assisted living, memory care, and skilled nursing facility, is located on our town border. They will soon open a standalone transitional rehabilitation center (the first in the state) specializing in short-term rehabilitation. Pennybyrn also has plans to open a seven-day-a-week Adult Care and Support Center.

Planned: The town recently approved a parks plan that includes many amenities for older adults, including flat walking paths, ample shade, dog parks, and space for yoga. Town plans also include an updated pedestrian plan, bike lanes, advocating for affordable and age-in-place housing when opportunities arise, and exploring the viability of a senior services center. Guilford County, the Piedmont Triad Regional Council, and neighboring churches offer programming geared toward older adults, but many of these events take place outside of Jamestown. We plan to invite representatives from local groups to offer workshops and programs in town so that older residents who may be uncomfortable traveling can participate. We are also interested in hosting AARP workshops such as those focused on making a home suitable for aging in place. A national homebuilder recently purchased a large parcel of land in Jamestown, and the town hired a community planner to lead a series of “property visioning workshops” for residents to give input on how they would like to see the area developed. Members of the Livable Communities Committee will bring the 8 Domains of Livability to the conversation as plans for this, and any other new developments, are made.

How will older adults be involved in the community’s efforts to become more age-friendly? (250-300 words required)

We have already convened a committee for the Livable Communities initiative made of residents age 55 and up. They represent diverse backgrounds and different geographic areas of town. This group has been meeting approximately monthly since February 2021. Members of this group will reach out to neighbors to solicit feedback and offer volunteer opportunities. The town will use its social media (Facebook) page, website, notes sections of water bill/mailers, and monthly newsletter to update residents on the Livable Communities Committee’s progress and invite community members to participate in the initiative. Jamestown is a welcoming and supportive community. We anticipate that local businesses, churches, and civic groups will help raise awareness of the initiative among their members and supporters. Volunteers beyond members of the Livable Communities Committee will be needed to take part in focus groups and town resource audits (such as a sidewalk audit, or exploring the need for new types of in-town senior programming).

Jamestown is in the midst of updating our age-friendly Comprehensive Plan, and over half of our Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee’s members are over age 60.
Senior residents are also well-represented on our other town boards and other committees, so we already benefit from having a wealth of influential older adults involved in town matters. The Livable Communities Team will share the 8 Domains of Livability with town leaders. This framework and these tools will lead to intentional discussions on becoming more age-friendly in the work of all of our boards and committees. We also anticipate resources from AARP, such as the Livable Communities newsletter, prompting new ideas for town that we are excited to explore.

How will the efforts to become more age-friendly increase collaboration and coordination among relevant community agencies and departments? (250-300 words required)

Approximately 30% of our Jamestown’s population is over 60 years old and we are designated as a certified retirement community by Retire NC. Tourist draws such as the historic Mendenhall Homeplace, local museums, and Old Jamestown School (now the Jamestown Public Library) also bring seniors to our area. Many of our town’s programs and services already cater to older residents, and the Livable Communities initiative will allow us to “connect the dots” between those and see what we would like to enhance or add.

As a small town with limited staff, Jamestown already does well working with community agencies and service providers. We rely on these partnerships, including our local sheriff’s department, fire department, library, and historic/cultural programming providers, and YMCA, which we have contracts with to provide services. Local medical providers—both large and small—offer services to residents at all stages of life. The Livable Communities initiative gives us the opportunity to formalize some of these partnerships and make our work as it relates to older adults less piecemeal. Rather than responding to senior residents’ needs and interests as one-off situations, those services will be integrated into each of our community efforts. We are confident that having a Livable Communities designation by AARP will give us the extra incentive and backing to better articulate the needs of older adults in Jamestown when strengthening and making new connections with local agencies. Many of our partners may already offer services geared toward older adults that we’re not even aware of, simply because the conversation has not come up. Nonprofit organizations and churches, especially, are often so focused on providing their much-needed community services that the public relations piece about those programs is neglected. For example, our local fire department offers free smoke detectors—including installation—for residents. Town leaders did not know about this until it was mentioned during an annual presentation by a fire department representative. The Livable Communities initiative will prompt town leaders and staff to become more proactive about asking about senior-focused programming and resources from each of the agencies with whom we collaborate.

Section 3: Network Membership

What motivated your community to join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities?
Town representative attended a statewide AARP conference on age-friendly communities and realized that the initiative could be a great fit for Jamestown. We invited Mark Hensley to speak at a council meeting and then began the process to apply in 2020. Livable Communities Committee members are motivated to work on this initiative because we see Jamestown as “the place to be.” Longtime residents are especially interested in making town (and their homes) more age-friendly. We appreciate the opportunity to invest in the community and make it more inclusive and welcoming for people of all ages.

If you have consulted with an AARP State office or the national AARP Livable Communities team to discuss enrollment, please provide that person’s name, title, and email address or phone number.

What aspect of your community’s current or intended age-friendly work could be useful to other communities in the network?

As a certified retirement community and one that has been successful in engaging older adults, we could provide resources to other communities on how to make civic opportunities available and accessible to seniors.

Section 4: Required Materials (To be uploaded with application)
Letter of Commitment
Resolution or Proclamation (From October 20, 2020 meeting)
Logo/Image

Section 5: Social Media
Facebook: facebook.com/JamestownNC/