

**DRAFT**  
**TOWN OF DARIEN**  
**COMMISSION ON AGING**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**SEPTEMBER 21, 2011**

**ATTENDANCE:** Joe Pankowski, Chair; Amy Squyers, Charlie English, Ron Heinbaugh, Mary McCarthy, Jennifer Geddes, Robin Woods, Tom Valentino, Pat Morgan, Ray Slavin

**OTHERS:** Olive Hauser, Director of Social Services; Beth Paris, Senior Center Coordinator; Geri Genovese

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Pankowski called the meeting to order at 9:15

**APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MONTH'S MINUTES**

The following corrections were noted:

Page 3, paragraph 3, line 3: please change the following from: "leak raking" to "leaf raking"

**\*\* MR. HEINBAUGH MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JULY 20, 2011 AS CORRECTED.**

**\*\* MS. GEDDES SECONDED.**

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

**SENIOR CENTER REPORT**

Ms. Paris reported Senior Center was closed for a week for the installation of grease traps and general cleaning. The bocce courts have been refurbished. On Aug 17<sup>th</sup>, the presentation from architects went well and was well attended. The Center was closed for 3 additional days because of Hurricane Irene. There were some flooding issues over one room at the Center. Ms. Paris reported that she had coordinated the Gallivant program while coordinator was out. A flyer about the various Senior Center programs has been sent out to all the households in Darien, which was well received. There were many inquires about the programs.

Ms. Parish went on to report that Marcy has started a number of new programs including a free 15 minute consultation with a local lawyer. September is Senior Center Month. Congressman Himes will be present on the 28th, talking about Medicare and Older American's Act.

The Darien Health Department now has needless shots. The extra strength flu shot will be available at the Senior Center to those who want it. October is filled with programs, which are listed in the flyer.

Ms. Paris said that there were questions about the attendance numbers. She said that she was not padding the numbers in any way. The attendance is being tracked very carefully. All participants are being asked to sign in. It was believed that there were only 12 to 16 people who spent their day at the Center. Currently there are no less than 60 attendees per day. Definitely the attendance is growing. The sign in sheets are available for inspection. The service that is being offered is worthwhile and has intrinsic value. Discussion followed about the details of the statistics.

The discussion then moved to the Aging in Place program that works from the Senior Center. There is also an Alzheimer's Support Group for those who have family members with Alzheimer's.

### **SOCIAL SERVICES REPORT**

Ms. Hauser then presented her report. She gave a brief overview of the Governor's proposal that residents with electric heat or gas heat no longer receive energy assistance. She encouraged everyone to contact their legislators about this issue. While the electric company and gas company will not shut off the services during the winter, seniors who can not pay their bills will have their services will be shut off in the spring. Ms. Hauser said that any reductions should be across the board, and that the State should step up on its own and put in some funds rather than depending on Federal funds.

Ms. Hauser then spoke about Renter's Rebates. She said that the funding was not confirmed until literally just before the program ended.

Ms. Hauser said that she was very impressed with the preparation that went on in town before the hurricane. The fire department, EMS, DPW and the police were well prepared.

There is help available for help with Medicare D assistance.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Ms. Woods then reported on the recent meeting with the two architects and the Board of Selectmen. She said that she felt that the presentation was well received. There was no vote taken at the meeting. The meeting will be broadcast on Channel 79 in the future.

Ms. Woods then reviewed the upcoming process that the project must go through. It was pointed out that the new police station, the high school, and various other projects had not gone through such intense scrutiny. She reviewed the figures that were projected. Mr. Pankowski said that the Board of Finance had discussed this. If the issue doesn't reach the RTM until December, there could be a problem since the RTM will be newly elected.

Ms. Squyres said that the town was used to having police, fire and school services. However, the Senior Center is relatively new and it is not part of the town's consciousness yet. Ms. Woods noted that during the Selectmen's meeting, there were people who were questioning the need for the Senior Center. Mr. Pankowski encouraged everyone to write letters to the newspapers about this issue.

Mr. Pankowski pointed out that the activities at the Senior Center end by 3 p.m. and there would be an excellent opportunity for other groups like Brownies and youth groups to use the facility.

### NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Squyres then spoke about the Aging in Place program and explained that work was being done towards establishing a volunteer corps to take over the Friendly Visitor program. The director will coordinate with high school for snow shoveling, and other tasks. This program helps seniors stay in their homes and in their town. It was suggested that the request for volunteer be placed in church bulletin.

### ADJOURNMENT

**\*\* MR. HEINBAUGH MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* MS. SQUYRES SECONDED.**

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

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted

Sharon L. Soltes  
Telesco Secretarial Service