

COMMISSION ON AGING

Minutes

October 4, 2016

Present: Commission members Helen de Keijzer, Don Gumaer, Allison Lisbon, Peggy Anderson, Bruce Lorentzen, Margarita Garces-Shapiro, and Joy Peshkin; Senior Center Director Wendy Petty and Program Coordinator Carla Jegen; Dial-a-Ride driver Gordon Green; SWCAA liaison Meta Schroeter; First Selectman Nina Daniel; and guests Dale Robinson and Woody Bliss (briefly).

Meeting convened at 9:20 a.m.

Minutes: June (Long-range Planning) and September minutes were approved by consensus as written.

SWCAA: Meta reported on SWCAA's September meeting, which was held at Westport's senior center. Betsy Ritter of the CT Agency on Aging attended and most of the meeting focused on a discussion of the needs of the elderly, including socialization, transportation, nutrition, and medical conditions, including dementias and mental illnesses.

Dial-A-Ride/Transportation: Gordon distributed his summer activity and September reports; ridership levels remained typical. The Center's new excursion bus was delivered in time to be on hand for the Classic Car Show (detailing will be completed later this fall). Gordon, who hosted mini-tours of the new bus at the show, commented on the positive reaction people had to the bus and its comfort. Gordon and Roy Marsh, who will also be driving the bus, are both very pleased with its drivability, comfort, safety, and additional amenities. Thanks were expressed to Gordon, Bruce, and Wendy, who has also put much effort into choosing special features for the new bus.

Senior Tax Relief Programs review: Margarita reported that she and Woody have had difficulty finding clear, consistent information about Weston's existing programs, including historical data on program usage. They will be working closely with the tax collector and potentially others as well during the month ahead to find out more before making any recommendations to the Commission.

Weston Senior Activities Center: Wendy reported that the Classic Car Show went well, though without a particular fundraising goal as last year (the excursion bus), she expects it to bring in less money overall; she does not yet have final net fundraising figures. She commented that this year the expenses were higher than previously but noted that the show had more exceptional cars than ever before and that many people, including exhibitors and participants alike, seem to particularly enjoy our show and find it welcoming. Wendy also mentioned that there were some new sponsors this year.

Next, Wendy brought up needing more space for lunches in the café since they have proved so popular. Discussion ensued about the room layout. Wendy, Helen and Carla will work on finding

a way to create more space and it was noted that taking out some shelving and using some additional rectangular tables could be part of the solution.

The discussion turned to the upcoming budget process and Wendy's interest in increasing staff hours (which would involve benefits as well). Wendy commented that the Center is very busy and that it is operating without the staff and, therefore, flexibility that she thinks is needed. Helen asked for a sense of the group regarding requesting additional hours in the upcoming budget; Commissioners all felt it appropriate and supported it. Regarding staffing, Helen also asked if everyone liked the idea of having a regular social services presence of two or three hours/week at the senior center, such as might be possible in the future if more staff hours can be added to the Department of Social Services budget. Allison commented that such a presence could be helpful and could provide a good bridge between the Center and the town's Social Services resources; Commissioners concurred.

Wendy also reported that an increasing number of town groups and agencies, including the Library (which is undergoing renovation), the Parks and Recreation Department, and others are utilizing the Center after hours, which everyone agreed was positive for the Center and the community as a whole.

Friends of the Weston Senior Activities Center: Bruce reported that the Friends are interested in expanding their board and requested names of anyone who might be interested. He mentioned that the Friends have funded many varied programs at the Center over the last year. He also noted that the total cost of the excursion bus will come in at about \$68,000, which is less than originally estimated (at ~ \$80,000) and that the Friends will be paying half.

Other Business: Helen reported that she has spoken with the Director of Community Health and Wellness at the RVNA about the organization's Quality Living at Home program, which is currently offered free to seniors in Ridgefield, Redding, and New Fairfield. Interest was expressed in learning more about the program and Helen will try to arrange a meeting at the Center at a time when Wendy, Carla, Allison and Margarita and others can attend. Helen also noted that she and Wendy will be working on the website and on modestly re-designing the Center newsletter with designer Gayle Clayton today at 11:00 a.m.

Meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Gumaer

Approved:12-5-16