

PPUBLIC MEETING SHOPPING AND MEALS

APRIL 11, 2019 AT 1:00PM

706 ROCKINGHAM RD

ROCKINGHAM, VERMONT 05101

Rebecca Gagnon opened the meeting at 1:00 pm and passed around the sign in sheet. There were three participants besides herself.

Rebecca stated that she received emails and letters and wanted to mention them in the minutes.

Ben Copeland sent a letter dated April 8, 2019 objecting to the changes.

Rebecca mentioned only first names below because they did not ask specifically to be in the minutes.

Elizabeth sent a letter dated April 1, 2019 stating that “the paper said it’s coming on the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday”. She said that this will be a hardship on the them because they use it weekly. Rebecca said Sara Campbell the dispatcher called Elizabeth and explained that the service is weekly, but that Hannaford and Market 32 are once a month and Walmart is twice a month. Once Elizabeth realized that there was still service weekly, she was fine with the changes.

Merris sent a letter explaining that she was taking exercise class on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and enjoyed going to lunch after. Due to the changes she can now only go on Tuesday and Friday’s. She noted that taking our medical trips has helped her save the cost of a taxi. Close to \$12.

Isabel sent an email indicating that all seniors agree that the old schedule did not make sense. “People living close to each other were picked up by different busses or volunteers at different times was a waste of time and money. Also, we don’t need 2 hours or more for shopping, 1-1/2 house is enough, some people are done even sooner. Since Hannaford has the best groceries, especially a larger selection of vegetables and fruit and of better quality as well as less expensive than Market 32, I suggest two trips to Hannaford, one trip to Walmart, one trip to Market 32 over a 4-week period”.

Jacqueline sent an email, “It appears that Walmart is the favored van stop in the new schedule receiving 2 calls (1 & 3 Fridays). Hannaford and Price Chopper will each have one call per month (2 & 4 Fridays). I know that arranging a schedule that suits everyone is not possible, but I personally do my grocery shopping at Hannaford and Price Chopper. I would welcome the opportunity to go to these stores more frequently than once a month. I find the quality of the fruits and vegetables at Walmart inferior. Additionally, the store is isolated with no surrounding shops or cafes to help pass the waiting time. Two hours in that wasteland is not pleasant. Perhaps the allotted time could be shortened to one or one and a half hours since there will be two opportunities each month for those who need more time to shop at Walmart. However, the schedule is configured the fact that there is a senior door to door van remains wonderful. I do not have a car and the van simplifies my life.

Rebecca explained that the E&D committee reviewed the cost and amount of service in all facets of the E&D program. The Dialysis and Cancer trips have been constrained since 2017 to two trips a week for Dialysis and 3 trips a week for Cancer treatment. Dialysis treatment is generally three times a week and

Cancer treatment is generally four times a week. Rebecca stated that the company suggested cutting the shopping and meal program to help cut cost and potentially increase the Dialysis and Cancer trips weekly.

Brattleboro and Putney are the only towns in the Current's service area that have a shopping and meals program. The shopping and meal program has increased in trips and cost over several years to the detriment of the Dialysis and Cancer treatment trips. Rebecca said "we have dialysis clients who need three trips a week, but we can only provide two. Healthwise they are failing because they can't find a ride for that third treatment. We have some very ill people who are suffering".

Rebecca states that the E&D committee agreed that ten shopping trips a month was exorbitant and that once a week, especially with the fixed route bus service available, was optimal. The Current also decided to decrease meal trips from daily to three times a week due to the fact that there was very low participation especially on the shopping days.

Cathy Wisniewski from Senior Solutions stated that the Senior Meal site was interested in the outcome and had some concerns about a drop in attendance. Rebecca stated that the Current generally has only had five riders going to the meal site when they are not shopping.

Based on the comments from the public emails and letters, those present wondered if going to Hannaford twice a month and Walmart once a month would be more beneficial.

Also suggested was a follow up meeting at the Senior Center in Brattleboro possibly before or after one of the luncheons to discuss the program and possibly discuss the option of Walmart once a month and to talk to the riders about other options for shopping such as the ADA program and E&D program for medical trips.

The participants also recommended a survey go out to the riders regarding what options they would prefer regarding shopping locations and length of time.

Rebecca agreed to set up a meet in Brattleboro, preferably the meal site and send out a survey to existing riders about options.

The changes will go into effect April 15, 2019 as presented.

Meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm.

