

## COMMISSION ON AGING

### MINUTES

April 7, 2014

**Present:** Commission members Helen de Keijzer, Nina Daniel, Laura Smits, Peggy Anderson, Margarita Shapiro; Senior Center Director Wendy Petty and Program Coordinator Pam Wilson; Social Services Director Charlene Chiang-Hillman; and SWCAA liaison Meta Schroeder.

Meeting convened 9:25 a.m.

**Facilities and Budget Update:** Helen updated the group about progress on the Senior Center expansion. She mentioned that there is support in town, including by the Board of Selectmen for increasing the Senior Center budget by approximately \$15,000 and she recounted the Board of Finance Public Hearing where she appeared on the Commission's behalf. The Board of Finance votes tonight on the budgets.

**March Minutes:** Approved by consensus.

**Dial-A-Ride:** Gordon is very busy. The bus suffered some ice damage during the winter due to narrow driveways with too much snow. There seems to be some confusion about the Dial-A-Ride schedule and hours. Wendy will ensure that explanatory wording is straight-forward in Town resources.

**SWCAA Report:** Last month's meeting was in Norwalk on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. Pat Knebel is conducting site visits for grant evaluations. Grants for 2014-2015 will be awarded in June. There was a discussion about the importance of senior centers becoming accredited by a national accreditation organization. The group decided that because senior centers usually reflect the local communities that they serve it seems unnecessary. The Westport Housing Authority is moving to help seniors move into senior housing around town. ITN has increased their ridership averaging 30 riders per day. There will be a Health Fair at the Trumbull Senior Center on May 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Social Services:** Charlene stated that the town renter's rebate and senior tax rebate programs begin in April and run through the middle of May. It was a hard winter for fuel assistance and utility bills for many seniors. Charlene's biggest challenge is helping seniors to understand when they need help in their homes; she currently has seven cases like this who refuse help even though they desperately need it. Discussion ensued.

**Senior Center Report:** Wendy raised the question about how to recognize volunteers at this year's Volunteer Luncheon. Discussion ensued. Wendy also asked about protocols for leaving seniors alone in the center with someone other than themselves. Margarita shared her experience with the RVNA and will work with Wendy and Pam on coming up with protocols. It was suggested that we have an orientation for center volunteers. Helen proposed that we investigate having a lifestyle choices series that would explore long-term care insurance issues as well as aging in place and other senior housing/assisted living options. Helen will contact Chris Crain from the CHOICES program to explore possible presentation ideas. Pam reported that they have

30 people signed up for the trip to the Roosevelt Mansion and library on April 24<sup>th</sup>. There will also be a trip to the Brooklyn Museum and the Botanical Gardens. There will be smoothies after exercise on Tuesdays. Pam has received positive feedback about the recent author event—27 people attended. There will be a “how to organize your home” event and a flower-arranging class. Carla will be running book group.

Helen handed out the Community Help Sheet for possible inclusion in the newsletter. Discussion ensued about the best ways to get information to people. It was determined that we should have it printed and available in the senior center, library, town hall and Charlene’s office, but that we not insert it in the newsletter at this time. Helen suggested that we consider creating a reading area featuring health and wellness newsletters (and books) such as from the Mayo Clinic as well as other aging-related materials.

**Friends of the WSAC:** No report, Nina had to leave for another meeting.

**Needs Assessment for Current/Expanded Facilities:** Helen went through some of the scenarios and how to assign space for different programs. Meta suggested we take a look at what Easton has done in their space. Helen asked everyone to think of ideas on ways to best utilize the space for the future.

**Other Business:** The date for this year’s car show will be September 21, 2014. Wendy raised the issue of the difficulty of getting things for the Re-Gifting/Holiday sale. One idea was to send out a notice to the PTOs to get more items. We will have a Long-Term Planning meeting on June 2<sup>nd</sup> in place of our regular meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laura Smits