

COMMISSION ON AGING MINUTES

January 4, 2016

Present: Commission members Helen de Keijzer, Peggy Anderson, Bruce Lorentzen, Harvey Bellin, Joy Peshkin, and Margarita Shapiro via conference call; Senior Center Director Wendy Petty and Program Coordinator Pam Wilson; Social Services Director Charlene Chiang-Hillman; Dial-a-Ride Driver Gordon Greene, SWCAA liaison Meta Schoeter; and guest Chip Plato.

Helen called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m. She welcomed everyone and distributed background documents to new Commission members Harvey Bellin and Joy Peshkin.

Minutes: December minutes were approved by consensus.

Helen invited Weston resident Chip Plato to speak and he raised his concern about Weston's senior tax relief programs, which he said didn't appear to have been changed in a long time. He wondered what could be done since he felt that the current parameters of the programs are likely inadequate. Meta mentioned that SWCAA was pulling together information on all such programs in the 14 towns and cities within its region and Helen added that the Commission itself had been awaiting a subcommittee's report back on a review of Weston's programs that will hopefully be ready soon.

SWCAA: Meta briefly outlined what SWCAA is and does for the benefit of new Commissioners. She then presented her report from the December meeting, which was held at Grasmere and was short due to the holidays. ITN needs more volunteer drivers. It offers approximately 350 rides per month, mostly in the more populated towns within its area. It's had an especially difficult time finding drivers in Weston, Easton, and Wilton. Among other items, Meta also said that everyone was being reminded of the importance of an advocate in the emergency room in part because of confusion about the requirement that a person be actually admitted into the hospital for at least 3 days in order for Medicare and supplemental plans to cover certain rehabilitation services following release; simply being kept in for 'observation' does not allow for the same coverage.

Weston Social Services: Charlene reported that she had been very busy during the holiday season and that due to outstanding community support everyone's needs were met. She's currently focused on heating issues and making sure people are protected. Charlene also gave an update on the status of Weston's Food Pantry. A new group of volunteers has taken over the organization and is establishing new rules that are not yet finalized.

Weston Senior Activities Center: Wendy said that funding for a new excursion bus has been secured thanks to a very successful Classic Car Show (more than \$40,000 raised) and Town approval of other monies to come from the Elderly Assistance Fund and the Unreserved Capital Fund. Pam and everyone applauded Wendy, Jim, the Friends, and all the

volunteers for the great success of the show and it was noted that having a specific fundraising goal had been very helpful. The bus will make possible many new, exciting outings. Wendy will meet with Gordon and Bruce this week to explore specs in more detail and they will work with Tom Landry on the required RFP.

Wendy is working with Gayle Clayton on the website; Judy Renacia will help with the logo. The Center now has a permit to serve lunches and as an experiment in January and February meals will be provided more often at the Center. Sign-up is required but no one will be turned away. The Senior Services budget request for 2016–2017 will be presented this week. There are no issues anticipated and the request for capital funding for a new Dial-a-Ride van has already been raised.

Westport Weston Health District: No report; Monica Wheeler was absent.

Commission business: January is the month in which election of officers to serve in 2016 is required and Helen asked for nominations from the floor. Bruce nominated Helen as chairman, Harvey seconded the nomination and Helen was unanimously elected; Helen nominated Bruce as vice chairman, Peggy seconded it and Bruce was unanimously elected; Helen nominated Don Gumaer as secretary (she had his permission to do so though he was unable to attend the meeting), Margarita seconded it and Don was unanimously elected.

Helen reported that she and Dale Robinson had a long, instructive meeting with Lisa Jamison of the At Home in Greenwich organization and are planning to visit the head of Staying Put in New Canaan and of Darien's program in order to further gather perspective on what a "Weston Village" style program might involve and what it might accomplish. She mentioned the ongoing work of the seniors-focused subgroup of the Weston Strategic Planning Committee, including development of a possible survey. Discussion ensued about the difficulties of designing a useful survey. Helen raised the possibility of the Commission holding an open forum to encourage community input on issues surrounding aging and ideas about what might be done to most effectively support aging in place in Weston.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Helen R. de Keijzer