

**TOWN OF DARIEN
COMMISSION ON AGING
REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 19, 2014**

ATTENDANCE: Joe Pankowski, Chair; Mary McCarthy, Amy Squyres, Arden Anderson-Broecking, Ray Slavin, Ron Heinbaugh

STAFF: Olive Hauser, Human Services Director; Beth Paris, Senior Center Director

CALL TO ORDER.

Mr. Pankowski called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

October 15, 2014 Minutes

**** MR. HEINBAUGH MOVED THE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 15, 2014.**

**** MS. SQUYRES SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 15, 2014 AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

HUMAN SERVICES REPORT.

Ms. Hauser presented her report. (See attached)

Mr. Pankowski asked if the program allowing the local farmer markets to accept SNAP coupons had been approved. Ms. Hauser said that she believe that it had been approved.

SENIOR CENTER REPORT.

Ms. Paris presented her report. (See attached) She distributed copies of the most recent newsletter.

Ms. Squyres asked if the clientele has changed since the move. Ms. Paris said that there had been a change in clientele and that some people are coming in to learn how to aging better. She said that it was important for the Center to be a welcoming place for everyone and people feel comfortable. There has been good integration. She said that the attendance was about 80% of Darien residents.

Ms. Woods pointed out that Aging in Place was having their upcoming meeting at the Mather Center.

OLD BUSINESS.

There was no old business to consider at this time.

NEW BUSINESS.

Mr. Pankowski said that he had been contacted by someone who had issues with the ballots in the recent elections. The issue was the size of the font for the ballots and the signage at Town Hall being too small to read for seniors. Mr. Slavin said that he was responsible for Voter Registration and would look into this. It was noted that there was a magnifier for the ballots. Mr. Slavin said that in the past, copies of the ballot had been enlarged and posted on the door. Mr. Slavin said that he would report back on this and the Town Hall signage issues in December.

A discussion followed about the details of Election Day, the confusion regarding the re-Districting, explanations about the amendment and the poor signage at 35 Leroy.

Ms. Woods that this was the first year that people could come in and register on the same day. Ms. Squyres said that those unaffiliated voters could not switch parties on the same day. Discussion followed.

Ms. Woods asked if the new Center was working out well in terms of heat. Ms. Paris said that it was but that the staff was still working on balancing the heating system.

ADJOURNMENT.

**** MR. SLAVIN MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MS. WOODS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting adjourned at 9:47 a.m.

Respectfully submitted

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**Commission on Aging
Darien Human Services
11/19/14**

- The Energy Assistance Program is well underway. We are working with ABCD (Action for Community Development for Bridgeport). The application process is longer for us because of a new online program and requirements they have for documentation. However, they are very responsive and helpful.
- We are receiving complaints from low income CL&P/EAP customers, including seniors, who were erroneously placed on a low budget payment plan by NEON. They have now been re-evaluated by CL&P and their monthly payments have increased dramatically, one went from \$60 to \$120 a month. CL&P in turn are sending Darien customers to us to do a low budget worksheet; whose only benefit is to get the customer off the phone with CL&P. We in turn do the low budget worksheet and have been successful in saving people only a few dollars off their monthly bill. In the above case, \$5.
- An increase in rates was granted to CL&P beginning this January. The EAP clients will not be affected until next year but all other CL&P customers will be, come January. We are cautioning everyone to be careful if you choose to select another electric provider, as many have attractive introductory rates which may end up costing you more in the long run. You can compare electric rates at <http://www.energizect.com/compare-energy-suppliers>
- The Medicare Part D enrollment period ends on December 7th. Staff have been able to review people's coverage and save some a good amount of money. It is best to review your coverage yearly as plans change from one year to the next. Inta and Ali had a Medicare Part D presentation at the Mather Center and Senior Housing. Ali was available yesterday at the Mather Center from 1p to 2p and one or the other will be there for the next two Tuesdays as well. After that one or the other will be available at the same time, every Wednesday, for confidential sessions in which the seniors can, "Ask the Social Worker"

- We have purchased wall mounted brochure and flyer holders for the Wellness Center in the Mather Center. We are filling them with important reference materials and will change them up from time to time to meet the current needs and trends. The money came to us from a SWACC grant.
- Our Thanksgiving program is all set. A few low income seniors have selected to receive a basket from Person to Person while most have opted to receive a Stop and Shop gift card for their Thanksgiving meal.
- We have begun planning for our Holiday gift program. Again we will be recruiting volunteers to make gift baskets for seniors who we believe can use a little extra cheer. Last year we were able to provide that holiday cheer to 16 seniors. Anyone wishing to volunteer should let me know. ohauser@darienct.gov or 203-656-7373.

Our program for children and families has also begun. Last year 135 children received gifts. Donations of toys and gift cards are greatly appreciated. Donations can be brought to Human Services room 109 in Town Hall.

The Darien Unit of the Salvation Army will be ringing the bell in front of Palmers for the three weeks before Christmas. 90% of all the money raised in that red bucket stays right here in Darien and is distributed through Darien Human Services for the paying heating and utility bills, and other essential needs of individuals, seniors and families in Darien. We can always use bell ringers, contact Joan Davey, jdavey@darienct.gov or call 203-656-7328, if you are interested.

Respectfully Submitted,
Olive Hauser
Director

Commission on Aging Report

Darien Senior Program

November 19, 2014

Respectfully Submitted: Beth Paris. Director

November Highlights:

We have printed a record 500 Newsletter this month. Since taking over the printing task we are able to print as we go along and determine what the real need is more accurately. We currently have 2 volunteer who bring about 25 copies to the Darien Men's Association and Library. More folks are accessing the newsletter through the Town website as well. We are still giving tours daily to new members. **New Programs** this month: Beginner Computer Class (to run 8 weeks) Stretch, Strength and Balance Class on Monday afternoon, Knitting & Crochet Circle....

A record 164 people have signed up for the Thanksgiving Luncheon!

There are some concerns over parking spaces that are too far away to walk. Some seniors have already taken on the role of dropping friends off then parking. We have also made announcements at lunch encouraging those that can walk the distance to do so. We are also directing folks to exit from other doors. Center opened at 10:00 on Election Day to accommodate morning voting.

Program Specialist and Director are meeting regularly to manage day to day activity while planning out to spring. Being in a new space demands change of routine and being present in the Center during busiest times between 9:00-2:00...Cameras have been installed that allow staff to check building throughout the day- there is no assigned monitor.

The inclement weather policy will be the same when Darien Schools are closed we are closed –when they are delayed we open regular time.

Program Days: 17

Monthly Caregiver Educational Support Group: 6

Referral to Human Service: 7

At Home in Darien Referrals: 4

Caregiver Options Counseling: 5

Mather's Evening Use: 7

Highlighted Programs:

3rd Blood Pressures

3rd RVNA "Take a Breather" Complimentary Lunch and Learn

3rd: NEW STRECH CLASS BEGINS

5th Knitting Class BEGINS

5th Visiting Nurse & Hospice present: One two buckle my shoe 3, 4 stay off the floor- Complimentary

Lunch & Learn

6th Medicare and Medicare Advantage Plans- Darien Human Services

Highlighted Programs (Continued)

11th CLOSED Veterans Day

12th AARP Driving Course 10-2:30

12th Iris-folding Holiday Card Project with JoAn Jacobs

12th Pleasure through Plants-Garden Club of Darien

12th Caregiver Educational Support Group

13th BINGO PLUS with Pam James

17th MUSICAL Entertainment with the HOOT OWLS

18th Stamford Hospital presents "Oh My Aching Back" Complimentary Lunch & Learn

19th Holiday Bell Craft-Ruth Taubl

19th THANKSGIVING LUNCHEON

26th "Let's Talk" with Amanda Geffner

27th & 28th CLOSED for Thanksgiving Holiday

Ongoing Work in progress:

Spring Program Schedule

Newsletter

Daily Statistics

Budget Planning

Building Issues:

Surveillance Cameras have been installed-Staff training will take place on Nov 20th...During the day monitoring will be intermittent shared my staff. In the evening Building Attendants will have the responsibility to check the cameras throughout their shift; door lock was broken between Town Hall and Mather Stair case it was a forced entry- PW secured it. Cleaning service remains inadequate – Building Attendants are taking on duties regularly- bathrooms need to replenish once per day because of the volume of participants.

Meetings Attendant: SWCAA Advisory Nov. 12th; COA Nov 19th Training meeting for Cameras Nov. 20th