

COMMISSION ON AGING

MINUTES

Monday, January 8, 2018

Present: Commission members Helen de Keijzer, Don Gumaer, Bruce Lorentzen, Peggy Anderson, Dale Robinson, Allison Lisbon, and Richard Wolf; Senior Center Director Wendy Petty; SWCAA liaison Meta Schroeter and Social Services Director Charlene Chiang-Hillman.

Meeting convened at 9:18 a.m.

Minutes of the December 4th meeting were approved as written.

The election of new Commission officers was next on the agenda and Helen called for nominations from the floor: Helen nominated Bruce to serve as chairman, which was seconded by Dale, and approved unanimously; Bruce nominated Helen as vice chair, which was seconded by Allison, and approved unanimously; and Bruce nominated Don as secretary, which was seconded by Peggy, and also approved unanimously. Helen passed the symbolic baton to Bruce, who took over the meeting.

SWCAA: Meta Schroeter reported on SWCAA's December meeting, which was held at 'Bridges by Epoch' in Trumbull, an innovative facility especially designed to serve sufferers of Alzheimer disease and other dementias. The discussion focus was again on State budget cuts to the Medicare Savings Plan (MSP) and, with much pushback from SWCAA and others interested in senior welfare, the CT Legislature is scheduled to redress the situation this week.

It was noted that on January 3rd Chris Spaulding, Wendy, Charlene, and Meta met to discuss Weston's senior transportation needs. Chris has expressed interest in this issue and possibly participating in SWCAA's January 17th regional transportation meeting.

Dial-a-Ride: Wendy reported that Roy Marsh has been officially hired as Weston's driver. She has spoken to Town Administrator Jonathan Luiz about securing a designated back-up driver and will add this new position into her upcoming annual budget proposal. Discussion ensued about the importance of coverage for more than back up for Roy's vacation, sick times, etc. The usefulness of providing greater flexibility of service to seniors was noted and various options, including Weston's volunteer Neighbor-to-Neighbor network and Uber/Lyft service options were discussed and will be followed up.

Weston Social Services: Charlene reported that she had been surprised to see from a SWCAA report that the number of Weston residents potentially disadvantaged by the threatened MSP service reductions was much larger than thought; she will investigate. She also reported that Allison's employment at 14.5 hours/week has been extended to the end of February. Charlene said that she's been inundated with requests for heating help during this difficult cold spell and that the department has been able to meet the need. She also commented on the especially impressive generosity of donors this year, which has made expanded holiday gift giving possible. She also noted that all funds given in support of Weston families are raised through volunteers and without the use of tax dollars.

Attention next turned to the department's evacuation support and reassurance call lists as well as the town's CodeRed system. Discussion ensued about how to maximize the effectiveness of reaching out to help people be prepared, stay safe, and feel connected during challenging events. Charlene and Allison will also review and update the 'neighborhood captains' community outreach lists and protocols.

Charlene will be putting monies into her budget request for a 10 hour/week Volunteer Coordinator position and would like to see the coordinator be located in the Senior Center. Everyone was enthusiastic about this proposal and strongly support it.

Weston Senior Center: Wendy reported that things are going well and participation continues to grow. She will be asking for additional monies at the upcoming budget request meeting with Jonathan, et. al. Increases will be requested for expansion of Center operations, increased hours for Wendy to full-time, and monies for the back-up driver as previously discussed. Support was unanimous.

Friends of the Weston Senior Activities Center: Bruce commented that there was nothing new to report.

Commission Business: The schedule of meetings for 2018 was confirmed. Commission members who had recently toured several area Senior Centers briefly discussed some of what was learned.

Bruce adjourned the meeting at 10:24 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Don Gumaer

Minutes of the January 8, 2018 were approved, as written at monthly meeting
on February, 2018.