

**Tompkins County Office for the Aging
Advisory Committee Meeting**

March 24, 2025

Hybrid

9:30am

Members present: Lesser, Izbicki, Dean, Roe, Hultberg, Beyers, Mallison, Stamm

Liaisons: Askew, Champion, Ella (LLH), Lindhorst, Stuart, Hillson, Burger

Staff: Bullis, Monroe, Stevenson, Davis, Jackson

Public: Edie Spaulding

Excused: Evans

1. Lesser called the meeting to order at 9:30am. Introductions made.
2. Public comments: No public comment.
3. Member comments: No member comment.
4. Discussion: Delia Yarrow, Director of Homeownership and Victoria Neenan, Senior Real Estate Developer at INHS: New senior housing and information about programs offered to adults
 - Housing non-profit service Tompkins and 6 surrounding counties (Cayuga, Cortland, Tioga, Chemung, Seneca, Schuyler)
 - INHS develops housing-rental housing and low income for sale homeownership units. Have about 75 units in their community housing trust. The rental portfolio is a little less than 500 units in Ithaca; senior property in Newfield and Ovid.
 - Homeownership- INHS has run downpayment assistance, counseling and education for folks looking to buy a home; Income limits for those programs are \$70,000 for single person
 - Repair- Split work into two buckets; Minor repair program, receive support from COFA-provides minor repairs focusing on health and safety and allowing people to stay in their homes, ie. grab bars, rebuilding stairs, addressing trip hazards, etc. Have heard from people coming out to the hospital or short term rehab who are looking for someone to install on a short-term basis and was preventing people from leaving the hospital. INGS have agreed to perform this work on a case by case basis even if folks are above the income limits. Have completed about 7-10 jobs. Labor is free, if over income they will pay for the grab bars themselves.
 - Major repair program- running 4-8 grants at a time; administering some funding for accessibility modifications that will allow them to help renters as long as the landlords agree that they will make effort to rent to people with disability; can help folks age safely with walk in shower for example. Comes with lien against property and are limited to homeowners with the exception of accessibility mods.

Beyers asked how long their wait list is; Yarrow responded it is up to 70 people.

Lesser asked about their ability to meet the needs of rural residents. Yarrow stated that the majority of jobs and wait list have been in the areas outside the City for both minor and major repair funding. The number of low-income individuals living in the city is declining. Last year completed 130 jobs in minor repair program; 40 were in the city, the balance were in the county.

- Perform very targeted outreach. They also will make very thoughtful referrals to make sure they get people to the right resources of they aren't eligible for their programs.
- INHS purchased a manufactured home community in Trumansburg. Borders Seneca and Tompkins. Have replaced the first 3 units. Will complete 3 more units this year and 6 units the following year. If things stabilize, hope to expand the manufactured home replacement program in Tompkins County.
- Able to install metal ramps. The hope is overtime, they will be able to warehouse the ramps to be able to have them available quicker. Have some storage in Trumansburg.
- Multifamily properties: newest project is 209 W. State St. across the street from COFA. Redeveloping former family medicine and adjacent parking lot. Will be senior housing with a daycare on the first floor. 56 one-bedroom units, five stories, all electric.
- Targeting households that are earning 50-100% AMI; most will be towards 50-60% AMI which is about \$46,000 one person, \$53,000 for two person; will accept section 8 for all properties.
- Early stages of development; are hoping to apply for funding at the end of this year, would find out Spring of 2026 to see if they are funded
- Thinking about 62+; currently don't have any dedicated senior housing in Ithaca- have a very long wait list for one bedroom unit's half of which are people over 50.

Dean asked about the South St. project in Trumansburg. In the process of renting the units and there will be 10 for sale town homes that are under construction right now. 46 units in that development.

Lesser asked about the private real estate sector goes through booms and busts. Is Ithaca getting overbuilt? Suggestion is that if that happens rents would start declining. Do you see that happening? Neenan responded that covid has been hard on lot of real estate developers. A lot of developers are moving through the market trying to increase rents. Seeing more increase in rents rather than decrease.

Izbicki asked about low income decreasing in city of Ithaca. INHS seeing less households meeting funding requirement who live in the city of Ithaca. Very expensive to live in the City of Ithaca.

Lesser asked if they get a lot of requests for all senior housing? Neenan clarified that this will be the first senior only property in Ithaca others are in Ovid and Newfield. Neenan says it just seems that is the preference of older adults wanting to live and age in place.

- INHS has a resident services coordinator who is a social worker who will work with their residents who are having significant issues, connect with resources, etc.

Stuart talked about a program that compliments the work with INHS. Grant opportunity called Capable “Community Aging in Place Advancing Better Living for Elders”. This grant will cover an RN, OT and handy worker. 5-week intervention; series of visits from RN focusing on medications, appointments, anything preventative. OT will be working on falls preventions in 5-7 visits. \$1300-\$1500 in funding for a handy worker to install grab bars, fix floors, etc. To make people safer; in the process of applying for grant. Might be able to identify people VNS is working with that could benefit from a RN or OT. Office of aging and long-term care.

Monroe mentioned that this program is high level so would be good to have conversation with COFA and INHS to figure out referral and limit overlap and duplication of services.

5. February meeting minutes approved unanimously.

6. COFA Update:

- Funding: at this point, the Senate passed a 6-month continuing resolution for federal funds through the end of September. Included extended funding for MIPPA (Medicare Improvements for Patient and Providers Act), and AAA’s being able to enroll people into Medicare cost savings.

Beyers asked about Foodnet. Monroe explained that that federal funding comes through COFA from the Older American’s Act. So far everything is intact. The same goes for federal funding that we provide Lifelong. Beyers asked about the food banks being affected. Monroe stated she was unsure about that. Have not heard anything about USDA funding for Farmer’s Market Coupons.

- Announced Outstanding Volunteers for 2025: Mary Chapman and Wil Lawrence.
- Annual Luncheon May 9th 12pm-2pm.

7. Liaison Reports:

a. Lynch: FLIC-

- Conversion from CDPAP to PPL is continuing. Reports every day that it just isn’t working; just this morning the Governor has finally said they are working on a plan to extend the deadline for enrollment past April 1st.
- FLIC has several employees working on this. Very time consuming. Still will be a facilitator as of April 1st and can help enroll folks in PPL but will no longer be the fiscal intermediary. Will be a big change for FLIC.
- FLIC has a certified benefits advisor who can help folks sort through their benefits.
- Working with Ithaca Murals and will have a mural painted this summer.
- Also provides ramps

Lesser asked about whether people know about the certified benefits advisor and if someone called 211 would they be directed to FLIC? Lynch stated that she hoped so and will check with 211.

b. Burger: Lifelong-

- Full swing with free tax prep program, on the way to having completed 900 tax returns. Handful of appointments left, ends of April 15th.
- Launched first Music Memories Café which is a social, music, food, free opportunity for caregivers and care receivers. Will be held every other month. The next session is May 20th. Ask that people sign up.

- Library Place: Burger will be meeting with Frost Travis to see what that means for the community space. Has been told the occupancy agreement will go with the sale. Hoping for good communication and a smooth transition with new owners.
- Lifelong has a totally new AV system through grant funding. Will notice it significantly especially in activity room.
- Summer catalog in the works; will include programs for June, July, August-catalog launches in May.
- Annual Meeting, Thursday, May 29th

c. Monroe for Evans: Foodnet-

- Mac n cheese bowl with be on May 7th from 4:30-7 at the Ithaca Farmers Market. Tickets will be on sale soon. If anyone interested in volunteering, they can reach out to AJ Bouchie at abouchie@foodnet.org or calling 607-266-9553.

d. Champion: TC Legislature-

- All departments are assessing what federal funding they have for Administration to be aware of what is potentially going to be cut and where we might need to make up that finding.
- Budget: had a great budget presentation from the state comptroller's office. Found it very educational on budget practices. Will have budget retreat in about a month where they will get big picture from county administration.
- Shelter project on Cherry St. ongoing. Continues to be worked on.

e. Askew: StateWide-

- Teach in tomorrow 10am-11am; zoom or call in; will be recorded and posted on their website; next teach ins held April 22 (Elderlaw Tips for Long Term Care Planning), May 27 (the ne Be Well Initiative) and June 24 (Using Telehealth for Older Adults).

Roe asked about telehealth and Medicare because she heard that the federal government was stopping that. Askew stated that it is going to be very limited. Starting April 1st, there is limited coverage but can still get some services via telehealth.

Lesser asked if they were able to help folks who were having trouble connecting with Social Security. Askew responded that they would probably refer them to their local Social Security office.

f. Lindhorst: LLH-

- Spoken with Foodnet about partnering with LLH volunteers at current and future congregate dining sites.
- Community Connections Fair this Saturday in Dryden, hosted by Dryden Rotary. 11am-1pm
- Annual Community Celebration to honor volunteers is Sunday, May 18, 2025, 4-6pm at Stewart Park. Open to the public.

g. No old business

f. No new business

Next meeting will be April 28, 2025.

Meeting adjourned 11:07am