

**DRAFT**  
**TOWN OF DARIEN**  
**COMMISSION ON AGING**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**FEBRUARY 15, 2012**

**ATTENDANCE:** Joe Pankowski, Chair; Mary McCarthy, Jennifer Geddes, Amy Squyres, Pat Morgan

**STAFF:** Olive Hauser, Social Service Director; Beth Paris, Senior Center Director

**OTHERS:** Tony Homicki, Darien Tax Assessor

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Pankowski called the meeting to order at 9:04 p.m. A quorum was not present.

**APPROVAL OF JANUARY 2012 MINUTES**

Mr. Pankowski noted that Tom Valentino was at the last meeting, but his name was not reflected in the Attendance. Due to the fact that there was no quorum, the January minutes will be approved at the next meeting.

**SENIOR CENTER REPORT**

Ms. Paris reported that she had talked to Communications Publications, a newsletter service that was interested in undertaking the printing and mailing of the Darien Senior Center newsletter. The mailing would be limited to just Darien residents. If a Senior Center member lives outside of Darien, then the resident would not receive the newsletter in the mail. The cost of the newsletter is supplemented by ads. Discussion followed about potentially charging a membership fee for those seniors who attend the Center but are not town residents. Ms. Paris reviewed the requirements for ads being included. There would be a one year commitment to the newsletter.

The Membership drive is moving along briskly. Attendance has increased. In January, there were 1,400 unique users. This number has tripled from last year. Ms. Paris gave an overview of upcoming events.

The traffic study for the shuffle will be done soon and the architect will be meeting with Ms. Paris in the near future.

Ms. Paris reported that she had referred a few cases to Ms. Hauser in January and February. When the Senior Center moves into the new space, Social Services will be able to provide even more support for seniors in need.

## SOCIAL SERVICES

Ms. Hauser reviewed her report. She noted that a number of small towns in the surrounding area had requested permission from the State of Connecticut to enter the information for their senior clients directly into the State's fuel assistance database. NEON will continue to certify the applications and the deliveries, but the local Social Service Departments would be able to monitor the amount of funding left during the winter months.

The Social Services Department received a grant for \$3,000 and the funds will be used for a new Senior Resource Directory.

Regarding the Household Goods Closet, Ms. Paris said that the Coupon Cuties are willing to donate items that they have gotten for free to the Household Goods Closet. Ms. Hauser said that a Brownie troop and local church congregation will also be donating some supplies.

The Allen O'Neill project is moving forward. Most of the residents have been relocated. Trees are being removed, pipes are going in and construction is starting. Some residents will be out of their homes for one year, others for two.

## TAX ABATEMENT

Ms. Geddes reported that she and Ms. McCarthy had met with Mr. Homicki about updating the Tax Relief Abatement program. Mr. Homicki suggested that the request to the Board of Selectmen be postponed until September. Ms. McCarthy has agreed to be the liaison to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Homicki has also suggested that a study group be formed.

Mr. Homicki then distributed copies of a draft letter about property Tax Relief program. Mr. Homicki noted that there had never been a cross check between the Tax Relief program clients and those who are on Energy Relief clients. Ms. McCarthy pointed out that the veterans also need to be included in the tax relief.

Ms. Geddes, Ms. Squyres and Ms. McCarthy will be part of the study group. The discussion then moved to the possibility of asking someone from the Board of Finance to join the group. Mr. Homicki then reviewed the process that the request to expand the program would have to go through for approval. Discussion followed.

The Committee will be reporting back with the goal of presenting this to the Board in September.

## OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Pankowski said that there was a new title, the Darien Senior Housing Initiative, for a currently existing group. This group is currently applying for 501c3 status. A meeting was held

with the Edgerton Road residents about the possibility of having 20 units of affordable senior housing. Individual invitations to the meeting were sent to the residents. He then gave an overview of the residents' concerns about the future use of the Darien Senior Center property, once the Center moves to the new location.

The project is moving forward with donations of time by various professionals until the 501c3 receives approval. Mr. Pankowski said that he believed ultimately the decision would be an RTM/Land Use issue. Discussion followed.

### NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Squyres said that there were a number of support systems in place for the seniors who were not able to fend for themselves due to disability or income. However, she pointed out that those seniors that were disabled or income restricted had no advocate. Discussion followed about the role of the Aging in Place program and the programs at the Senior Center.

### ADJOURNMENT

**\*\* MS. MCCARTHY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* MS. MORGAN SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes  
Telesco Secretarial Services

## **Commission on Aging Report**

Darien Senior Activities Center

February 15, 2012

Respectfully Submitted: Beth Paris, Coordinator

Membership drive is still going on- returns for the surveys are also coming in. The calendar is once again packed with events and participation is solid. We are looking for front desk volunteers at this time- Thursday Mornings 9:00-12:00 and back up for all the days. Also looking into **Communications Publications** a newsletter service that through the sale of local ads will print our newsletter and mail it monthly. There would be a deadline for staff each month but this would ensure our members would get a home delivered copy of the newsletter in a timely fashion. It would also be an **incentive for membership** especially if we are looking at a membership charge for out of toners in the future. In the past 3 months it has become increasingly difficult to get any of our articles or an accurate weekly schedule in Darien Times. We do post on Patch/News on Line and the Stamford Advocate and Norwalk Hour publish are weekly schedule. We are also seeing a boost to membership and participation in anticipation of the Mathers Community Center.

We participated in the **Darien High School Volunteer Fair** and the **Human Services Planning Councils Health Fair at the DCA** on February 9<sup>th</sup>. We are planning to host and **AIP+Gallivant Home Assessment Program in April.**

There has been several service interventions have presented themselves at the Center during January and February. Both Seniors in need and family care givers. Beth coordinated these interventions with Olive Hauser. Both Social Services and the Senior Center are keeping notes and already firming up a strong partner ship for the present and future.

### **Ongoing Work in Progress:** Budget Workshops

Daily Stats

Membership Renewal/New and Survey

Newsletter Development

AIP+Gallivant support/I&R

Program Planning Spring/ Summer

Social Services referral/collaborations

Building Management

Art Show Planning

### **February Program Highlights:** 1<sup>st</sup>: DCA Flower Arranging

2<sup>nd</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup>: 60 plus Gathering w/Pam James

3<sup>rd</sup> Make Your Own Jewelry **NEW Class**

3<sup>rd</sup> AARP Chapter Meeting

6<sup>th</sup> Blood Pressure

7<sup>th</sup> French Literature

14<sup>th</sup> Take Shape for Life

14<sup>th</sup> Entertainment Love Songs with Bob Lupi

**Highlights Continued:**

- 15<sup>th</sup>: Valentine Day Traditions & Customs/Phil Lechak
- 17<sup>th</sup> Ask the Lawyer
- 20<sup>th</sup>: CLOSED Presidents Day
- 21<sup>st</sup> Author Visit Julian Padowicz
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Middle Eastern Luncheon Belly Dancer “Sirica”
- 27<sup>th</sup> February Birthdays
- 27<sup>th</sup> Introduction to Chinese Medicines
- 28<sup>th</sup> Met Life Home Loans: Reverse Mortgages-The Pros  
And Cons –Complimentary Lunch
- 28<sup>th</sup>: Darien Library Presents

**Building Issues:** Boiler Inspector was in-Hot Water Heater showing signs of rust in corrosion in lower area-mineral deposit indicate slow leak-company will contact Public Works. Sending Building Attendant to Boiler room every other day to check. Will have to be replaced eventually –monitored presently.

New signs have been placed in Main Hall with Program Information displayed.

Leaks being managed with buckets

Heat in gym is causing issues because of being turned on and off so frequently working with instructors and other users to make sure it is left on at night.

**Meetings Attended:** Feb 3<sup>rd</sup> Social Services Meeting; Feb 7<sup>th</sup> Support Group Leadership Meeting in Norwalk; Feb 8<sup>th</sup> SWCAA meeting at Bridgeport Housing; Feb 8<sup>th</sup> Marcy Rand Attends HSPC meeting; February 9<sup>th</sup> Heath fair DCA; Feb 27<sup>th</sup> AIP+Gallivant Advisory Board discuss Volunteers. Feb 28<sup>th</sup> Presentation at Kwianis Club Meeting  
AIP+Gallivant ED monthly and as requested.