

COMMISSION ON AGING

MINUTES

Tuesday, September 5, 2017

Present: Commission members Helen de Keijzer, Don Gumaer, Peggy Anderson, Allison Lisbon, Dale Robinson and Bruce Lorentzen; Senior Center Director Wendy Petty and Program Coordinator Carla Jegen; Social Services Director Charlene Chiang-Hillman; SWCAA liaison Meta Schroeter, and WWHD's Monica Wheeler. Guest Woody Bliss briefly participated toward the end of the meeting, as did Lynn Kimberly in the last few minutes.

Meeting convened at 9:20 a.m.

Minutes of the June 5th Review and Long-range Planning Meeting were approved as written.

SWCAA: Meta Schroeter reported on the June meeting. She noted that there is deepening concern about meeting senior transportation needs, especially in light of threats to transit funding, and that a transportation symposium, attended by about 50 stakeholders, was held during the summer. Charlene commented that ITN (Independent Transportation Network) is no longer functioning although there is an effort to reorganize a new coastal transportation option.

Dial-a-Ride: Gordon has been out for part of the summer and Roy has been filling in; there was no update on summer activity.

Weston Social Services: Charlene reported that her office had served 60 senior households during the last fiscal year of which 33 were in financial need. She said that there is still no replacement for the Youth Services Director and that her Department has not had its usual staffing coverage this summer. Under the circumstances, she is very interested in securing funding for the part-time position of Volunteer Coordinator, which had been rejected in preparation of the last annual budget.

Among other things, Charlene reported that she is currently reviewing documentation and helping residents with their applications for assistance for the upcoming season. Allison, who was away during the summer, is back and will again be connecting her network of community volunteers with seniors as well as others who require support, including for transportation. She is also planning to try spending a little time on hand at the Center on a regular basis this fall in order to learn more about senior needs as well as to share information about available benefits and services.

Weston Senior Activities Center: Following a quick mention of summer activities, Wendy noted that she printed the Center's September/October newsletter cover in color for the first time. It looks more attractive but she is concerned that it's not worth the extra cost. She said that the new Senior Center sign is up on the large School Campus Directory at the first fork on School Road and looks good. She will investigate the cost of making and installing a stand-alone Center

sign for Rt. 57 and a logo-only sign for the side of the Center Entrance. Wendy also commented on how helpful and welcomed it is to have Carla back after being away for part of the summer.

Westport Weston Health District: Monica announced upcoming Fall Prevention and Flu Clinics that will be offered in Weston and noted that it is now possible to make appointments for the latter through the WWHD website as well as by phone.

Friends of Weston Senior Activities Center: Bruce said there was nothing new to report.

Commission Business/other: CodeRed was discussed in light of the frustration and concern expressed by some residents that it had not been utilized during the recent, severe summer storm. Woody Bliss, who is working with Emergency Manager Joe Miceli on a report to be given this month to the Selectmen, stopped by briefly to give background information on the program. Among other things, he reported that the system is quite flexible and that for some time Weston has been under-utilizing what it can offer residents. He expects that the town will opt to use more of the available (cost-free) upgrades, which each resident will have to actively sign up to receive. If this decision is made, building public awareness of these program options will be crucial to its effectiveness.

Helen asked everyone to be thinking about what they would like to focus on in the next year, what their greatest concerns are for seniors in Weston, and what role they think the Commission might play in helping to constructively address those concerns.

A general discussion ensued exploring the perceived division in attitudes in town between those with children in the schools and seniors, empty nesters, and others who continue to support the schools but who are not recipients of but the most minimal of town services and amenities themselves. The potential value of finding ways to bring the two groups together was also discussed. Finally, concern was expressed about a lack of adequate long-range land and facilities planning in Weston over the years; Lynn Kimberly joined in the conversation about this latter issue as the meeting was ending.

Meeting adjourned at 11:07 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Gumaer

Approved: October 2, 2017