Age-Friendly Chelsea
A community for *all* Ages

Walks  Luncheons  Concerts

Action Plan: Live Here ~ Stay Here

2021/2022
February 9, 2022

AARP — Age Friendly Chelsea

The Town of Chelsea Select Board is pleased to express its support of the Age-Friendly Chelsea Committee. The Select Board also supports its age-friendly community plan, goal setting and accomplishments for the Chelsea age-friendly community.

The Select Board and the Age-Friendly Chelsea Committee recognize the valuable contributions the older residents make to the community. We believe providing opportunities and addressing changing needs of residents of all ages is fundamental to success of this program. This can be accomplished by good health and well-being programs, social connectivity initiatives, and local recreational events.

We encourage the Chelsea Age-Friendly Committee to continue its efforts to inspire the well-being of residents of all ages. In addition, continue to develop partnerships with other committees and encourage community participation.

The Select Board looks forward to continuing to work with the Age-Friendly Chelsea Committee in supporting activities and programs that improve and enhance the quality of life for all ages in town.

Respectfully,

The Chelsea Select Board

Michael Pushard, Chairperson

Sheri Truman, Vice Chair

Jason Mills
Age-Friendly Chelsea Action Plan

Table of Contents

The Age-Friendly Chelsea Committee..............................................................................................................1&2

Community Profile..............................................................................................................................................3-5
   a. Introduction to community
   b. Demographic and Diversity Data
   c. Description of age-friendly features of the community
   d. History of Chelsea Waterfront

Introduction to the Plan......................................................................................................................................6-8
   a. Mission Statement
   b. Vision Statement
   c. Summary of Community Assessment/Survey
   d. Description of who was involved in the development and implementation of the plan

Domain-Specific Action Plans.........................................................................................................................9&10

Chelsea's Select Board
Sheri Truman, Mike Pushard and Jason Mills
The Age-Friendly Chelsea Committee

Marion Bowman

Marion is a retired systems software engineer, project manager and former State data center enterprise operations manager (24x7x365). Marion also has been/is an amateur archaeologist all her life and was/is a psychology major. Living in Chelsea (rural country just outside the Capital) while raising her sons was important to her. Since asking a retired town volunteer who was attending a culvert replacement on her driveway one day “if the town had all the volunteers it needed to run its processes” (the answer was NO of course!) she has served on several Boards and Committees over many years and now is the Coordinator for Chelsea Heart & Soul albeit with COVID challenges and all! Marion also edited and published a newsletter based on the people behind technology for government. Community communication (information or light) is key to moving forward and connecting everyone to it (sharing) even more so to her!

Nina Polina Charczenko

Nina is a 56 years old woman who grew up in Chelsea. In fact, she lives in the home she grew up in. Nina has a BA in Political Science, a degree in photography and studied at the Sheffield England School of Law. She was an intern for Maine International Trade Center and she also has 25 years of experience in food and beverage. She retired from the State of Maine and has a licensed business in town..

Patti Fredette

Patti worked in Human Service agencies for over 30 years. She moved to Chelsea with her husband Chuck in 2016 after retiring from her job as a Medicare Specialist with an Aging and Disabled Resource Center in NH. Patti has 5 children and 5 grandchildren. In her spare time, she enjoys arts and crafts and traveling.

Dot Grady

Dot has been a resident of Chelsea for over 35 years, a business owner in the community for 23 years and served in the Maine Army National Guard for 6 years. She has been married for 35 years, is the mother of 2 and a grandmother of 2. Dot enjoys volunteering in her community, spending time with her family and doing crafts.
Lori Milner

Lori is an Air Force and Civil Service retiree, after completing 33 years combined active and reserve duty. Lori relocated to Maine in 2020 to be near family and is currently a first year student at the Chaplaincy Institute of Maine.

Scott Tilton

Scott currently serves as the Town Manager of Chelsea, a position he has held for 10 years. Scott earned his Masters in Public Administration from the University of Maine and has 25 years of experience in town management. Outside of work, Scott enjoys officiating basketball and softball games. He also volunteers regularly as a Range Safety Officer at the Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Summerhaven shooting range. Scott resides in Winslow with his family and 2 dogs.

Wilma Ware

Wilma grew up in Ellsworth and moved to Gardiner to attend Central Beauty School. Wilma moved to Chelsea 48 ½ years ago when she married her husband Dan. She has 2 grown children and 4 grandchildren. She was active in school activities, PTA and scouts when her children were young. Wilma owned a beauty salon in Chelsea for 20 years. Through these activities she met many local people, many of them became great friends. At the age of 50, Wilma attended Mid State College to get an Associates Degree in medical assisting. She worked as a M.A. until her retirement. She now enjoys being involved with the Age-Friendly Chelsea committee, especially the senior lunches.
Community Profile

Introduction to Community:

Chelsea is a rural community that is rich in history, diverse in economics and is centrally located to everything that Maine has to offer.

Demographics and Diversity Data

Population: 2778, more than 23% is 65 and over.

Median Household Income: $67,845.00

Median House Value: $163,067.00

Education: High School/GED, 40.5%
            College, 28%

Employment: 58.3%

Minority Population: 249

Description of Age-Friendly Features of the Community

Currently the town of Chelsea offers an annual Christmas Tree Lighting festivity. We also have a senior luncheon on the 3rd Thursday of the month and a walking group that meets 3 times a week. Chelsea also has a Sand for Seniors Program, where volunteers from the fire department deliver a bucket of sand to residents 60 and over or who are disabled. There is an active Grange, Historical Society, Food Bank and Heart & Soul Committee in Chelsea. We have trails at Butternut Park for walking, for exploring nature, for bird watching. Butternut Park also has a rudimentary boat launch with access to the Kennebec River for those who wish to canoe, kayak or fish. The ball fields located next to the elementary school and the school gymnasium provide opportunities to watch children play sports. There are trails for those who ride snowmobiles and we even have concerts, free to our residents, May through October. Chelsea is a town that values and supports recreational activities. All are welcome, come join the fun!
History and Importance of the Chelsea Waterfront

Chelsea was settled in 1762 with Jonathon Davenport and family it’s first inhabitants. Chelsea was at first part of Old Hallowell which encompassed present Hallowell, Chelsea, Augusta and parts of neighboring towns. Jonathan became the Hallowell’s first town clerk and much of what we know of the early days comes from his writings and notes. In 1850 the State legislature passed a bill allowing Chelsea to separate from Hallowell and in 1851 it became an independent town. The Kennebec River was the lifeblood of the community and as late as 1900 the principal settlement for inhabitants and industry was along the river on either side of Butternut Park.

Roads were nonexistent or very crude, in the early years most travel was by water. Ferry service was established in the 1700’s and in 1830 the Hallowell Ferry Company was established to provide both foot and vehicle ferry service. Some of these ferries were horse powered with a horse on a treadmill propelling the paddles. Ferry service continued until 1860 when the Hallowell/Chelsea bridge opened. In 1858 Horace Beals erected a luxury 134 room hotel on property that later became the Togus VA. Hallowell and Chelsea, anticipating a huge increase in travel and shipping to the hotel, banded together to build the state of the art bridge linking the two towns. Unfortunately, largely due to the Civil War, the hotel was unprofitable and soon closed and so the bridge lost money. In 1870 a huge flood hit the Kennebec and took out the bridge. Hallowell and Chelsea voted not to rebuild. Chelsea went back to the ferries which continued until the mid 1900’s.

Shipyards and maritime interests dotted the waterfront on either side of Butternut Park. Clippers, schooners and whaling boats were built in Chelsea yards and launched into the Kennebec to begin their journeys around the world. Many Chelsea men sailed on them and many Chelsea ladies waited anxiously to hear news of their fate.
Even the industry established inland depended on the river and Chelsea’s many landings. Saw, grist and shingle mills dotted nearly every stream and all shipped their goods via the Kennebec. For a number of years ice was a large industry in town. Two large ice houses in town cut and shipped hundreds of tons of ice down south. Farming and farm produce contributed to the wealth of Chelsea and again needed the river for transportation to market.

In 1775 Arnold and his men passed through Chelsea both on the river and on foot. When their ship had to pause for the tide to change a number of soldiers and officers chose to walk to Fort Western passing along the waterfront of Chelsea. When sick or injured men were sent back from the Quebec campaign they were taken in by local families to wait for the ice out that would allow a ship to take them home. Some did not survive the wait and were buried by the good towns folks in the Goodwin Cemetery. Chelsea has an honored history of military service. For instance, Chelsea sent 98 soldiers to service in the Civil War. 28 of them died in that cause and many more were wounded.

If the river was the blood of the community, the area around Butternut Park was the center of its heart and history. If you stood there in 1800 you’d hear the saws and hammers of its shipyards and the slap of oars from the river traffic and fishermen, you’d see farm and mill wagons bringing their produce to the landings. Perhaps you’d see women gathering to chat with their neighbors or await the ferry for news of an overdue ship. Then you might see men trooping from the shipyard to the “entertainment house” just north of the park for a well deserved drink after work. The waterfront is where Chelsea began and where perhaps its heart still beats.

Chelsea Historical Society
Introduction to the Plan

Mission Statement:

Creating and supporting activities that promote good health, active lives and engage residents.

Vision Statement:

The committee is dedicated to making Chelsea the BEST place to live, work and play. To make our town one where residents can enjoy quality of life through all its stages.

Summary of Community Assessment/Survey:

Survey Summary: 21 surveys were returned, a percentage of 21.5%. 47.6% of the respondents were 60-70 years old, 33.3% were 70-80 and 19% between 80-90. 90.4% said they wanted to remain in their current home. 19.6% were considering moving to a smaller residence. 28.6% said their biggest desire was transportation in Chelsea. This was followed by a tie of 19% each between the need for housing assistance, social events and the “other” option which most respondents designated as property tax.

Survey Results:

Best way to communicate with the public: Ranked only, percentages not given.

#1 - Emailed Newsletter, #2 - Paper Newsletter, #3 - Town Website, #4 - Town Facebook, #5 - Townline Community Newspaper

Healthcare:

Access to in home services, 28.6%, wellness classes and programs, 19.1%. Other popular choices were access to home care professionals and having an assisted living facility in Chelsea. Least popular (38.1% of all last place votes) was having daily check in calls.

Socialization:

Continued education, 28.6% and Group volunteer activities or social events, 23.8%.
Home Affordability:

List of affordable home repair services, 42.9% and access to reduced prices in fuel or food resources, 38.1%.

Transportation:

Getting medical appointments outside of Chelsea, 62.1%. Also (no percentage) access to regional public transportation in outlying areas

Sidewalks and Trails: (ranked only)

#1 - Sidewalks for exercise, #2 - Outside walking trails, #3 - Bike trails, #4 - Indoor walking facility

Access to Businesses: (ranked only)

#1 - Access to a list of reliable home repair contractors, #2 - Access to a list of reliable providers of other home services, #3 - Access to qualified providers of special adaptations.

Description of Who Was Involved in the Development of the Plan and Implementation of the Plan:

Scott Tilton, our Town Manager, created a survey which was sent out to a group of older residents in town. He then put a call out to some key people, asking if they would be willing to serve on a committee to address concerns based on the survey. In August 2021, the Age-Friendly Chelsea Committee was formed. The committee came up with a list of projects that would address these concerns, as well as helping to make Chelsea a more age-friendly community.

The Age-Friendly Chelsea Committee has already begun a couple projects and is actively planning some larger projects for the community.

The committee started a walking group utilizing the grounds of the adjacent Togus VA hospital. This involved talking with the hospital to obtain permission to park there and use of the grounds.

The committee has also been holding monthly informational luncheons featuring social time, a meal prepared by committee members and a speaker to inform attendees about programs and services in the area. The local Grange Hall has donated space in which to hold these luncheons, and a volunteer for the Chelsea Food Bank helps with setup and cleanup.
Our project to enhance and improve Butternut Park has brought more people to the table, including a representative from Maine Department of Environmental Protection and the Chelsea Planning Board. Two local groups are also key to the success of the project. The Conservation Committee has been working on walking trails at Butternut Park and the Age-Friendly Chelsea Committee is seeking funding to provide trail markers, trail head sign and identification placards for local trees and plants. The committee has also engaged the Chelsea Historical Society to work with them on providing historical information for signs that will tell the story of Chelsea to visitors of the park.
Domain-Specific Action Plans

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings:

Work with the Conservation Committee and the Historical Society to expand Butternut Park – stage area, picnic area, benches, historical signage, trail head and flora markers. Apply for funding.

Request acreage from the select board for Chelsea Community Common. Make a four year plan and apply for funding.

Work with the SVRSU #12 Superintendent and the Conservation Committee to build a walking trail along the fence bordering the ball fields located beside Chelsea Elementary School. Apply for funding.

Transportation:

Local resource assessment. Clarify services of Where M I Taxi and Kennebec Explorer. Look into a Volunteer Driver Program.

Housing:

Look into Shared Housing Programs. Look into Property Tax programs that help residents remain in their homes. Support creation of Accessory Dwelling Units. Establish a program to provide household repair and improvement services.

Social Participation:

Work with the local Grange to host monthly senior luncheons. Walking group meets 3 times a week. Hold concerts, May through October. Ask Select Board to fund and/or allow the committee to seek sponsorships and donations.

Respect & Social Inclusion:

Host monthly senior luncheons. Walking group meets 3 times a week. Hold concerts, May through October.

Civic Participation and Employment:

Investigate providing a class on “How to use Zoom” for our senior residents.
Age-Friendly Chelsea Action Plan

Communication & Information:

Develop a Resource Guide in conjunction with the Chelsea Heart & Soul Committee. Create an Age-Friendly Chelsea Facebook Page to share information and post upcoming events. Provide information for the quarterly newsletter published by the town and the Chelsea Heart & Soul Coordinator. Create a Tri-fold or One Pager. Computer (Internet) Classes.

Community Support & Health Services:

Develop a Resource Guide. Implement a senior call check in program. Sand for Seniors Program. Delivery of food to senior households.