



Aging Well in Readfield

Progress Report and Recommendations by Readfield's Age-Friendly Committee

~ 2023 ~



Readfield Age-Friendly Committee Members

Deborah Carey, Ed Dodge, Maggie Edmondson, Eric Johnson, Elaine Katz, Margaret Livingston, Marianne Perry, and Steve DeAngelis (Select Board liaison)

Former members: Marjorie Ellis, Ann Mitchell, John Moran, Donna McGibney, Romaine Turyn (Chair) and Bruce Bourgoine (former Select Board liaison)

The original plan and survey supported by a grant from AARP Maine

Introduction

The Readfield Select Board established an Ad Hoc Age Friendly Committee in January of 2016 and charged it with:

"...creating an inventory of possible desirable resources and services, identifying best methods to communicate the preceding to older citizens in our community, recommending future courses of action they deem desirable, and pursuing in conjunction with the town manager any grant offerings that may be available..."



The Committee organized its research and recommendations around eight key dimensions of livability that AARP recommends that communities should consider:

- outdoor space and buildings
- transportation
- housing
- social participation
- respect and social inclusion
- civic participation and employment,
- communication and information
- community support and health services

In 2017 AARP Maine awarded a grant to the Committee, which was used to hire a consultant (Frank O'Hara) to assist with the planning process. The Committee conducted a survey of Readfield residents over the age of 50; held presentations and discussions at a Community Meeting at the Town Office, met with the Library Board and with members of the Senior Café held at the Maranacook Community Middle School. For a copy of the full report, methodology and responses, please contact the Town.

Since the development of the first Aging Well Report in 2017, it is important to note from the 2020 census that the 65 and older age bracket has increased steadily. Readfield's Comprehensive Plan notes that the 55-65 age group makes up 15 % and 65+ another 15% with a 57% upward trend over the last 20 years, requiring that housing, transportation and recreation are all areas that must address the needs of our older population.

Using the survey results, the Committee organized its initial report using the 8 domains of livability and made recommendations in two categories: those requiring immediate action and Long-Term actions.

Following is a summary of activities and accomplishments made by the Age Friendly Committee toward meeting the recommendations, additional activities initiated by the Committee, and recommendations for future activities.

Outdoor Space and Buildings

Initial Recommendations for Immediate Actions:

- Seek membership on the potential new Parks and Recreation Commission
- Construct a railing at the Town Beach to ease in getting in and out of the water

Long-Term Actions:

- All programs offer an age appropriate component
- Enhance community gardens, benches, edible garden



Kayak/Canoe rack at the Readfield Beach

Progress:

- A member of the Age Friendly Committee serves on the Ad Hoc Fairgrounds and on the Comprehensive Planning Committee, which includes the use of outdoor space and buildings.
- Kayak/canoe rack built at the Town Beach to increase accessibility to the water for all ages. A kayak launch/dock is in the process of being completed.
- Planted a tree at the Fairgrounds to commemorate the State's Bicentennial, in the height of COVID pandemic.
- With funds from an \$8,000 AARP Challenge Grant, the Town purchased benches for the Fairgrounds, bleachers for the ball field, a bike rack, and ADA compliant picnic tables adding to the amenities at the Fairgrounds.
- With funds from the Maine Community Foundation of \$2,429 the Town purchased blue stone for the ADA accessible trail system located at the Fairgrounds which were matched by the Readfield Conservation Committee. Volunteer members of the Trails and Conservation Committees as well as high school students from Maranacook Community School and Kents Hill School helped spread the stone. Also purchased was a bench for the trail a top of a hill overlooking the lake and a large expanse of open space. These funds were also used to prepare space and kiosk for the historical pulling stone exhibit at the Fairgrounds.
- With a second \$6,556 Challenge Grant from AARP, the Town purchased Adirondack chairs for the Town Beach and the Library, a canopy for outside Library presentations, more outdoor chairs and a table for use outside the Library. While these items were purchased during the pandemic which necessitated more outdoor activity, the community continues to enjoy meeting outside.
- The Town has waived all beach fees for residents to use the Town beach.
- Planning for a kayak launch is in process.

Bench purchased for the trail system



Transportation

Initial Recommendations for Immediate Actions:

- Work with AARP to assign a teacher for an Over 55 Driver Safety Program to be held in conjunction with Maranacook Community Education
- Safety of roads for walkers is a concern
- Improved signage and walkway identification is needed

Long-Term Actions:

- Seek ways to develop a Neighbor Driving Neighbor Program with neighboring communities (Winthrop and Wayne) modeled after the program in Mount Vernon.
- Create a bicycle share program
- Extend the Church Street sidewalk to the Fairgrounds



Progress:

- Maranacook Community Education offered several sessions of the Over 55 Driver Safety Program. This was offered until COVID closed the Community Education program in person classes. The teacher of the Program subsequently moved out of town. Availability of this program exists throughout the state through AARP.
- Worked with Catholic Charities SEARCH Program to develop a transportation component to their SEARCH Program. A few residents participated in this offering.
- Readfield is now a member of the Neighbor Driving Neighbor Program and had its kick off meeting on June 25, 2023. The Age friendly Committee has a liaison member to the Program. Volunteer drivers have been identified and trained and are actively driving. Efforts are underway to identify additional riders.
- The extension of the sidewalk has been approved by the Maine Department of Transportation and town matching funding has been appropriated. The Town is waiting for the MDOT funds to be made available.
- Crosswalks in town and near the beach have been repainted.
- The Town also has periodic access to a speed recorder to alert drivers how fast they are driving in posted areas.
- Speed limit signs in the village area have been highlighted with a red background to alert drivers of a posted speed change as they drive through the center of town.

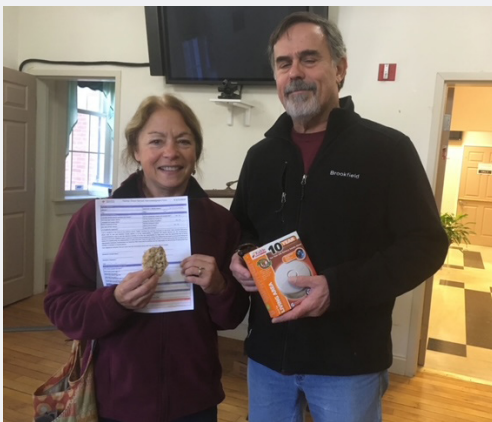
Housing

Initial Recommendations for Immediate Actions:

- Inform residents of existing property tax proposal
- Work with AARP to secure a volunteer to assist with resident income tax filings at Readfield Town Hall

Long-Term Actions:

- Develop a tax relief program for Readfield's oldest and lowest income seniors so that they may remain in their home.
- Explore the possibility of elderly housing (options: Find town owned land. Issue an RFQ. Build onto Balsam House)
- Work with town office to distribute a list of home repair contractors who are residents of Readfield



American Red Cross Smoke Alarm Program



Handy Helpers Sand Bucket Program

Progress:

- Publicized the tax relief programs available to low income Mainers.
- Publicized locations that provide income tax assistance.
- Provided information on the new law freezing the property tax of seniors who have owned their homes for 10 years.
- Developed a sand bucket delivery program which has served over 30 households.
- Developed a Handy Helper Program using volunteers to assist residents with minor home repairs. Over 30 households have received services.
- Worked with the American Red Cross – Maine Chapter to install up to 3 smoke alarms in 46 households of any age in Readfield. This program was offered for 3 years
- Participated with the Maranacook Community School, Community Service Day to assist older residents with raking leaves, moving rocks and other yard work chores.
- An Adaptive Living Tool Kit was borrowed from the Town of Bethel, Maine and was displayed at the Town Office and at the Readfield Community Library.

Social Participation, Respect & Community Inclusion

Initial Recommendations for Immediate Actions:

- Request the school to coordinate a free afternoon opportunity to view the high school play, perhaps at the last dress rehearsal.
- Coordinate with the Library Board to create programs at the library to support the Senior Café at the Middle School.
- Continue and build on an annual recognition for volunteers

Long-Term Actions:

- Expand art courses and music lessons in community education
- Create a volunteer bank matching volunteers with needs
- Use school busses to take seniors to special programs in the area
- Create a community center for seniors



Progress:

- A significant accomplishment is the creation of Readfield U, a month long offering of classes and activities highlighting the resources and talents of community members. It is offered during the month of March and is intended to bring community members together to get to know each other in new and different ways. The first year was successful but was halted due to the COVID pandemic. This year it offered 16 classes and had 69 registrants with some registering for multiple classes and more people showing up on the day for some of the classes. This free community forum will continue.
- The high school plays were opened at least twice for residents to attend a free viewing of the final dress rehearsal.
- The Readfield Community Library has become a major supporting partner for many Age Friendly activities.
- The town continues to recognize its volunteers each summer during the Spirit of America award celebration.
- The Age Friendly Committee assisted with writing a grant intending to help development of a community centered facility at the Union Meeting House Vestry. Unfortunately, the grant was not funded but efforts continue to make this a reality.
- The Senior Café has been reactivated post COVID, which meets every Tuesday at the Maranacook Community Middle School during the school year. Efforts are underway to find a location to meet during the summer.





READFIELD RESOURCES

(Current as of April, 2023)

**EMERGENCY
9-1-1**

Kennebec County Sheriff Office 623-3614
Maine State Police (Non-Emergency) 624-7076
Maine Resource Guide/Assistance 2-1-1
Maine Relay Service (Hearing/Speech) 7-1-1
Poison Control Center 1-800-222-1222

Readfield Community:

Adult Education 685-4923 ext. 1065
Animal Control Officer 931-7684
Community Library 685-4089
Food Pantry (Maranacook) 685-3128
Food Pantry (Mt. Vernon) 293-2351
Neighbors Driving Neighbors 860-0677
Post Office 685-9220
Readfield Historical Society & Museum . . . 377-2299
Senior Café @ Maranacook 500-1737
Town Office 685-4939
Transfer Station 685-3144
Union Meeting House 685-4537

Regional Resources:

Aging & Disability Resource Center. . .1-877-353-3771
Central Maine Medical Center/Lewiston . . . 795-0111
Department of Health & Human Services . . . 287-3707
(MaineCare/Medicaid/SNAP/Emergency Assistance)
Elder Abuse Hotline 1-800-624-8404
Hannaford To-Go/Winthrop 377-3150
KVCAP (HEAP/Transportation) 622-4761
Legal Services for Elderly 1-800-750-5353
Maine Attorney General 626-8800
Maine General Hospital/Augusta 626-1000
Maine General Express Care/Winthrop . . . 377-1450
SEARCH (Catholic Charities Assistance) 530-0137
Social Security 1-800-772-1213
Spectrum Generations/Cohen Center. 626-7777
Togus/Veterans Affairs 623-8411

The mission of Readfield's Age-Friendly Committee is to identify information and resources to help support our aging citizens to remain healthy, safe and comfortable in their homes for as long as possible.

<https://www.readfieldmaine.org/age-friendly-community-committee>

Civic Engagement and Employment

Initial Recommendations for Immediate Actions:

- Have an age-friendly technology training at the library; one on using email and Facebook and one using apps for telephone and iPad ("appy hour")
- Encourage Library to initiate a book delivery program to seniors who cannot get to the library

Progress:

- The Age Friendly made it through the challenges resulting from the COVID Pandemic.
- The Age Friendly Committee has a full complement of members.
- The library has a book delivery program for seniors who cannot drive to the library.
- The Library encourages participation in online events and book clubs.
- A technology technical assistance class was held at the library.
- An Age Friendly Committee member is an active member of the Comprehensive Planning Committee which is in the process of updating its plan. This provides an opportunity to provide insight and input how Readfield can be a more livable community for all in every aspect of the community.
- The Town of Readfield has many boards and commissions including the Planning Board, trails and conservation committees, comprehensive planning committee, all appointed by an elected Select board. It is estimated that over 80% of those members are people over the age of 55.

Readfield's VOLUNTEER Handy Helpers

Contact through Readfield Town Office
Phone: (207) 685-1816
E-mail: clerk@readfieldmaine.org
Web Site: www.readfieldmaine.org

Communication and Information

Progress:

- The Age Friendly Committee has a table at June and November election sites which includes information about Age Friendly activities.
- The Age Friendly Committee developed a one-page resource guide with relevant and pertinent information and telephone numbers of interest. This has been updated recently and it is hoped it will be sent out with the tax bills.
- The Handy Helper brochure has been updated and will be widely distributed.
- The Committee provides an update and news article every month for inclusion in the Town's Readfield Messenger, which is available in paper format or online.
- Committee minutes are provided each month to the Readfield Select Board. One member of the Select Board serves as a liaison to the Committee and attends meetings when possible. He has been instrumental in re-establishing the Senior Café located in the Readfield Community Middle School where residents can gather, to socialize with students, have coffee, and arrange speakers on topics of interest.
- The Age Friendly Committee is a standing committee of the Town and is included in budget discussions, and other policy discussions initiated by the Town.



Community Support and Health Services

Initial Recommendations for Immediate Actions:

- Communicate with Adult Ed to ensure courses and programs for seniors
- Invite Spectrum Generations to hold a town forum to discuss services available. Arrange for a benefits counselor to be available to assist residents explore what benefits they may be eligible to receive
- Arrange for a State Health Insurance Counselor to come to the Readfield Town Office to assist with health insurance during open enrollment next September
- Pet care – for seniors in towns, waive fee for pet rabies shots
- Coordinate with high school to identify service learning opportunities between residents and students
- Explore getting more Farm shares vouchers for Readfield farmers and residents

Long-Term Actions:

- Develop a program of seniors calling seniors
- Have a medical person available to do home visits

Progress:

- Using Challenge Grant funds, funded the food pantry to purchase 2 sandwich boards to promote the food pantry, a coleman cooler to keep food cold and a metal rolling cart to deliver food to cars.
- Currently working with the Senior Café and Food Pantry to develop a Food Pet Pantry.
- Explored getting more Farm Share Vouchers but was not successful because there is a limit on the number of vouchers available.
- Increased communication is needed between the Town and Spectrum Generations to assure residents are aware of all available services and resources. Because of the close proximity, many community members attend activities at the Cohen Center in Hallowell.
- Community members continue to check in with one another but on an informal basis. The Age Friendly Committee intends to continue formalizing a Neighbor Calling Neighbor Program.
- During the height of the Pandemic, the Town was awarded a grant by Grass Roots in 2020. The purpose of the monies was to support individuals during the shut down period by making periodic calls, going to the grocery store or pharmacy to pick up needed prescriptions.



Current and Future Activities



Late in 2022, the Chair of the Age Friendly Committee since its inception, moved out of town. She continued to assist the Committee as a Fellow through the Maine Center on Aging at the University of Maine. Readfield is happy to report that the transition has been completed smoothly and the Age Friendly Committee is active and strong. It is in the process of developing new energy with new members. Some of the planned activities include:

- Continue to publicize and work on improved publicity and participation for those with interest.
- Education on Emergency Services – what is an emergency and expectations of response times.
- Work to offer a basic first aid program for residents.
- Work with the Comprehensive Planning Committee and the Town to implement recommendations that benefit older community members.
- Participate in Heritage Days in August to highlight and promote Age Friendly Programs.
- Assist and support the Library as it continue the Senior Café over the summer.