

## COMMISSION ON AGING

### MINUTES

**Monday, December 4, 2017**

**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; Social Services Director Charlene Chiang-Hillman and WWHD's Monica Wheeler.

Weston's new First Selectman Chris Spaulding stopped by with a floral bouquet and thanked Helen for her eight years of leadership of the Commission on Aging. (According to Town Charter, chairmanships are limited to eight consecutive years.) Allison also thanked Helen with a bouquet and brought refreshments for all to enjoy. Helen expressed much appreciation and thanked everyone.

Meeting convened at 9:20 a.m.

**SWCAA:** Meta Schroeter reported on SWCAA's November meeting, which was held at the new Hospice facility in Stamford. The focus was on the potential severity and dire consequences of State budget cuts to the Medicare Savings Plan, which could result in eligibility income levels falling precipitously, forcing recipients to make choices between basic needs for medicine, food, and rent. SWCAA urged people to register their concerns with State legislators. It was noted that Weston has 34 people on the MSP program. SWCAA also called on towns to report back in time for a January 17<sup>th</sup> meeting on their own transportation service goals. Chris Spaulding has expressed strong interest in participating.

Minutes of the November meeting were approved as written.

**WWHD:** Monica announced that she was retiring at the end of December and that her position would not be re-filled. Discussion ensued. Everyone expressed appreciation for Monica's service to the Health District and her participation at Commission meetings over the past couple of years.

**Dial-a-Ride:** Wendy reported that Roy Marsh continues to serve as interim driver and may officially assume the position in the future; however, the position must be publicly noticed. The official naming of the new Dial-a-Ride driver is expected soon. Bruce raised the need for back-up drivers during times of sickness and/or emergencies and discussion ensued about the importance of the goal of trying to more flexibly meet a broader range of senior transport needs as well. Bruce will work on this issue with Jonathan and Wendy.

**Weston Social Services:** Charlene reported that 75 Thanksgiving baskets were distributed through the office and that they are now working on the December Holiday gifting program. She commented on the vital importance of having Allison Lisbon's support in the Department and noted that the burden of vetting people for the fuel assistance program has become more bureaucratic and time consuming since Weston's regional assistance agency was changed. Charlene also again commented on the inadequacy of database software available to the Department. Helen said she had spoken with

Chris about this issue and was hopeful that a good solution could be found as part of an overall drive to modernize Weston's information systems.

Richard asked about the Food Pantry and whether it would be an asset to have it located in the Senior Center, as it is in Wilton. Charlene expressed concern about users' confidentiality and comfort in accessing it if it were to be inside the Center and commented that she feels it is currently working well.

Allison noted that she is still serving as a volunteer liaison and finding people in town willing to help address senior needs. However, she noted that it's difficult to find people willing to provide scheduled help in advance since they are more interested in helping on a spontaneous basis.

**Weston Senior Center:** Wendy reported that things are going well with 40–50 people coming to the Center on a typical day though, despite the staff's best efforts, not everyone consistently signs in. Regarding creation and installation of a Center sign for Route 57, Wendy said that it would be reasonably priced; all agreed that having one would be helpful. Bruce volunteered to follow up and shepherd it through the approval/installation process with the Town.

Helen raised upcoming Town Budget preparations and all agreed on the importance of Wendy requesting monies for a full-time Center and an expanded full-time directorship. There is a strong consensus on the Commission that these changes, as well as at least a modest weekly social services presence at the Center, are essential to appropriately meet seniors' growing needs going forward.

**Friends of the Weston Senior Activities Center:** Bruce reported that the group has supported 45 programs/events and that new fundraising ideas are being explored. He also noted that Donna Anatasia has joined the Board.

**Commission Business:** Helen mentioned that Wendy, Richard, Dale and she had visited the Easton, Redding, and Wilton Senior Centers and briefly commented on some of what was learned, including that all three offered on-hand access to social services. Two more trips to visit other area Centers are planned over the next two days.

Helen thanked everyone for the honor of serving as Commission Chairman for the past eight years. She also reminded everyone about the need to elect new officers at the beginning of our first meeting of the New Year on January 8<sup>th</sup>, and asked Richard to keep the Commission informed about the P&Z Town Plan update process and opportunities for input during its development.

Meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Don Gumaer

Approved: 1-8-18