

**TOWN OF DARIEN  
COMMISSION ON AGING  
REGULAR MEETING  
JANUARY 20, 2016**

**ATTENDANCE:** Joe Pankowski, Chair; Jennifer Geddes, Ron Heinbaugh, Christine Castles, AnneMarie Rayhill, Amy Squyres, Mary McCarthy (9:08 a.m.)

**STAFF:** Olive Hauser, Human Services Director; Beth Paris, Mather Senior Center Director

**OTHERS:** Peter Eder, At Home in Darien Board Vice President.

**CALL TO ORDER.**

Mr. Pankowski called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. A quorum was present.

**MINUTES**

**December 16, 2015 Meeting**

The following correction was noted:

Page 2, paragraph 6, line 1: please change "Mental Health as a Social Determination" to "the social determination of mental health"

**\*\* MR. HEINBAUGH MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 16, 2015 AS CORRECTED.**

**\*\* MS. CASTLE SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 16, 2015 MINUTES AS CORRECTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**MATHER CENTER REPORT**

Ms. Paris presented her report. (See attached.)

*Ms. McCarthy joined the meeting at 9:08 a.m.*

Ms. Paris mentioned that there would be a mandatory training program about the various scams that are being used to exploit seniors for bankers and financial planners. The State is sponsoring this training and the Senior Program Directors will be involved.

**HUMAN SERVICES REPORT**

Ms. Hauser said that there had been a large increase in the number of scams that were going on. Mr. Pankowski pointed out that there were legitimate fund raising calls from charities that ask for the donor's credit card on the phone. He said that he would not provide anyone with that number over the phone for any reason.

Ms. Hauser then presented her report. She thanked everyone who participated in the holiday gift program. (See attached.)

### NEW BUSINESS.

Mr. Eder started by listing some statistics. In Darien's population of 20,688, 3,273 residents are over the age of 60, which is 16%. Connecticut is the 10th oldest State in the U.S. with 679,000 residents over the age of 60. The Connecticut residents who are 65+ comprise 14.2% while the national average is 13%.

Mr. Eder announced Ms. Squyres is no longer on the Board for At Home in Darien, and Ms. Woods has taken her place.

He then displayed the recent newsletters sent out along with the monthly blast that is sent both electronically and via the regular mail. Mr. Eder went on to speak about the Darien At Home membership card, which provides some discounts from local businesses.

Mr. Eder reviewed the following statistics for the 2015 At Home in Darien Annual Report: 3,031 rides were provided by At Home in the past year, which is a significant increase over the 1,864 rides that Gallivant provided in 2010 when At Home took the program over. 1,229 households have used this service and it accounts for 717 volunteer hours last year. There have been 455 donors for fund raising. At Home in Darien is completely free to residents who are 60 years or older, so the program relies on financial donations.

Mr. Eder said that there are 187 Connecticut legislators with 151 Representatives and 36 Senators. Ten legislators will be receiving Capital Care Giver Awards. Two of those awards will be presented this week and both of them are Darien Representatives. Mr. William Tong was being honored with the award for spearheading the Uniform Power of Attorney Act, which only 18 states have. Senator Bob Duff, the majority leader, will also be honored for his role in the passage of the CARE Act.

Mr. Eder also mentioned a report that Terrie Woods put out on Acts Affecting Seniors some time ago, which includes Elder Abuse, hospitals, insurance and a number of other issues.

Mr. Eder then reviewed the AARP's 2016 priorities, which include enhancing seniors' security, supporting family care givers and also helping people living independently in their homes. These priorities have been published.

Mr. Pankowski commented that since the Probate Courts have been defunded, the widows and heirs have been hit with large filing fees. He strongly urged the advocates to become involved in this issue because of its impact on residents of limited means. Discussion followed.

Mr. Eder mentioned that AARP offers a number of educational workshops.

Ms. McCarthy asked whether the seniors who use the At Home service are required to pay. Mr. Eder said that it was strictly voluntary donations. He pointed out that the people who need the service the most often don't have money for donations. The program relies on donations from others sources.

Ms. Castle asked about the liability of the volunteer drivers. Mr. Pankowski said that it was no different than driving another family member or a friend in your private vehicle.

Ms Paris said that the AARP driving courses were filled to capacity. She added that Terrie Woods had done a class on scams which was also filled to capacity.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Mr. Pankowski asked if there was any additional information on creating a memorial for David Campbell. Ms. Paris said that the woodshop workers were discussing various ideas. They have not contacted Mr. Campbell for his input. Discussion followed.

Ms. Hauser said that Ms. Geddes and Holly Hawes were attending the housing meetings. Ms. Hauser said that Ms. Anderson had sent out some drawing that were presented to the residents at the housing complex. There are still some concerns. Discussion followed about the details of the approval and the vetting process, along with the issues of moving the tenants to new locations during the construction phase.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Geddes said that she had some concerns about the handicapped parking at the Senior Center. The spaces are currently located at the top of the hill rather than at the bottom of the hill near the door. She said that she did not know how to rectify the issue. Ms. Hauser said that Jeremy and Dwayne were very positive about dealing with the crosswalk. She said that she thought that they would be able to help.

Ms. Paris said that the reason the four spots were up the hill was because handicapped vans need the discharge room for lifts. She said that the Town could add more handicapped spaces closer to the Senior Center entrance.

The discussion moved to the crosswalk in front of the Senior Center and driveway that leads from the back parking lot to the front of the Senior Center. Discussion followed. Ms. Paris said that she would look into the details of possibly making that driveway one way from the front of the building to the back parking lot rather than from the back of the building to the front.

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

**\*\* MS. MCCARTHY SECONDED.**

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

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted

S. L. Soltes  
Telesco Secretarial Services

## **Commission on Aging Report**

Darien Senior Programs

January 20, 2016

Respectfully Submitted: Beth Paris, Director

Membership renewal and updates begin this month and run through March. New information has been requested –to determine reason for use of Darien Senior Programs. There will also be a short survey again for to share thoughts, ideas and offer suggestions. Working with ***At Home in Darien*** on presentation early March-Conquering Clutter: Get Organized and Stay Organized in 2016! ***Amanda Geffner LCSW from Center for Hope/Family Centers*** will be beginning a new monthly program: Read & Tell-Good Lit, Good Life! This program will serve as a spring board for discussion, life review, handling loss and daily challenges through inspirational literature, art, poetry... Senior Programs is partnering with ***High School CORE Group*** for a crafts and conversation class. We are very pleased to have an exciting winter planned. Due to funding cuts ***Stamford Hospital*** will not be offering complimentary lunch but we are hoping to continue the wonderful professional medical presentations resuming in February 2016. At the suggestion of several Department Heads we are now putting a Newsletter in their mailboxes each month. Health & Wellness Classes, Exercise class that are offering during employees lunch hours can be accessed.

**Highlighted & Highlighted Classes:** Read & Tell: Good Lit, Good Life! ; Darien High School CORE Group – Crafts and Conversation; New Blood Pressure and counseling with Melody Matheny- Opren RN 1:00-2:00 Visiting Nurse & Hospice of Fairfield County

**Health & Wellness Programs:** Ridgefield VNA-Living to 100: Ten Surprising Clues You Will Live to Be 100; CT Pharmacy- Eye Health; Walgreens Pharmacist- Just a Cold? Bi Monthly Blood pressure screenings

**Educational & Informational:** Art Gottlieb LCSW presents National Monuments of Washington DC; Caregiver Educational Support Group-Benefits of Planning Strategies; Ask a Lawyer; Ask a Social Worker; Darien Library presents The Golden Age of Television.

**Creative Pursuits:** Garden Club of Darien Pleasure through Plants; Wednesday Crafting; Mondays Knotting Bee by the Fireplace;

**Entertainments:** Bob Mel Musician, Impressionist and entertainer extraordinaire; Monday at the Movies.

**Program Days:** 19 (Close 1<sup>st</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup>)

**Caregiver Educational Support Group:** 7

**Human Services Referral:** 8

**At Home in Darien:** 5

**Caregiver Options Counseling:** 12

**Family Inquiries:** 5

**EMS calls:** 0

**Ongoing Work in Progress:**

Monthly Newsletter

Membership/Survey

Commission on Aging Meeting

January 20, 2016

Olive Hauser

Darien Human Services

- Holiday programs went very well. The Seniors were thrilled with their gifts as were all the families and children. Thank you to everyone who were so generous in their donations.
- Inta Adams has retired. We are grateful for her more than 20 years of service to our department.
- Ali will be attending Darien Domestic Violence Partnership in Inta's place.
- The Town budget is being developed and nearly complete. Now the meetings with the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance will begin, eventually ending in an RTM vote.
- It is not too late to apply for Energy Assistance. Please call department at 203-656-7328 for more information. Income and assets apply.
- We have begun to use our Facebook Page on a trial basis. We have begun inviting human services providers and agencies to participate.
- Nancy Herling has retired from our commission after many years of service, for which we are very grateful. She has left to take on more responsibilities at Post 53