

COMMISSION ON AGING

Minutes

April 2, 2012

Present: Commission members Helen de Keijzer, Peggy Ann Anderson, Nina Daniel, Nancy Hammerslough, Terry Hully, and Bruce Lorentzen, Senior Center Director Wendy Petty and Program Coordinator Pamela Wilson, Social Services Director Charlene Chiang Hillman, Dial-a-Ride driver Gordon Green, SWCAA liaison Meta Schroeter, and Doris Hall.

Helen convened the meeting at 9:15am.

Minutes from March 5th meeting: Approved by consensus as written.

SWCAA Report: Meta gave a report from the March 14h meeting in Monroe. There were 21 people present. There is a Choices Training program coming up. Community reports summary included discussion of "Pickleball", medicinal benefits of marijuana for glaucoma, Advanced Directives issues and education about new laws affecting seniors, other senior centers' budgets (most got no increase), and tourist center in Darien on I-95 moving to Fairfield Rest Center – looking for volunteers.

Dial-a-Ride update: Gordon reported being very busy. He sometimes goes beyond 4:30pm hours to meet medical needs. Tom Landry limits time to 4:30. A specific need has been identified involving overtime and Gordon is trying to take "comp time" at other times. Charlene strongly felt that this was potentially not fair to Gordon however and suggested advocating for additional hours. Helen suggested investigating possible alternatives for rides home after hours (maybe ITN), but Gordon also reminds us that rider's require vehicle to be wheelchair accessible.

Bruce gave a report on the "vehicle sinking fund" after communicating with Rick Darling about the fund and steps for replacement of the Dial-a-Ride van. There is a need to submit a report/request by end of 2012 whether it is targeted for the following year or 5 years hence. The current van is more than half way through it's 5 year life expectancy. Helen noted that the ride is rough and wondered whether there was a relatively simple/inexpensive remedy to this problem. Bruce will continue to research and advise on the topic. Wendy noted that if we pursue a grant for another bus we would need another driver, Gordon doesn't have extra time. Also, grants come with caveats and conditions attached that we may not want.

Senior Activities Center Programs: Pam discussed busses for trips; wants to wait until Fall. Meta says several towns are sharing a bus for specific events, such as Tanglewood. Pam also felt that as a consequence of her going on trips, her Center/office hours are shortened. (She currently has 14 hours a week.) She recognizes the need for more marketing of trips and programs. The possibility of trained volunteers stepping up to go on trips when Wendy or Pam cannot go was greeted positively by the Commission. Need to check about liability.

Social Services: Charlene is working with ITN and Links to get community volunteers to develop a long range strategic vision of what the community can offer to make Weston more

attractive and friendly to seniors. Karen Tatarka has issued a “Homebound Delivery Service” pamphlet which goes out with Meals on Wheels etc. to extend library resources to seniors at home. Wendy mentioned Gatekeeper 8 which is a free service, like Links. Charlene was emphatic about the need to give more support to people aging in place in town, noting the expense of going elsewhere and lack of facilities as waiting lists grow longer and longer. If needed in difficult situations, EMTs can make a call to Elderly Protective Services or will call Charlene to become involved and potentially to make such a call. Community Service Coalition may be helpful in finding volunteers.

Senior Center Report: Wendy’s report included what other Centers are doing. She went to SWCAA’s quarterly senior center directors’ meeting in New Canaan on March 30th. One of the big topics was what to do when someone gets hurt, noted that other Centers have a policy that there are 2 staff present at all times for emergency situations and the need for CPR training for staff and volunteers. Wendy will set up a training session and include Commission members. Other Centers have had life threatening situations and the question about emergency is not if, but when. Bruce asked if there was a defibrillator at the Center. Charlene and others said there should be; Wendy will follow-up. Wendy also said she was reminded at the directors’ meeting, if someone falls to not pick them up, but to call EMS. Wendy talked to Gayle and Commission about closing for 2 weeks this summer, the week of July 2nd and the last week of August right before Labor Day. Commission agreed with the schedule. During the last week of August, Wendy and Pam can get some work done to kick off the fall schedule. The Center will still remain on the same schedule as the schools throughout the year at this time.

Parks and Recreation and Lynn Stevens are interested in making more programs for adults, such as additional pool hours for seniors only. Helen thought tennis might be expanded and Pam suggested coordinating trips together. Also, Helen, Ray Rauth of the Bicycle/Ped Committee and Center staff are interested in expanding senior access to walking trails especially in and around the schools/town campus.

Updates: Laura Smits will be out for while for medical reasons. Joan Harnett will substitute for current events discussion group. The Art Show for Memorial Day is too soon but may occur next year. Weston Historical Society is doing an art show in April or May. Helen discussed Easton’s success in acquiring grants for their Senior Center.

Friends’ Report: Nina gave her update on Friends’, there will be a Strawberry Festival on June 7th at the Senior Center, David Connell will provide entertainment.

The regular June 4th Commission on Aging meeting will start at 8:30 and end by 9:45am due to another meeting needing space at the Center. The Commission’s annual long-range/strategic planning meeting will be held on Friday, June 8th from 9:00am-12:00pm.

Nancy recommended a list of key information for a magnet to be given to all seniors and/or a laminated post card titled “emergency preparedness for seniors” – discussion will continue at long-range planning

Submitted by Wendy Petty