

COMMISSION ON AGING  
MINUTES  
November 7, 2011

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

Meeting called to order at 9:22 a.m.

The Commission congratulated Wendy Petty on her official appointment as the new WSAC Director and also expressed its appreciation to both Wendy and Pam for all the hard work, organizational skill, and responsive energy that they are bringing to the Center.

Minutes of October 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting approved as written.

SWCAA Report: Meta briefly reported on the agency's annual meeting held on October 20<sup>th</sup>. Wendy Petty is Weston's liaison to a new SWCAA initiative designed to foster closer contact and sharing of more information. Weston to receive a two thousand dollar SWCAA grant.

Dial A Ride: Gordon said that everything is going fine; 1,076 miles were driven in October. He noted that the van will need new tires soon.

Weston Social Services: Charlene reported on issues that arose in the aftermath of Irene and the Nor'easter. Following these events she received numerous calls from children of Weston seniors needing services for their elderly parents. Charlene and Wendy coordinated volunteers to do senior checks. Charlene warned of a long and difficult winter ahead noting that state/federal fuel subsidy support has been decreased significantly. Ideas about alternative support options were briefly discussed.

Charlene also noted that RSVP is looking for a dispatcher and that the program may be in jeopardy if none is found.

Emergency Preparedness: Several questions were raised such as, when electric power went out, how reliable were Lifeline-type connections and which systems held up the best? Which service providers and which phones (landlines plugged into phone jacks and/or cell phones, etc.) worked most reliably for CodeRed and other calls. We discussed possibility of informing everyone, through The Weston Forum, Senior Newsletter, etc., about these issues and such other aids as radios with multiple back-up power options (battery-operated/solar/hand-cranked), etc. It was noted that there are two emergency support lists: The Westport/Weston Health District Emergency List (for people who can't evacuate themselves) and the Weston Reassurance List (for those who are able, but may be living alone, etc.). Neighbor-to-neighbor volunteer network ideas were also discussed.

A League of Women Voters program on emergency preparedness will be held on November 19<sup>th</sup> at which various Town leaders will discuss Weston's storm readiness and response, and answer questions. The Center may plan its own program for seniors as well; and Charlene will call Russ from Tidewater Electric regarding a possible talk about generators, including safety issues and realistic costs involved in all aspects of their operation.

Pam will create an informal survey on preparedness for the next senior lunch. Among possible questions are: Do you have a landline phone that worked during the power outage? Are you on one of the available emergency call lists and, if not, would you like to be?

Senior Center Report: Wendy gave an update on the budget for September and October and noted that all programs are within budget guidelines, which include subsidizing of exercise programs. She has found volunteers to donate pre-luncheon "coffee hour" items on Wednesdays, which will save the Center about \$100 per month. We discussed the Weston Education Fund (WEF) grant proposal/Oral History grant, new volunteers at the Center, the Newsletter, information in The Weston Forum, and the Center redecorating project.

The annual budget process: a discussion of future budget needs is planned for next meeting.

Center Program Report: Pam gave an update on all past/ongoing activities and upcoming classes and programs. She is doing research on Health and Wellness and exploring co-sponsoring some talks with the Library. Pam will call the Greens about their wellness lectures/programs. (Charlene noted that in the past, the Westport/Weston United Way had organized a well attended annual Aging Successfully event and that its programs might be of interest.)

Friends of Senior Center Report: Nina said that the paperwork is complete for establishing the organization's 501c3 status and nonprofit designation should come through by mid-January. A five session Friend's Genealogy program is planned to begin February 10th at the Weston High School. Participants will be charged for supplies only; and high school student volunteers will help with computer research as needed. Nina is researching insurance issues for Friends' classes.

Helen brought up the idea of creating a nickname for—or changing the name of—the Weston Senior Activities Center to "The Hub" or something else more inviting to a broader range of seniors. We will all give this some thought.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Submitted by Wendy Petty