



Advisory Committee Meeting - September 17, 2018 – Sherburne Commons

Margaretta Andrews and Tucker Holland began by welcoming and thanking all Advisory Committee (“AC”) members in attendance. Both spoke to the high value the Foundation places on the input from this group of community leaders.

To that point, the Foundation reported that the 2018 Nantucket Fund™ grants focused on an array of priorities, yet **60% of funding went directly to the top two priorities identified by the Advisory Committee**. The 2017 highest priorities reflected in the granting were Housing, Behavioral Health Services, and Diversity-related programming.

At the outset of the meeting, AC members were asked to identify through voting with stickers (two per AC member) what they thought were: 1) the top two needs facing the community, and 2) the top two underfunded/poorly understood needs facing the community. The Committee emphatically identified Housing (10) and Drug Abuse/ Substance Use (9) as the top needs. There was less-consensus around what is the most underfunded/ poorly understood need facing the Island today. The top categories were: Housing (7), Environmental Stability (4), Isolation of Community Members (3), and Pace of Development (3).

This year’s Committee identified the following as the top needs:

- Housing (10)
- Drug Abuse/ Substance Use (9)
- Elder Care (4)
- Access to Healthcare; Child Enrichment Programs; Isolation of Community Members (1 each)

This year’s Committee identified the following as the most underfunded / poorly understood needs:

- Housing (7)
- Environmental Stability (4)
- Isolation of Community Members (3)
- Pace of Development (3)
- Elder Care (3)
- Drug Abuse/ Substance Use (3)
- Diversity Programs (2)
- Access to Healthcare (2)
- Behavioral Health; Child Enrichment Programs (1 each)

All attending noted the similarities as well as the changes in this year’s priority list. Particularly that Housing continues to be at the top of the list. It was noted that while **Housing** does receive a large amount of grant money proportionally from the Foundation, it is an enormous issue for the community that will not be solved through grant-making. It was noted that the Foundation has played a central role in convening engaged minds on the topic. The Committee applauded the ongoing convening and work of Housing Stakeholders group to help address the need. AC member Anne Kuszpa suggested that there is enough existing housing on the Island to meet the need, if we could convert a portion of the seasonal homes (64% of Nantucket’s residences are seasonally occupied) to year-round housing. Tucker Holland noted this is an admirable goal yet we should just be eyes-wide-open that it would take substantial financial resources to achieve (the Island’s average

home price is \$2.3 million). The Committee discussed how the housing shortage is an overarching theme in all of the needs discussed. The current cost of living on Nantucket is growing at a higher rate than wages. As a community we are squeezing out the middle class and losing professional resources as a result. The scarcity and cost of housing on Nantucket is a stressor (with consequences) for many of our community members.

The group next discussed **Island's Environmental Stability**...or future instability. Committee members noted that the extreme weather last winter and this summer has made them think about our Island's environmental instability and if any measures need to be taken. Town Manager, Libby Gibson, was in attendance and she was able to update the group on the various Town-initiated projects to address this issue, such as an Island Coastal Resiliency Plan. Libby noted there may be a possible role the Community Foundation and AC could play in these important discussions.

The conversation naturally flowed from there to discussing **Education**, specifically how the "issue of education" is connected to every community need (i.e., educating the community on all these topics). The Committee agreed that efforts to disseminate information around all issues through multiple platforms, particularly issues of Town Government, could perhaps be facilitated by the Foundation. Island leaders, including many in the room, agree that the information and resources are available but not always accessed or understood by the community. The Committee applauded the work of the Nantucket Data Platform in this regard. This relates to **Diversity Programming** as well; the Committee agreed that efforts have been made to include all members of our community in all aspects of community life, but the information is not being understood properly or communicated in an inclusive way. Margaretta suggested that we focus our next Small Group Advisory Committee meeting on "Government 101". AC member Martin Anguelov underscored the importance of this effort and offered to be involved.

The Committee then discussed how **Diversity Programming** is more than just inclusionary programming but also relates to "**diversity of ideas**". Many of the underfunded or misunderstood community issues will require new ideas and new solutions. The AC felt the Foundation and the Committee should investigate ways to get new members of the community involved in conversations – make a conscious effort to include voices which are not otherwise engaged or community members who might feel excluded. Beyond just including silent voices, it was discussed how important it will be for all community members to start to "think outside the box" when it comes to addressing community-wide issues.

The group reaffirmed that there is a **mental health and addiction crisis** on Nantucket. Behavioral Health services are available but the need is greater than the island's current resources can adequately address. The AC applauded the efforts of the Behavioral Health Task Force, though there is still much work to do. AC member Darcie Evans noted that sharing the good news around addiction – *recovery* – may help in the effort to reduce stigma and increase involvement. The progress made by our Island's mental health providers has increased the number of people who are seeking services and helped alleviate the need for "urgent" care, but the group emphasized the need still exists. There also was group discussion regarding the need for prevention services and healthy opportunities for younger children – particularly middle school and high school aged students. The Committee also discussed how the perception might be that funding for behavioral health on Nantucket has increased, yet all the providers in the room clarified that it remains materially underfunded.

Isolation was an intertwined theme in this year's discussion – are we becoming increasingly isolated by language, age, poverty, mental illness, and substance abuse? As the population grows, are our community connections lost? How are individuals accessing information? Adequate and accessible year-round transportation and/or alternatives to a fixed bus route would help solve some of the concerns related to Isolation, in particular for Island teenagers who might feel "stuck" and resort to unhealthy behavior. There are many community programs and events, but not always ways for community members to get to those events. How can we make sure that information and services are equally and inclusively accessible?

Finally, the meeting ended with a group consensus that we should continue our Small Group Advisory Meetings and continue to bring in an "expert" on a specific topic for each of these meetings.

September 17, 2018 Community Foundation for Nantucket Advisory Committee Attendance:

Tom Dixon (On Behalf of Rep. Dylan Fernandes)

Tessandra De Alberdi

Darcie Evans

Libby Gibson

Anne Kuszpa

Martin Anguelov

Tim Madden

Phil Stambaugh

Dr. Nicholas Ouellette

Jim Perelman

Michael Varbalow

Jason Bridges

Kevin Cormick

Matt Fee

Ella Finn

Gene Mahon

Ken Beaugrand

Rachel Day

Cathy Ward (Trustee)

Tucker Holland (Trustee and Outreach Committee Co-Chair)

Community Foundation for Nantucket

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