

MINUTES of MEETING – DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE TASK FORCE
Wednesday, December 17, 2008 – Lexington Town Office Building, Room 111

Call to order: 7:05 p.m.

Present: Marion Cohen (2020 Vision Committee Liaison), Margaret Coppe (School Committee Liaison), Ben Esty, Bebe Fallick (Chair), Dan Krupka, Candy McLaughlin (Assistant to the Town Manager), Carl Valente (Town Manager)

George Burnell (Selectman) arrived shortly after the start of the meeting

Presenters: Donna Hooper, Town Clerk, and Connie Rawson, Cary Library Director

There was some discussion as to why the Day Care facilities are not being used more fully. Possible reasons are people are too negatively medically advanced, not enough publicity, possible candidates not wanting to admit need.

The minutes of October 29, 2008, were accepted as presented.

DONNA HOOPER, TOWN CLERK, presented a Summary of Vital Events, 1994-2008, from the records recorded in the Lexington Town Hall. Birth numbers are down, marriages are down, deaths are stable. Population numbers are fairly stable.

The Annual Town Census will be mailed at the beginning of January. Information on ethnicity is not necessarily captured via this Town Census but from office counter visits by residents there is an apparent increase in Asian and Indian population. There are a number of out of country adoptions from Asian countries and South America.

There are a large number of vacant properties: teardowns and the time lag to rebuild, people away for winter, dual residences (one in Lexington and one out of state).

Death numbers include nursing home residences.

There is a need for the School Department to insure that people complete the census forms. Margaret Coppe mentioned that there were 50 more kindergarteners than anticipated from the birth numbers. The only people currently captured from Avalon Bay are those who registered to vote.

In discussing the Population Distribution 1997-2008 chart which Ms. Hooper presented, it was noted that the number of young residents is down and the number of older residents is up. There was a concern expressed by a Task Force member that favoring one demographic over another (especially the senior portion) would eventually create a vacuum of residents at the younger age, especially among the 30 –49 year olds. The Town Manager stated that little has been spent on seniors to date, and that the largest portion of the Town budget is expended via the School budget. There was some discussion that the 30-39 year old drop may be attributed to lack of affordable housing stock.

There was mention of a possible Home Rule petition to allow non-citizen residents to vote in local elections.

The nature of occupations listed on the Town Census was questioned and Ms. Hooper was asked to run a list of 30-39 year olds and their occupations, and also the 20, the 30, and the 40 year olds.

Ms. Hooper indicated a desire for funding for digitization of materials recorded in the Town Clerk's Office.

CONNIE RAWSON, CARY LIBRARY DIRECTOR, stated the library is a public/private institution. The library is a consumer of demographics, looking for information, using the MAPC, the Department of Education, and Town Clerk trends, among others. Confidentiality is a basic principle of the library.

There is an increase in Asian users; there is a Chinese collection of books and DVDs, a Bengali collection. There is a need for a Hindi catalogue. There are a number of languages not only in the book area but also on the computers.

Additional trends noted: family downsizing and donation of collections to the library; use of the facility by people in need of services (mental health issues, homelessness, the need for heating or cooling).

Circulation is up: 630,000. Possibilities: economic downturn, ability to borrow on line. Have added more complexity (archives, books on tape, digitization of local history). Use by non-residents is tracked. With the Minuteman system, the Lexington library lends fewer books than are borrowed. This is a highly educated community with access to other libraries. It has a sophisticated reference department. The Children's Library accounts for 46% of the library's circulation.

Ms. Rawson stated that they are trying to hire diverse staff members. The Library is municipally funded with a trustee's fund of fines and fees. The Cary Memorial Library Foundation supplements the book budget. The Town pays the staff. There has been State Funding for special projects.

The collection is capped at 225,000 items. There is a need for people to receive delivery, unpack, sort, and ready the materials on a daily basis.

Ms. Rawson would like to provide more outreach, offering more delivery to those in need of this service.

The Library must meet the certification requirements of the Board of Regulators.

The Meeting Room and Small Room usage by non-profit and civic organizations has been very high, as is the use of the Study Rooms.

Security cameras have been installed to prevent vandalism.

Ms. Rawson sees the Library as a "public living room, a great equalizer."

Dr. Paul Ash, Superintendent of Schools, will present at the next meeting, Wednesday, January 7, 7 p.m., Town Office Building, Room 111. It was asked that Dr. Ash send out his report ahead of the meeting, if possible.

There was discussion of future presenters. The Town Manager will make the arrangements. Possible March meeting date of Wednesday, March 4.

Motion to adjourn was made and seconded. Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Submitted by,

Bebe Fallick