

COMMISSION ON AGING

Minutes

January 9, 2012

Present: Commission members Helen de Keijzer, Nancy Hammerslough, Terry Hulley, Nina Daniel, Peggy Anderson, Bruce Lorentzen, and Laura Smits, Senior Center Director Wendy Petty, Program Coordinator Pam Wilson, Social Services Director Charlene Chiang-Hillman, Dial-A-Ride driver Gordon Green, and SWCAA liaison Meta Schroeder.

Helen convened the meeting at 9:14.

Helen welcomed and introduced the Commission's newest appointed member Laura Smits, and announced the official reappointment of Terry Hulley and Peggy Anderson to another term.

Election of Officers: Helen was unanimously elected as Chairman, Bruce, as Vice Chair, and Laura Smits, as Secretary. Helen will provide an updated list of all commission members at the next meeting.

Helen asked everyone to notice all of the changes and new furnishings in the Center. Wendy reported that the Forum will do a story when all of the changes are completed.

December Minutes: approved by consensus as written.

SWCAA Report: Meta reported that there was low attendance at the last meeting due to the holidays. No final news on Title 3 nutrition programs, but they are anticipating a reduction in budget allocations. CHOICES program—Medicare/Medicare Part D enrollment ended on 12/7/11. Meta, who is a trained volunteer CHOICES counselor, stated that she conducted 45 consults by phone or in person for Weston seniors. Grants program: Advisory board members will be asked to view sites for grants awarded in May/June. Darien will have a new Senior Center; their clientele has risen to 400 from 200—which they attribute to a rise in programming relating to health, exercise and wellness. There was a discussion about At Risk Seniors (ARS) during the power outage, the agency is asking for town plans for future emergencies. There is a 2012 “Innovations in Caregiving” grant available for new programs. Their website with details on the application process is <http://web.raffa.com/nac/caregiverawards>.

Dial-A-Ride: Gordon submitted a report detailing the kinds and numbers of trips taken with the Dial-a-Ride van. Charlene would like to know how many individuals are using the service and is concerned that only a few people are riding on a regular basis. She would like to do more outreach to increase usage. Gordon will have more details at the next meeting. Wendy will publicize the van's availability, and suggested a “Spotlight” piece on Gordon for the next Center newsletter. Gordon predicts that the van is okay for another three years. Discussion ensued.

Research on the issue of purchasing vs. leasing/renting of a replacement for our larger bus is ongoing. Pam submitted rental costs from three different bus companies for two hypothetical trips: one to Westchester and one to NYC for comparison.

Social Services Report: Charlene reported that there was an increased need over the holidays, not all senior-related, 150 gift cards were distributed. She is racing to get fuel assistance to those who have already expended their allotment. There are four households with couples who are no longer able to care for themselves, requiring increased monitoring and time.

Nina suggested development of an “elderly preparedness” program. Pam will look into this possibility. Charlene suggested the United Way as a resource for funding this type of program.

Emergency Preparedness Update: Wendy stated that she’d contacted the police and there was a state program for the provision of cell phones for 911 emergencies, but the program was abused and is no longer available. The Weston Community Services Coalition will be meeting on emergency preparedness at the Center immediately following our own meeting. Helen will keep the item on our agenda for next month.

Facilities: Wendy updated the group about the re-decorating process. Helen noted that the Commission’s recommendation that up to \$6,500 from the Morehouse Elderly Assistance Fund be used by Wendy for re-decoration needs was approved by the Board of Selectmen. Couches are on order. Helen and Wendy are meeting with Chief Pokorny and Dan Clark to make sure that the hallway entrance is in compliance with fire and building safety codes. Meta asked about plans for an Open House in the spring, Wendy mentioned that once a date is determined, the information will be included in the March/April newsletter. Discussion ensued regarding the utilization of the two rooms.

Activities/Programs: Wendy asked for guidance about programs that have low attendance, as this affects the town’s level of subsidy for programming. There were suggestions on how to increase participation—Sandy (the dance instructor) will promote her classes at the Senior Lunch, and at next week’s (1/18) “bring a friend” event. There was also a suggestion to have a class in the evening to attract seniors who still may be working. Discussion ensued about other ways to raise awareness. Helen stated that perhaps we needed a separate conversation about programs and should include Karen, Weston’s head librarian. Bruce suggested that the group adopt Wendy’s goal of a current minimum of 35% fee/expense ratio for programs. This guideline was approved by consensus with the idea of moving toward a higher minimum in the future.

WEF Grant: The Center has received a grant from the Weston Education Fund for 3 people to tell their stories and Weston history. WHS students will video 3 interview session with each participant. Several possible participants were identified. Wendy will follow-up and the Forum will do a “Spotlight Series” in the paper, once the participants have been determined.

WSC Budget 2012-2013: Helen noted that Wendy has been very organized in her approach to the budget and that she, and the Commission, are as of now, Pam's hours have been raised to 14 hours vs. the 16 that were requested. There will be a need for a part-time person in the summer to cover the Center during staff vacation. Bruce has developed a budget history. The Center will be open year-round with the possible exception of one week in the summer. Helen recommended a separate staffing discussion.

Newsletter Sponsorship: Wendy is seeking ways to get a sponsor(s) for the newsletter, which currently costs \$3,600 per year.

Friends of the Senior Center: Nina mentioned that there is a Genealogy class that starts on 2/10/12 from 3-4:30 at Weston High School. Ten people have already signed up. There is no charge for instruction, but a fee may be needed for software if desired. Friends of the Library want to do an article about the program—and there has already been an article in The Weston Forum about the class.

The deadline for the March/April newsletter is February 14th.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Smits