

DRAFT
TOWN OF DARIEN
COMMISSION ON AGING
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 15, 2010

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

OTHERS: Beth Paris, Senior Center Coordinator; Olive Hauser, ex-officio/Social Services Director; David Campbell, First Selectman

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF JULY MINUTES

** MS. McCARTHY MOVED TO APPROVE THE JULY MINUTES.

** MR. VALENTINO SECONDED.

** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Pankowski said that the Board of Selectmen held a meeting on Tuesday, September 7. They voted to move forward with Weed Beach, Police Station and the Senior Center projects.

Mr. Pankowski asked if there is anything our Board should be doing in support of senior issues. Ms. Squyres said that she would like to make a Motion to support the Board of Selectmen on their going forward with all three projects. She stated that seniors also are concerned about tax relief, are in need of programs, and low-cost housing. Mr. Heinbaugh asked about the housing. Ms. Hauser said that the plan is for single-story bungalows.

Ms. Morgan joined the meeting at 9:10 a.m.

Mr. Valentino said that he is in favor of the Senior Center moving to Town Hall, but felt that each of the three initiatives should be handled one at a time. He does not believe that leaving the Senior Center vacant is a good move and that something should be done with the property right away when the time comes for the Senior Center move.

Mr. Valentino asked about the Department of Justice inquiry. Mr. Campbell said that their inquiry is about Inclusionary Zoning, and that it has been on the table for about one year. It is not problematic, he emphasized. The focus is to encourage the development of affordable housing, which is being addressed. Mr. Campbell said that twenty units are planned, and other possibilities are being looked into. Planning & Zoning does not foresee a problem. Those earning less than \$40,000 will get tax abatements on their property taxes.

Mr. England said that approximately 150 seniors cannot afford their homes. While they would like to stay in them, he said that they can no longer afford the upkeep. He said that two-story homes are not practical for the aging population. Stairs are inconvenient for those with conditions and illnesses. Mr. Campbell said he is in contact with the water company about three lots that potentially could be used for affordable housing. Ms. McCarthy asked if the housing will be subsidized. Mr. Campbell said that the taxes will be low, at around \$1,000.00. The pricing of the units will be about \$125,000.

Mr. Valentino asked about Mr. Hollister's position on the Moratorium. Mr. Campbell said Mr. Hollister is a land-use lawyer in Hartford and represented The Avalon. Darien is in the process of requesting a moratorium on affordable housing projects under State Statute 8-30g. Currently, the law does not require developers who propose affordable housing projects to adhere to all zoning laws in town. If a moratorium is reached, the town will enter a four-year period during which all developers will have to follow the town's zoning laws. Mr. Campbell said the 8-30g law is flawed and will likely end up in Court. Massachusetts has the same law and is trying to rid it. He said that The Avalon has been great for Darien, however. There are thirty affordable housing units in the complex, and overall it is a very good environment for the residents there.

- ** MS. SQUIRES MOVED TO SUPPORT THE ACTIONS OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN IN MOVING FORWARD ON THREE PROJECTS WHICH ARE THE SENIOR CENTER, WEED BEACH, AND THE POLICE STATION; AND THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING, AND TAX RELIEF FOR SENIORS.**
- ** MOTION PASSED WITH EIGHT (8) IN FAVOR (PANKOWSKI, MCCARTHY, ENGLAND, GEDDES, HEINBAUGH, MORGAN, SQUIRES, WOODS) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (VALENTINO).**

SENIOR CENTER REPORT

Ms. Paris reported that the Senior Center was busy in August. There was air-conditioning maintenance and repairs. She attended the AIP board meeting on August 23.

There are 437 active members of the Senior Center, of which 180 are non residents.

She passed out a brochure on *Memory Matters* being presented by The Greens at Cannondale and to be held at the Senior Center. Reservations are required. Also, Ms. Paris handed out a flyer from the Darien Health Department on dates and times to receive a flu shot.

September Highlights as follows:

New Mahjong on Monday and Fridays

New Tuesdays, Chinese Calligraphy

13-14 AARP Driving Course

14 Hearing Clinic

Commission on Aging

Regular Meeting

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- 21 *Memory Matters* 5-part series begins (complimentary lunch)
- 22 Flu Clinic

On October 28, attending a meeting at Fairfield County Bank in Darien on *The Cost of Living Alone*.

SOCIAL SERVICES REPORT

Ms. Hauser reported that the renter's rebate is ending for seniors and the disabled, and that more people should have received relief from this program.

Fifty-six children were helped with *Back to School* items.

With the upcoming holidays, those needing assistance for food costs can receive up to \$100 a month.

She mentioned Angel Foods, angelfoods.com, which is a website where one can order food at a very reasonable price. The food is delivered to and picked up on Sundays at the New Beginnings Church in Darien. Mr. England noted on Thursday evenings that there is a community supper at St. Luke's Church.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Squyres asked about 35 Leroy and borrowing. Mr. Campbell said that a Bond would have to be earmarked for a use. The Board of Finance is running out of time. He said there is borrowing available at 3/10ths of 1% (percent).

Mr. Pankowski noted that Ms. Squyres had previously been designated to assist Ms. Swiatek and Ms. Paris on the Budget as the Senior Center gets an allocation of funds.

ADJOURNMENT

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

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

Next scheduled meeting is Wednesday, October 20, at 9:00 a.m., Room 119, Darien Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Hohlweck,
Recording Secretary