

COMMISSION ON AGING
MINUTES
September 12, 2011

Present: Commission members Helen de Keijzer, Peggy Anderson, Bruce Lorentzen, and Nina Daniel, Social Services Director Charlene Chiang-Hillman, Interim Senior Activities Center Director Wendy Petty and Program Coordinator Pam Wilson, Dial-a-Ride driver Gordon Green (briefly), SWCAA liaison Meta Schoeter, and guests First Selectman Gayle Weinstein, Selectman Dan Gilbert, and Betty Green, Mary Doyle, John Marozik, Roberta Morelli, and Doris Hall.

Helen called the meeting to order at 9:20 a.m. She welcomed everyone and introduced Wendy Petty as Interim Director, Pamela Wilson, Program Coordinator and guests.

A recap was given regarding the summer transitions and changes at the Senior Center. After Jen Ruddy's resignation, the Center was able to remain open with the help of college intern Christina Hillman and Wendy Petty. They kept the Center open throughout the month of August, including the weekly lunch program and all Center activities. They also produced a Sept./Oct. issue of the Center Newsletter.

Next, Helen invited guests to share their thoughts and any questions about the Center. Betty Green, one of the regular seniors at the Center, voiced her concerns about rumors she had heard regarding closing the Center, etc. Those rumors were addressed, nothing will change.

Roberta Morelli wanted to know about craft classes and continuation and expansion of activities in the Center (also about reimbursement for items purchased). A meeting was set for Wednesday, September 14th, immediately following lunch to discuss Senior Center plans for arts and crafts as well as any other issues seniors may wish to raise.

June 20th Minutes: Bruce made a motion to approve the minutes as written, Nina seconded it, and the motion passed unanimously.

Susan Moore has resigned from the Commission so there is an open position.

Emergency Preparedness: Gayle and Charlene reported on Weston's responses to Hurricane Irene and its aftermath. Three separate emergency assistance lists (the WWHD, Social Services, and RUOK), are utilized to check on residents who may be in need. What worked and what did not was briefly discussed with particular focus on helping people to sign up for Code Red if they did not receive any calls. The Center can help raise senior's awareness of Code Red, which kinds of phones are more likely to function during a

power-outage, and what to do about it. (Wendy offered to help anyone to sign up for Code Red alerts on their cell phones at the Senior Lunch.)

Gordon gave a report on Dial-A-Ride usage during the summer months. (Mileage driven: 1,125 in June, 907 in July, and 1,467 in August.) The marginal condition of the large bus was briefly raised and, since seniors would like more trips, the value of leasing a bus versus replacing the one we have needs to be investigated.

SWCAA report: Meta summarized her written report and, among other things, noted that some senior centers charge a “share-the-mailing fee” for their newsletters. Meta offers appointments on certain Monday afternoons to help Weston seniors with Medicare Part D questions. Meta to possibly write an occasional newsletter article with helpful hints about Medicare – general information, “Did you know”.

Social Services: Charlene let us know times are hard, especially for some families. She emphasized that people should apply for fuel assistance early. Also, there are more foreclosures in town than in the past and more families on food stamps. Donations to the Social Services Fund have helped the Department to cover many electric bills, avoiding shut off, but things are tight. Charlene expressed gratitude for the donations received during the summer fundraising.

With the goal of helping communities lower both energy consumption and consumer costs, Neighbor-to-Neighbor Energy Challenge is promoting a \$75 energy assessment, which includes remediation. Charlene noted that assessments for low income home owners can be done for free.

Wendy and Pam gave a report of ongoing and future program ideas for the Center. They met together with all volunteer group contacts for the Wednesday Lunch Program simultaneously to set the 2011-2012 schedule, discussing holidays, entertainment, and menus. They are also planning to print the Nov./Dec. Newsletter in mid-October and are working on trips, classes, and wellness lectures. An idea/questions box will be established at the Center/senior lunches.

Nina reported that the Friends of Senior Center is already incorporated and is working toward obtaining 501c3 status. She emphasized that the organization’s fundraising will not replace town budget support of the Center, but will help enhance what the Center is already doing. The Friends will send an appeal letter at year end, and may eventually be able to help with the bus, refurbishing the Center, scholarships for seniors in need, and more. The Friends also plan to reach out to seniors 50-60. Charlene suggested including adult children of seniors in the fundraising effort. Nina reported that Kiwanis approved a grant of \$1,000.

Since many seniors are not aware of the Volunteer Program put together by Social Services and the Weston Community Service Coalition, information on “Weston Helping Weston” will be put in the Newsletter.

Roberta expressed her gratitude for her friends at the Center for helping her through tough times, like a family.

Helen gave updates on ITNCoastalCT (a transportation service) and LINKS (an aging-in-place org.).

Meeting adjourned 11:09am

Submitted by Wendy Petty