

COMMISSION ON AGING

Minutes

September 10, 2012

Present: Commission members Helen de Keijzer, Nancy Hammerslough, Nina Daniel, Peggy Anderson, Bruce Lorentzen, and Laura Smits. Senior Center Director Wendy Petty, Social Services Director Charlene Chiang-Hillman, Dial-A-Ride driver Gordon Green, SWCAA liaison Meta Schroeter, First Selectman Gayle Weinstein and Alice Walsh. Helen convened the meeting at 9:20.

June Minutes: Minutes were approved by consensus for both the Commission's regular meeting on June 4 and the minutes from the Long-Range Planning Meeting held on June 8.

Helen asked for a motion to go into Executive Session. Bruce made the motion, Nancy seconded it, and it passed unanimously.

Public session resumed at 9:55. Helen distributed copies of the Commission's Annual Report for review; it was approved by consensus as written.

SWCAA Report: Meta gave a summary of the meeting held on June 13th. She visited two other area Senior Centers, Stamford, and Monroe, to evaluate their requests for grant money from the state. State grant monies have been reduced over the past three years. In an effort to reduce costs of newsletters, some centers now charge a fee, while others have changed from publishing monthly to bi-monthly. The planned survey for the Commission/Weston Senior Center has been postponed to a later date.

Social Services Report: Charlene reported that from January 2012 until June her caseload has increased by 23 households, mostly seniors. Some are households isolated by long driveways. She has seen an increase in seniors, remaining in Weston or "aging in place," but also an increase in seniors moving in with other family members in town. In some cases, she has had to contact Elder Protection Services. There is a concern with some households unable to pay for garbage stickers or unable to take their garbage to the town waste center. Discussion ensued about possible solutions. Social Services has received a software program to help facilitate the energy assistance application process for the upcoming winter season.

Charlene is concerned about our continued participation in the Meals-On-Wheels program at Wilton Meadows. There is a cap of 13-14 meals for Weston, but she is now seeing households that require more than one meal a day, and while clients prefer the food from the Wilton Meadows, the increase in meals may require us to use the State's program located in Bridgeport. Discussion ensued.

Dial-A-Ride: Bruce presented a draft letter of a Dial-a-Ride Van Replacement Request and discussed his study of service usage. The Weston Dial-a-Ride van is a 2008 Ford Startran Senator model with 64,500 miles on it as of August 2012. There has been a 9.5 % rise in ridership over the last 2-3 years, mostly for medical appointments, a trend that the Commission believes will continue as more residents opt to stay in their homes rather than move to senior assisted living facilities. While the van is in good condition thanks to repairs and maintenance by the town, by fiscal year 2014-2015, the van will be at the end of its expected life (7-8 years and over 100,000). A request will be submitted to Town Hall for inclusion in the 2014-2015 Capital Budget recommending that we replace the van rather than refurbish the old one. Refurbishing may cost up to 80% of the replacement cost and may not alleviate all the mechanical/comfort problems that occur over time. The estimated cost will be approximately \$75,000.

Bruce reported that Gordon is uncomfortable taking the Center's bus on long trips due to possible mechanical problems; the wheelchair lift has had a history of being unreliable. The group stressed the importance of having a vehicle available for local trips. Discussion ensued. There was also discussion about the importance of having a back-up driver, currently Roy is registered as the back-up.

Senior Center Director Report: Wendy reported that there have been a lot of day trips, which require much planning time, adding that she was thankful for having Christina Hillman available to help over the summer. The South House all-purpose room continues to be a work in progress. Wendy has been working with the Community Service Coalition to include Senior Center activities on the Community Calendar. She and Pam have been working on the upcoming Classic Car Show which will be held on September 23rd, from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. They have 80 cars already registered. Publicity has been a challenge since this is the first year the Center is having one, but she believes it will get easier over time. Some sponsors have come forward to cover the costs of the show, allowing all of the

proceeds to go directly to the Center, through the Friends of the WSAC organization. All proceeds will go to Wendy's discretionary fund. Discussion ensued about ways to publicize the event, understanding that not everyone receives the Weston Forum.

Friends of the Senior Center: Nina reported that the Friends have also been working on publicity for the car show. There will be tents with activities and a fee/donation collected at the "gate".

The Friends are planning to mail out a fund-raising letter to the community in November; Kiwanis has donated \$1,000 to cover the cost of mailing and printing. The popular and free genealogy class at Weston High School will begin again starting Friday, September 28th, and will continue with four Friday sessions: 10/5, 10/12, 10/26 and 11/2.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Smits