

COMMISSION ON AGING

MINUTES

December 5, 2011

Present: Commission members Helen de Keijzer, Nancy Hammerslough, Terry Hulley, Peggy Anderson, and Bruce Lorentzen, Social Services Director Charlene Chiang-Hillman, Weston Senior Activities Center Director Wendy Petty and Program Coordinator Pam Wilson, and Dial-A-Ride driver Gordon Green.

Meeting called to order at 9:17 a.m.

SWCAA report: Helen read the report submitted by Meta, who could not attend.

Dial-a-Ride: The van is out of commission due to a small accident. Looking into alternatives while waiting on repairs. Gordon's driving and mileage is up on trips for everything – medical services, senior center, etc.

Social Services: Charlene reported on big issue with federal/state fuel assistance cutbacks and problems getting people through fuel program qualification approval bottleneck at NEON, which has lost staff. People are running out of fuel. Dawn and Charlene are working on fundraising. Charlene noted difficulties of doing paperwork necessary for securing free energy audits for qualified applicants through the HES home energy conservation/audit program. The struggling economy continues to impact Weston with an increased number of houses in various stages of foreclosure. Charlene also commented on concerns and hurdles of working with some seniors in dangerous situations at home.

Emergency preparedness update: The League of Women Voters of Weston's November 19th program entitled 'After the Storm', which was attended by Charlene and Wendy as well as other town officials, provided a forum for many constructive ideas. Commissioners emphasized the importance of placing articles and/or a box of bulleted information in the Center Newsletter regarding CodeRed service, landline and cell phone issues, emergency evacuation and reassurance lists, availability of help in signing-up for services, etc. "Be Ready for the Next Storm" and/or "How the Center Can Help" entries may be repeated periodically and put in *The Weston Forum* as well. It was noted that Charlene's office and the Weston Community Service Coalition, with its many volunteers, coordinated efforts to assist residents in the aftermath of the recent storms and that there is also interest in developing a neighbor-to-neighbor support network.

Charlene will meet in Westport with Health District and other officials about emergency lists, etc.

Announcements: Weston's Bike/Ped Committee is developing a master plan to make biking/walking in Weston safer and is seeking community feedback, including from the Commission. Bruce will follow-up with Committee Chairman Ray Rauth.

Reappointments of Peggy and Terry to the Commission are coming up. Helen talked about dates for 2012 Commission on Aging meetings. January 9th is first meeting of the new year.

Upcoming Budget Process: With more seniors coming to the Center and more activities and programs being offered, the desirability of increasing Pam's hours, including through raising of more funds, reallocation of money within the Center's budget, etc. as well as best way to prepare for the budget process were discussed.

The new Friends of the Weston Senior Activities Center has been granted 501 (3)(C) nonprofit status. As soon as is feasible for the Friends' executive committee, it will be important to have a meeting with Center staff, a Commission representative(s), and the Friends' leadership to clarify guidelines on working together, funding interests and goals, etc.

Weston Senior Activities Center: Pam shared information about a multidimensional, holistic approach to wellness (Whole-Person Wellness) that she's using as a model for programming. She also gave an update on plans for January and February and discussed bringing a Great Courses program to the Center on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection (with a possible trip to the museum to follow in the spring).

Wendy presented Center space reorganization and redecoration ideas. Following discussion, Helen asked the Commission to consider recommending to the Board of Selectmen an expenditure of up to \$6,500 from the Morehouse Elderly Assistance Fund to finance the project. Nancy made a motion to make the recommendation, Terry seconded it, and it was unanimously approved.

Meeting adjourned, 10:45 a.m.

Submitted by Wendy Petty