

COMMISSION ON AGING

Minutes

January 6, 2014

Present: Commission members Helen de Keijzer, Don Gumaer, Margarita Shapiro, Nina Daniel, Peg Anderson, Bruce Lorentzsen and Laura Smits; Weston Senior Activities Center Director Wendy Petty and Program Coordinator Pam Wilson; Social Services Director Charlene Chiang-Hillman; Dial-A-Ride Driver Gordon Green; and SWCAA liaison Meta Schroeter.

Helen convened the meeting at 9:20 a.m.

Minutes: The November minutes were approved by consensus.

Transportation: Gordon reported that things were a little slow in December due to the holiday season and school closings. Charlene asked if weather was a factor in the number of requests for rides. Gordon stated that when the weather is bad, clients tend to reduce the number of discretionary rides (such as to the hairdresser) but that there are still medical appointments if someone is sick. Bruce read a draft of a letter to Tom Landry mentioning recurring medical appointments (such as for dialysis) that Gordon is now required to cover and asking for an additional car to make these trips rather than tie up the van. Discussion ensued. Gordon commented on a new state law concerning responsibility for removal of snow build-up on the roofs of vehicles; a tool to address this issue is on its way. Gordon asked about our request for a replacement Dial-a-Ride van and Bruce said that it is in the capital budget pipeline. He will follow up with Tom Landry.

SWCAA: Meta reported that the last meeting was on December 11, 2013. She said that open enrollment for Medicare had ended on December 7th. There will be a new volunteer training in February, Meta asked if anyone was interested in becoming a CHOICES counselor; there is a great need—training is a full day, 9-3 and takes place in Bridgeport. Those who are interested should contact program director Chris Crain at SWCAA. It is budget season throughout the area and again things will be tight in most towns. New Canaan is trying to get more affordable housing for seniors. “Grandparents Raising Grandchildren” programs are very popular. ITN is in its third year and will be expanding to include the visually impaired through a “Right in Sight” program.

Election of Officers: Peg made a motion to keep the same officers as last year, seconded by Don. Motion carried: Helen will remain Chair, Bruce will remain Vice-Chair, and Laura will remain Secretary.

Social Services Report: Charlene reported that she has a large group of seniors who continue to be in denial about their own limitations requiring them to be monitored by her department in conjunction with police and town emergency services. Charlene stated that this year the Hurlbutt and WIS PTO’s decided to keep their holiday giving programs in

town which was very helpful to Social Services. Charlene reiterated the importance of donations of food gift cards to purchase perishable food to supplement items available in the food pantry. The fuel assistance program run by NEON has been difficult to reach by phone, but Charlene has been working with Weston Warm-Up to cover some of the shortages. In addition to the Warm-Up Fund, there is also NEON, Operation Fuel, and Citizens Oil. Charlene explained the NEON authorization process.

Senior Center Director Report: Pam described the many activities held in the Center during December. The upcoming trip to the Pez factory and the Chinese buffet is proving very popular. Among other new programs there will be a “Lunch and Learn” health and wellness lecture series sponsored by the Friends of the Weston Senior Activities Center offered in January. Tai Chi is beginning to take off with many younger seniors participating. The art class with Keith Brooks is also very popular. A local chef will hold a cooking class in her home in March. Helen suggested that other classes of potential interest to new participants might be mat Pilates and perhaps a talk by a professional organizer.

Budget Timeline: Wendy reported that she has been working on the budget and that, without any facility and/or major parking expansion in the works as of yet, the budget will remain similar to last year’s but with added support for Pam. A brief discussion of getting the Center open on Fridays ensued.

New Initiatives: Helen and Margarita are looking into the possibility of creating a program such as Ridgefield’s “Quality Living at Home”, which offers home visits by a team, including a fireman and EMT, to evaluate potential on-site problems and help individuals to address them so that they can live at home safely and independently. Helen asked the group to bring any other ideas for programs to the next meeting for consideration.

Community Help Sheet: Helen presented the information as a 2-sided/1-page document, which Wendy will include it as an insert in the next newsletter.

Meeting Schedule for 2014: February 3, March 3, April 7, May 5, June 2, no meetings in July or August, September 8, October 6, November 3, and December 1.

Meeting adjourned at 11:15.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Smits