June 11, 2021

Mike Festa  
AARP Massachusetts Director  
One Beacon Street, Suite 2301  
Boston, MA 02108  

Dear Mr. Festa,

On behalf of the Town of Hadley, I am submitting this letter of commitment to joining the Age- and Dementia-Friendly Massachusetts networks. Various municipal departments in Hadley including its Council on Aging, which is spearheading this effort with the energy of community members, understand the importance of applying an “age-friendly lens” to our work to make Hadley a livable community for all. We share the value of working to increase the ability for all residents to age in place with dignity and security.

With the 2020 completion of the new Hadley Senior Center, we are poised to invite older adults to advocate together for town-wide initiatives that make aging in place easier. Indeed, the grassroots effort required to persuade Hadley voters of all ages to fund the building of the Senior Center attests to residents’ awareness of the needs of older adults. This process has already begun: Senior Services Director Hayley Wood has assembled a committee of Age- and Dementia-Friendly Hadley supporters who meet monthly to discuss the movements and strategies for Hadley to become involved. This group has six senior Hadley residents as members in addition to the Hadley Senior Center staff. Regular invitations to join the group will be issued to the community via the Senior Center’s newsletter, Facebook page, emailed correspondence, and cable television.

Hadley also has a special opportunity to join the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission’s regional Age-Friendly network, which will give Hadley access to resources it would otherwise struggle to attain: help with developing a town-wide needs-assessment and its distribution and analysis. Membership within this network also provides quarterly opportunities to meet with other regional members, get peer support, and learn from experts about specific topics relevant to the movement (housing, for instance).

Once we have applied for membership in Massachusetts’ Age- and Dementia-Friendly networks (which we plan to work on concurrently), we will set in motion the development of the assessment and its distribution. We will also begin our work on a plan of action that incorporates measurable goals that are specific enough to be doable. We will continually work as a community to increase our “dementia competence” and develop an approach to our work that involves awareness of what it means to live with severe memory loss and to care for someone living with dementia.

We will continually communicate with the public—Hadley residents of all ages, fellow municipal employees, and our legislators—about our progress. The task is daunting, but we all deserve the security of an Age- and Dementia-Friendly community.

Sincerely,
Carolyn Brennan
Town Administrator

David Fill, II
Select Board Chair