

DRAFT
TOWN OF DARIEN
COMMISSION ON AGING
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 17, 2010

ATTENDANCE: Joseph Pankowski, Chair; Jennifer Geddes, Vice Chair; Charlie England, Ron Heinbaugh, Mary McCarthy, Tom Valentino, Robin Woods

ABSENT: Pat Morgan, Amy Squyres

OTHERS: Beth Paris (Senior Center Coordinator), Olive Hauser (ex-officio/Social Services Director), Karl Kilduff, Administrative Officer; Callie Sullivan (Board of Selectmen Liaison)

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Pankowski called the Regular Meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

APPROVAL OF JANUARY AND FEBRUARY MINUTES

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

** **MR. VALENTINO MOVED TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY MINUTES.**
** **MS. McCARTHY SECONDED.**
** **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

REVIEW OF CURRENT STATUS OF SELECTMEN'S
PROPOSAL TO MOVE SENIOR CENTER

Ms. Sullivan reported that at the last Selectmen's meeting it was determined that the old library site will not be considered for affordable housing. It is an option for the Senior Center and BOE housing. She said the goal is for seniors to have an appropriate new home. Ms. Sullivan said that if the State provides funding for senior housing, then it cannot be exclusively used by Darien residents.

Mr. Kilduff said that if 100 percent of private dollars became available then it can be used for Darien residents only, even though it is town property. He added that even one cent of funding from the State will allow for those outside of Darien to live in the new housing and are bound by the Fair Housing Act.

Ms. Sullivan said that the Senior Center plans are moving in the right direction. The Senior Center may be at Town Hall or the old library.

Mr. Kilduff said that the next step will be an architectural review of options, but money is needed first. The Board of Selectmen (BOS) will present a transfer request which then goes to the Finance Department. Mr. Pankowski asked about the time frame. Mr. Kilduff said on March 22 the BOS meet, and the Finance Department has frequent meetings this time of the year.

SENIOR CENTER REPORT

Ms. Paris gave her report. An AARP representative came to the Center and arranged to do tax preparation on four dates. Next year, there will be counselors weekly throughout tax season.

March Highlights:

3rd - Blood pressure screenings

5th - AARP monthly membership meeting

8th - Preservation of Capital, Catamount Wealth Management

9th - Blue Notes musical program

10th - Tax issues for retired tax payers – Catherine Beckman

11th & 25th – AARP Tax Aides – appointment necessary

17th - St. Patrick's Day luncheon with entertainment (Beth invited all to stop by for St. Patrick's Day corned beef and cabbage.)

23rd - Redefining Independence with Phyllis Boyton

26th - Lifetime Learners Classes -Stone Carving and Oil Painting

Work in Progress

Membership

Assisting with Budget

Program Planning

Policy Manual Development

Outreach Plan for spring and summer

Attended SWCAA Advisory Board meeting at Westport Senior Center on March 10.

She said the Senior Center was closed Monday and Tuesday due to flooding. Ms. Paris mentioned that Parks and Recreation was by this past Monday to start the clean up which was terrific.

Mrs. Sullivan mentioned that Tokeneke shelter was open. However, the feedback was that the cots were hard to maneuver and too low for the use of some seniors.

Mr. Kilduff said the Library had much traffic. He said if the Senior Center was here at Town Hall, parking is better than at the Library.

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Ms. Hauser said that the seniors should sign up for Code Red and for free cell phones. Jitterbug is one of the cell phone services.

She added that it would be a good project for an Eagle Scout who has a wireless laptop to sign up seniors for Code Red. Mr. Kilduff said the Code Red program started in 2009.

Mr. England said this information needs to get out there. Ms. Hauser said that it should go in Beth's newsletter, Aging in Place, and the local newspapers.

Ms. Hauser said that for those seniors who could not be reached, the police checked up on them, and in some cases the churches got involved. She said that it is good if one has a landline and a cell phone. There was temporary interruption of cell phone service with some carriers.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Geddes said that she would like to arrange for Judge Rearden to speak at the April or May meeting. The Commission members were enthusiastic about this possibility. Ms. Geddes said he could talk about Probate Court accessibility, probate, and wills.

SOCIAL SERVICES REPORT

Ms. Hauser said that the fuel program is winding down. She said that some seniors are still having difficulty selling their homes. Eviction and Foreclosure rates have increased. The effects of the economy have plagued seniors in many areas of living.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:37 a.m.

Next scheduled meeting is Wednesday, April 21, at 9:00 a.m., Room 119 at Darien Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Hohlweck,
Recording Secretary