

DRAFT
TOWN OF DARIEN
COMMISSION ON AGING
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 16, 2011

ATTENDANCE: Joseph Pankowski, Chair; Jennifer Geddes, Vice Chair; Charlie England, Mary McCarthy, Pat Morgan, Amy Squyres, Tom Valentino, Robin Woods

ABSENT: Ron Heinbaugh

OTHERS: Beth Paris, Senior Center Coordinator

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Pankowski called to order the regular meeting at 9:00 a.m.

APPROVAL OF JANUARY MINUTES

- ** MS. WOODS MOVED TO APPROVE THE JANUARY MINUTES.**
- ** MS. GEDDES SECONDED.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

SENIOR CENTER REPORT

Ms. Paris reported that there are two new programs as follows:

- A four-part family series on Alzheimer's. There is no charge for the series. Participants will receive a Manual to take home.
- Living Well Program – two trainers will address how to live with different types of pain. A library will be formed to take out books on various subjects relating to pain.

Ms. Paris mentioned that on Valentines Day, February 14, there was a musical program with 60 attendees. Also, there was a sewage back up in the area where the coats were hung. She stated that the back up was significant. Plumbers had to go out to the street to work. Afterwards, Advanced Cleaning came to disinfect the area. This was an example of how unstable and unpredictable the Senior Center is. Mr. Pankowski suggested that someone other than an employee talk about this back-up. However, it was suggested that Sue Swiatek would be a good speaker to recount what occurred. Ms. Paris added that she is keeping a building journal.

Please refer to the attached report for additional Senior Center news items.

SOCIAL SERVICES REPORT

No report.

CONSIDERATION OF VIDEOTAPING OF COA MEETINGS

Mr. Valentino suggested that the COA meetings be videotaped. A brief discussion followed. The general consensus was that when a meeting is videotaped for TV, speakers are reluctant to speak their minds openly. Ms. Geddes said that oftentimes people get together off-camera to discuss the subject in greater detail and to bring additional issues out into the open. Ms. Squyres added that if we go forward with videotaping, greater responsibility rests with each board member. Ms. Morgan said that if the COA meeting is videotaped, the COA could fall flat. Mr. Pankowski asked for a straw vote, the results are as follows: Mr. England, Mr. Valentino, in favor; Ms. McCarthy, abstained; Ms. Squyres, Mr. Pankowski, Ms. Woods, Ms. Geddes, Ms. Morgan, voted against. The matter was tabled.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Pankowski said that Ms. Jayme Stevenson is the new liaison to the COA. She made available a handout on Facility Utilization Highlights dated February 2011. Mr. Pankowski said that the contents are useful and informative. He said that in two weeks he will speak at the BOS meeting on the Senior Center. At the March RTM meeting the Shuffle will be discussed. Some believe that all options have not yet been explored. Mr. Pankowski said that a COA committee needs to be set up to call RTM members to bring them to a decision to support the proposed Center move. Ms. Geddes, Ms. Squyres, Ms. McCarthy and Ms. Morgan offered to make calls. The contacts will be made over a six-week period. The hope is to move those in the 'maybe' slot to 'yes'. Ms. Squyres inquired if Ms. Stevenson will be doing a similar task. If so, she felt it would not be good to duplicate her efforts.

Ms. Woods inquired if the Town is paying the way for those from other areas who attend events at the Center. Ms. Paris said that everyone pays for lunch, and if there is a fee assessed to a program, everyone pays that fee as well. Ms. Paris stated that last year, 22 percent of attendees were non-residents. Ms. Paris also mentioned that she cannot write a Grant if there is exclusion. She said that we need to be inclusive and she stated that she works with other Centers on joint programs and combined efforts. Ms. Morgan inquired of Ms. Paris if the blue cards were finalized. Ms. Paris said not yet.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Woods provided a DTC (Darien Town Committee) Community Survey with questions about the Senior Center plans. The consensus was that the questions are slanted and leading. It was acknowledged that the cover letter that accompanied the survey may have contributed to the tone thereof. With respect to the survey itself, Ms. Squyres noted that it is true that people are not aware of the costs of the shuffle. Members agreed that we need to get the word out.

It is believed that the move of the Board of Education (BOE) to 35 Leroy Avenue is the bigger issue. Some in town do not want to give the BOE more space than they have now. If the project goes forward, the BOE should be moving in the spring of 2012.

Ms. Woods said that Beinfield/Q.A. Architects were chosen for the proposed building projects. The firm built the Groton Senior Center which is impressive. She made available pictures of the free-standing building. She stated that an RFQ will go out for "construction management".

Mr. Valentino raised the issue of easing the tax burden for seniors. Ms. Geddes said that the tax base to qualify seniors for a tax deferral should be raised. The BOS has the final say. Ms. Geddes provided a handout to review before the next meeting. She will continue to do research on this matter.

ADJOURNMENT

- ** MS. McCARTHY MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.
- ** MS. MORGAN SECONDED.
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Next scheduled meeting is Wednesday, March 16, 2011, at 9:00 a.m., Room 119, Darien Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Hohlweck,
Recording Secretary

Attachment (Senior Center Report)

Darien Senior Activities Center
Commission on Aging Report
February 16, 2011
Respectfully Submitted: Beth Paris, Center Coordinator

We are still working on membership renewals and program surveys. Hope to have new stats by March 2011. We are offering lots of great programming for February but the winter weather has caused some cancellations and rescheduling. Coordinator reports in during most closing. Good opportunity to field phone calls questions and concerns and get administrative work done. Also trouble shooting building during storms. We advertise closings on channel 3 & 12 and change phone messages remotely. Participated in DHS Volunteer Fair collected 55 signatures and talked over 100 kids. Great opportunity! Highlighted Programs this month Acabella Women's Singing group coming in for Valentine Celebration on February 14th over 60 folks attended, February 16th Eagle Scout Ben Burke organized a comprehensive presentation of the Code Red and Nixel Emergency System

Ongoing Work in Progress : Membership/Survey
Monthly Newsletter
Program Planning
Alzheimer's Association 4 Part Family Training Program
Living Well Series w State of Ct
SWCAA Senior Center Forum Host

Boiling Projects: Replaced valve on circulator pump
Replaced lighting system on outside deck lights with timer capacity
White pine in back of building being assessed for removal
Managing Leaks
Trouble shooting building regarding winter stressors

February Program Highlights: 2nd Flower Arranging w/Darien Garden Club
2nd Blood Pressure
7th Cataracts, Glaucoma & Dry Eye Presentation
7th Bingo with Hope Home Care
8th Cause of the Civil War Lecture
9th Special Sing Along w Pam
10th Jewelry Making w/Viola
14th Valentine Celebration w "Acabella"
15th New Release Movie
15th Caregiver Support Group-Journal Writing
16th Emergency Preparedness Presentation- Code Red & Nixle*
17th Navigating your Hospital Stay
23rd Valentine Theme High Tea w Cookie Martini
28th Choose an Electric Supplier Presentation

Meetings Attended: SWCAA Advisory Board Meeting Feb 9th in Bridgeport
SWCAA Senior Center Forum: Hosted at Center February 25th

Building Issues: Ceiling in custodial closet compromised by water leaks currently area currently being cleaned up and inspected for further damage
Boiler relief valve was replaced during repair lost heat in gym for the afternoon was able to get it back on line again. Circulators can not run together
White Pine in back lot area lost many limbs during recent storms –now leaning dangerously close to building. Arborist has recommended it be taken down.
Trouble shooting assorted leaks throughout the building as snow melts...