

**TOWN OF DARIEN
COMMISSION ON AGING
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 19, 2012**

ATTENDANCE: Joe Pankowski, Chair; Mary McCarthy, Jennifer Geddes, Ron Heinbaugh, Gerri Genovese, Ray Slavin

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

OTHERS: Karl Kilduff, Town Manager; First Selectman Jayme Stevenson; Millie Millan-Garcia, Assistant Tax Assessor

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Pankowski called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

MINUTES OF JULY 18, 2012

Page 1, Header: Please change the heading “SENIOR CENTER REPORT” to “SOCIAL SERVICES REPORT”

Page 1, under “SOCIAL SERVICES REPORT”, paragraph 1, line 3: please change the following from “in the membership terms.” to “in the Commission members’ terms.”

Page 2, paragraph 1, please replace the following:

“Ms. Hauser is compiling a list of residents who may want a safety check during any type of town emergency. Single parents, disabled, and others who are concerned are welcomed to add their names on the list.”

With:

“DSS has a list of residents who may want a safety check during any type of town emergency. Single parents, disabled, and others who are concerned are welcomed to add their names on the list. Seniors are especially encouraged to sign up and now compromise the majority of the list.”

**** MS. MCCARTHY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JULY 18, 2012 AS CORRECTED.**

**** MR. PANKOWSKI SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AMENDED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

SENIOR CENTER REPORT.

Ms. Paris announced the dates when the Visiting Nurse will be at the Center.

A small Health Fair is scheduled for September 26th from 9:30 to 12:30.

In October there will be a series of seminars on Medicare Changes and Choices. Ms. Paris gave dates for the various seminars. The representatives who are coming to address the group know that this is not an opportunity to sell insurance.

The nationwide program, Matter of Balance will be present thru Fairfield University at the Senior Center. It is a Prevention program and the seminars are not contingent on one another.

The October newsletter will be out with many activities for people to participate in.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Ms. Hauser stated that the Energy Rebate program ended and 34 households received assistance.

The Energy Assistance program will started on the 15th. The Department now using the State software to enter information. NEON will certify, but Darien Social Services will be able to track the fuel deliveries.

The Heights for Darien construction project is well underway. Floor plans are available on line.

Ms. Ramsteck is spending time with Senior Housing residents to assess needs. The senior residents are now contacting her for assistance.

Open enrollment for Medicare Part D begins in October and will close in December. Ms. Ramsteck and Inta are both trained to help senior navigate this process.

Ms. Hauser said the Home Goods Closet is in constant use. Residents can't purchase cleaning supplies or personal care products with food stamps. Until now, the program has been funded through donations. Right now, the account is down to \$200.

Preparation for the Thanksgiving and Christmas programs has begun. Ms. Hauser said that the department is assessing needs and considering expanding the program to have trees in more locations and have the trees up earlier. The knitted hats, gloves, and scarves done by the Seniors flew off the shelves last year.

TAX ABATEMENT

Ms. McCarthy and Ms. Geddes met last week to draft a letter to the Board of Selectmen regarding the Base Tax Relief rates. Ms. McCarthy then reviewed the information in the document. Mr. Pankowski asked for an explanation of the rationale behind moving to \$60,000 for both singles and couples. Ms. McCarthy said that Darien is the only town that distinguishes between singles and couples.

Mr. Kilduff said that there would be questions about fiscal impact. Ms. McCarthy said that Mr. Hormicki had already given the Commission the figures and that they would be attached to the letter. Mr. Pankowski said that it would be important to note that Mr. Hormicki and Ms. Millan-Garcia support this. Discussion followed about the State figures, which change every year.

Ms. Hauser left at 9:28 a.m.

**** MR. SLAVIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE LETTER TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN AS REVISED.**

**** MS. GEDDES SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Pankowski said that he would like to have this item on the agenda for the November 19th Board of Selectmen meeting. Discussion followed about the timeline regarding the presentation to the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance meetings before the end of the calendar year. The final draft of the letter will be on the October agenda.

Ms. Hauser rejoined the meeting at 9:40 a.m.

DISCUSSION OF THE NAME OF NEW CENTER IN TOWN HALL ANNEX

Mr. Heinbaugh said that he preferred the name "Darien Senior Activity Community Center". He said that he did not think it should include Mather, since this was not Mather High School. Ms. Genovese said that there was a strong feeling that the facility should be the Mather Senior Community Center. Ms. Geddes said that she thought many in the community felt that it should include the community because of the cost. Mr. Pankowski said that he had spoken to various people on this question. The reality is that it was referred to the Mather Community Center on every single document. The priority was for the Seniors, but it would also be used by the community when the Seniors were not using it. Heinbaugh said that it would be important to have it recognized that it is Senior Center first. Ms. McCarthy said that the Mather Community Center name helped the project move forward. Mr. Slavin said that he was torn. He would like to keep Mather in the name, but would like to have the seniors included.

Ms. Paris said that in discussions at the Center, the seniors have pointed out that there has been an independent Senior Center and some are very passionate about including the seniors in the name. There are many activities for the youth in the town, but the seniors deserve some respect.

She said that she had printed a list of the names of Senior Centers across the State and there are only a handful that don't have the word "Senior" in their name. Joe said that he thought that "Mather" would remain in. Olive had suggested a two line title such as"

"The Mather Community Center
Darien Senior Center"

Discussion followed.

First Selectman Stevenson Joined the meeting at 9:45 a.m.

Mr. Kilduff pointed out that creating the policies giving the seniors priority, was the critical issue. He suggested something like "The Mather Center, Home of the Darien Senior Activity Center". Ms. Paris said that she would interface with the seniors at the Center about this.

First Selectman Stevenson said that part of the programming that would be going on at the Center would be creating a more inclusive Senior programming. She said it was important to her that this was an opportunity to re-brand the Community Center and take it into the next generation. There would be every commitment to policy and programming for the seniors. Discussion followed.

Mr. Pankowski said that this would be on the October agenda, so that Ms. Paris would have time to talk to the Senior Center participants about this.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Pankowski said that the issue of the 20 units of senior housing at Edgerton would be going back before the Board of Selectmen for clarification about the project goals. Until the Board of Selectmen decide which project to pursue at the Edgerton property. Ms. Geddes said that there were concerns in the community about the number of students that might come out of the Procini property. If the Board of Selectmen decided to reserve the parcel for a new school in the future, then that will be the answer.

First Selectman Stevenson said that there was a lot of speculation around town, but it was really up to the Board of Education to project how many students there may be in the future. She said that this would be a Board of Education policy decision whether or not they publicly want to reserve this for a future school or not.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to discuss at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. HEINBAUGH MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** MS. GEDDES 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

August & September 2012

September 19, 2012

Respectfully Submitted: Beth Paris Coordinator

August was a steady month. Although there was less special programming scheduled regular activities continued. In consideration extensive yearly cleaning and some needed repairs to keep the Center safe until we move we closed from August 20th-24th. For the first time we printed a 2 month Newsletter for August/September. It was worth the extra effort.

We also were able to get the majority of our programming in the Fall Winter Parks and Recreation catalogue. Coordinator spent the majority of month exploring new trends and program. Program Specialist was sent to an Entertainment Review at the Glastonbury Senior Center on August 2nd.

Also a building use chart developed by Sue Swiatek was prepared by Beth Paris to be reviewed in September with Senior Center and Parks and Recreation staff. Beginning discussions on scheduling and collaborations.

**** AIP+Gallivant fielded all walk in and referrals for 3 weeks in August covering limited summer scheduled hours and vacation time assisted drivers and student staff as well.**

September extra busy with great response to the diversified programs offered in recognition of **National Senior Center Month**. From Health and Wellness offerings Could this Be A Thyroid Problem; Flu Shots Caregiver Education Groups to **3 themed Social/Entertainment** offerings Patriotic Salute; Hoedown at the Center International Celebration to new bridge classes, a **visit from Senator Bob Duff** and more...**New Classes:** Qigong, Crafts with Kim; Computer Sessions w Frank Billowitz; Diamond Series Bridge

Members were pleased to see a cleaner brighter Center; Feedback was very good and many comments on what Center Programming as a whole means to the quality of their lives.

Darien Arts utilizing Center Library and Gym beginning September 4th 3:30- 7:00 and Saturdays 9:00- 2:00

Ongoing Work in Progress: Monthly Newsletter/Publicity
Building Use Schedule for New Center
Statistics gathering and reporting
Planning for Winter/Spring Programs
Building Attendant coordinated schedule
Caregiver Supports
Holiday Boutique organizing

September Program Highlights: 3rd CLOSED Labor Day
4th French Literature & Conversation
4th Battle of River Plate Art Gottlieb LCSW

5th Visit from Senator Bob Duff
6th ACLB Diamond Series Bridge
6th Patriotic Salute to America w Karen Wagner
7th Intermediate Bridge
7th AARP Chapter Meeting
10th Blood Pressure Screening
10th Health & Wellness "Could it be my Thyroid"
12th AARP Driving Course
14th Crafts with Kim
18th International Day Entertainment Bob Lupi
18th Caregiver Educational Support Group
21st Ask A Lawyer
27th Hoedown with Richard Stillman

**Building Projects August
& September**

Water meter replace by AQUARION
Super Clean floors/chairs/rugs/all surfaces
Trimmed outside front bushes
Cracks and fissures in walk way spray painted
Woodshop cleared of junk dump run
Woodshop AC non repairable replaced with window unit
Asbestos floor tiles office area lifted and loose replaced
With linoleum tiles
Handicap BR on 2nd floor required gasket replaced
Utility sink outside kitchen backed up required
Plumbers to come in and unclog drains from roof top
To street vents filled with rocks and debris
Entire roof needs inspection roof vents need to be screen
Capped to prevent vandalism

Meetings Attended: August 3rd & 8th Building Use Meetings w Sue Swiatek: September 6th Program Committee Meeting AIP+Gallivant; September 7th Social Services Meeting; September 12th HSPC Meeting; September 19th CAO; September 28th SWCAA Senior Center Forum Group