

COMMISSION ON AGING

Minutes

March 6, 2017

Present: Commission members Helen de Keijzer, Don Gumaer, Peggy Anderson, Bruce Lorentzen, Allison Lisbon, and Dale Robinson; Senior Center Director Wendy Petty; Social Services Director Charlene Chiang-Hillman; Dial-a-Ride driver Gordon Green, SWCAA liaison Meta Schroeter; First Selectman Nina Daniel; and guest Jane Hutchinson.

Meeting convened at 9:18 a.m.

Nina shared some information about the three senior tax relief programs and the high number of people on the abatement. She would like to see more people taking advantage of the freeze and deferment programs, both of which requires that revenue eventually be recuperated by the town. Discussion ensued.

Minutes: February minutes were approved by consensus.

Weston Social Services: Charlene reported that, especially in light of recent power outages, her department is updating its emergency call list and noted that the department is also working on meeting heating needs. Charlene announced that her budget request for 10 additional hours per week for a volunteer coordinator was denied in this year's proposed town budget but that Allison has graciously agreed to continue to volunteer in this capacity. Charlene also reported that she sees an increasing need for senior housing options in town. Discussion ensued about alternative congregate and cluster housing and P&Z's current exploration of the potential for commercial cluster development. It was also noted that if the town eventually chooses to utilize town owned property for senior housing, some degree of flexible planning could be possible.

Dial-A-Ride/Transportation: Gordon distributed his monthly report and as usual had to get back to work. His office has moved into the Senior Center, which has been helpful, especially for Wendy who often needs to check in with him about seniors' requests.

SWCAA: Meta, who could not stay at the meeting, left her notes with Don.

Weston Senior Activities Center: Wendy spoke about the Car Show and the need for a fundraising focus for this year's effort. It was noted that since hours toward a full-time Director of the Senior Center have been added in the proposed town operating budget for the next fiscal year, but that no additional hours for the Program Coordinator or other staff have been included, we might consider the goal of funding a part-time position to serve as a kind of senior resource advocate. The position, which it was thought would need to be for at least 10 hours per week to be effective, could bring to the Center some of the supportive services that 'Village-style' nonprofits bring to their towns. (Greenwich at Home, Staying Put in New Canaan, and Stay at Home in Wilton are all examples that have been investigated by Helen and Dale.) What such a person

would do for seniors in Weston, what job description requirements would be most suitable in the new position, and the willingness, at least in the short-term, of the 'Friends' to fund such a role at the Center would all need to be worked out. Helen mentioned the Elderly Assistance Fund as another possible resource to use for such a pilot program/position. In either case, if the position became as useful to seniors as expected, the goal would be to turn funding over to the town in the future.

Helen, Allison, and Wendy will brainstorm about the potential position of senior resource advocate/'Village Concierge'. They will consider such issues as: what kinds of information sharing and other services could be provided by the new staff member (who could simultaneously serve as Weston's Municipal Agent for the Elderly); what background requirements would be most useful (such as an MSW) in light of the identified services; and what hours and when (potentially 2 hours per/day around lunchtime, two days/week at the Center, or...) would be most helpful.

The recent launch of TheWestonWay.org website was noted and several comments and suggestions were briefly discussed.

Meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m. and

Respectfully submitted,

Don Gumaer

Approved: 4-3-17