

**COMMISSION ON AGING**  
**Minutes**  
**January 7, 2013**

**Present:** Commission members Helen de Keijzer, Peggy Anderson, Bruce Lorentzen, Margarita Shapiro, Don Gumaer, and Laura Smits. Senior Center Director: Wendy Petty, Social Services Director: Charlene Chiang-Hillman, Pam Wilson, Dial-A-Ride driver: Gordon Green, SWCAA liaison: Meta Schroeter.

Helen convened the meeting at 9:20.

Helen welcomed new commission members Don and Margarita and everyone introduced themselves. Helen distributed “highlights” of what the commission and the Senior Center have accomplished between 2010 and 2012 as well as a meeting schedule for 2013. Peg made a motion to keep the same officers for 2013: Helen as Chair, Bruce as Vice-Chair and Laura as Secretary. The motion was seconded by Margarita, and passed unanimously.

**December Minutes:** Minutes were approved by consensus.

**SWCAA Report:** Meta explained the purpose of SWCAA to new members Don and Margarita. The agency’s last meeting of 2012 was held in SWCAA headquarters in Bridgeport. The agency is concerned about the government’s “fiscal cliff” and its impact on seniors and Medicare. There is also concern about Governor Malloy’s plan to cut funding for the Alzheimer’s Respite Program, since there is a growing need and many people are already on the waiting list, the agency is investigating other alternatives. The Norwalk Senior Center is working on its spring fundraiser and received a state grant for a new replacement bus. In Bridgeport, the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren program continues to be popular, and the AARP is running a senior driving program monthly. Medicare enrollment for the year ended on December 7<sup>th</sup>. AARP meal services and food pantries are running at several sites and cooperating with each other to cover shortages, a model that is being tested to see if it will work throughout the state. Several centers have noticed a drop in meals served and are monitoring this to see if it is a trend. Wilton recently held a lottery for 53 affordable housing units for seniors that will open in February 2013: there were 200 applications.

**Transportation:** Gordon distributed his transportation report for the month and discussion ensued about whether or not there was a need for a “marketing day” at a nearby supermarket. Wendy and Pam felt that there wasn’t a need at this time.

**Social Services Report:** Charlene reported that she had presented her budget to the town for 2013-2014. There were over 60 food baskets and over 100 gifts delivered to needy families in Weston this past holiday season. Charlene thanked Weston churches and service organizations for their generosity, and emphasized the importance of donations and volunteers in Weston to help supplement the town's social services budget. Charlene has been working with the Warm-Up Fund to help alleviate an increased demand for fuel assistance. Creative Culinary Services is the new meals on wheels program but the cost is substantially higher—\$7.75 vs. \$3.35 but the town will subsidize the additional cost for families that cannot afford the higher amount. There are currently 12 households that utilize the program. A lack of affordable housing and transportation remain challenges for seniors living in Weston. Charlene also reported that ITN (Independent Transportation Network of Coastal CT) is doing okay though it is expensive (with an annual fee of \$65 plus a fee for miles driven); and that LINKS, an “aging in place” membership organization aimed at Westport and Weston seniors has been unsustainable, (even after having dropped their annual rate down to \$120) and has closed down. Margarita shared her experience with Ridgefield's “aging in place” program.

**Senior Center Director Report:** Wendy said that the Holiday Party was a great success with over 60 people in attendance. She has received a large donation which will help offset expenses for this year's car show. Wendy has her budget review this week. Discussion ensued about how to get information about the center's programs out to the general public.

**Friends of the Senior Center:** Bruce reported that the Friends are planning a Lifestyles Fair. Norfield's Parish Hall is a possible venue but has an expensive insurance requirement before renting.

**Other Business:** There was a discussion about future plans for the building and flexibility for the location of the Center. The Board of Education has tabled indefinitely any plans for North House due to new security requirements for the schools in light of the Newtown shooting. There was also interest in holding lectures at the center similar to those held at the Westport Senior Center.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Smits