

**TOWN OF DARIEN
COMMISSION ON AGING
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 17, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Robin Woods, Acting Chair; Amy Squyres, Arden Anderson-Broecking, Ron Heinbaugh, Mary McCarthy, Ray Slavin, AnneMarie Rayhill

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

OTHERS: Jayme Steverson, First Selectman

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Woods called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. A quorum was present. Ms. Woods explained that Mr. Pankowski was out of town. Ms. Geddes was not able to attend the meeting and asked her to chair.

MINUTES.

January 20, 2016

**** MS. SQUYRES MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 20, 2016 MEETING.**

**** MS. ANDERSON-BROECKING SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 20, 2016 MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

MATHER CENTER REPORT

Ms. Paris presented her report to the Commission. (See Attached).

Ms. Paris said that there was a survey underway and the out of town participants are listing their reasons for coming to Darien. She gave an example that involved many of the older Stamford residents are coming because they can't find parking in Stamford.

HUMAN SERVICES.

Ms. Hauser presented her report to the Commission. (See Attached)

SENIOR HOUSING REPORT.

Ms. Anderson-Broecking presented her report (See attached).

Ms. Squyres asked who should be contacted regarding the inadequate snow removal. Ms. Anderson-Broecking said that most of the tenants will call the president of the tenant's association. Discussion followed.

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Squyres said that she understood the difficulties in going through a change of location but felt that having a more positive spin on the upcoming change. Ms. Anderson-Broecking agreed. She said that since the State requires certain things, it won't be as terrible as many of the residents expect. Also, she pointed out that the residents of the Allen O'Neill project had been relocated and then moved back into the facility once it was completed.

Mr. Slavin said a number of years ago, there had been a discussion about tax relief for Veterans. He said that Darien has one of the lowest rates for the surrounding towns. Ms. Stevenson said that she would like the Commission to send her a letter about this. Discussion followed. Ms. McCarthy said that there had been previous discussion with Mr. Homicki, about this. Ms. Stevenson requested that Ms. McCarthy set up an appointment with her to review the information from that meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Stevenson said that informal discussions about the Old Town Homes redevelopment have occurred. She said that she was pleased to hear about some of the amenities for the seniors including a fitness room and a computer room. If all goes as planned, it will be a 55 unit community, which is an increase in the number of units. The State requires that the work be done within one year.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. MCCARTHY MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** MS. ANDERSON-BROECKING SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:22 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

Town of Darien
Commission on Aging
Regular Meeting
February 17, 2016

Commission on Aging Report

Darien Senior Programs

February 17, 2016

Respectfully Submitted: Beth Paris, Director 

Membership updates and renewals continue through to March –reason for use of nonresidents is being collected. Surveys are being filled out and collected. Staff will compile results and share with the COA during April meeting. Sign Up for the Clutter Program sponsored by Senior Programs and At Home in Darien has robust interest over 75 folks have signed up already. Ingrid Hess will offer a 3 part series of Lunch and Learns on Condominium “Alternatives and Downsizing”. We are seeing an increased use of the Center for informal use-folks playing bridge, mahjong and pinochle throughout the week. This has necessitated some room juggling but is really important to the overall services we provide.

Girl Scout working on gold star award developing project for seniors; Youth Asset Team organizing Spring BINGO event

Highlighted & New Classes: Conversational Spanish w/Sybil Taccone; Beautiful Tava Belly Dancer Extraordinaire; For Ladies only-Support is Always Good-Finding the healthiest Bra Fit

Health & Wellness: Ridgefield VNA-100 Surprising Clues You Will Live to be a Hundred; VN & Hospice of Fairfield County- Oral Health & Heart Disease*; Walgreens Pharmacist present: Preventing & Managing Diabetes; Deb Latham “the Bra Lady presents-“Support is Always Good”; Caregiver Educational Support Group; Read and Tell Good Lit Good Life with Amanda Geffner LCSW; Blood Pressures 1st Monday of the Month and third Thursday of the Month VN & Hospice of Fairfield County.

Educational & Informational: NY Subway System- Art Gottlieb LCSW; Condominium Alternative and Downsizing with Real Estate Agent Ingrid Hess Part 1*; Conversational Spanish weekly; Ask a Social Worker;

Creative Pursuits: Garden Club of Darien Pleasure through Plants Program; Weekly Wednesdays Crafts; Mondays Knitting Circle around the fireplace; Painting to Jazz Music Blindfolded with Allison Reilly

Entertainments: Beautiful Tava Belly Dancer Extraordinaire; Ken Capetta serenades with some favorite hits and standard tunes; Monthly Movie February 22^{ns} & 29th with refreshments.

(*COMPLIMENTARY Lunch)

Program Days: 19 (Closed Presidents Day 15th) Closed Snow 2/5 ;Early Dismissal 2/8

Caregiver Educational Support Group: 5

Human Services Referrals: 7

At Home in Darien: 12

Caregiver Options: 8

Family Inquiries: 5

EMS Calls: 0

Police Call: 1

Ongoing Work in Progress:

Budget Presentation

Newsletter

Membership/Survey

Gold Star Project with Girl Scout

Organizing Spring Intergenerational BINGO YAT group

Clutter Organizing Program-met with Presenter

Emergency Preparedness Program Public Health Dept. (Spring)

Spring and Early Summer Program Planning

Meetings: 2/3/ DPH and Emergency Preparedness Coordinator to discuss Medication Drill; 2/5 7:00am

Girl Scout Project for Gold Star; SWCAA Advisory Board Bridgeport 2/10; 2/17 COA meeting; 2/17

Stamford Hospital to discuss Learning Classes monthly;

Commission on Aging

Feb. 17, 2016

Darien Human Services Report

Olive Hauser, Director

- The Energy Assistance Program (EAP) is having a very good year. Oil prices are down and the weather until recently has been relatively warm. Consequently we have not used any Fuel Bank grants or been asked to supplement any EAP grants. EAP grants are lasting so long that safety net payments and crisis payments have hardly been used. Compared to this time last when there were over 6,000 safety net/ crisis grants processed, less than 200 have been processed this year. Consequently these grants will be handled a bit differently, giving clients a better option to use them. We have also helped a couple of households with oil deliveries who are not eligible for EAP but are still at an income that would warrant help. These requests are also down.
- We are still keeping an eye on the affordable housing going up in Darien and hope to meet with Jayme and Jeremy sometime in March or April to discuss the Town's role in maintaining lists and information that guarantees these units remain affordable.
- When the bitter cold was on its way we reached out to 68 seniors to remind them to stay indoors during the worst of it and to take precautions otherwise. This courtesy call is available to any senior or any person with special needs. Anyone who would like to be included on our list is asked to call 203-656-7328.
- We are in the middle of the town's budget process and all seems to be going well. Our town budget is down a little ^{4.49%} and the Board Bd. Ed. is up a little. ^{3.1%} We will soon begin reviewing our budgets with the Board of Finance.

Arden Anderson-Broecking

February 17, 2016 -Report to the Commission on Aging

Re: Old Town Hall Houses

This is a difficult winter for all, with the extremes of weather, especially the serious cold. I want to thank Olive Hauser for calling the residents at OTHH to warn about the freezing temperatures, and her welcome advice.

The "redevelopment" is moving very slowly, but that has not helped the deep concern, not to say fear, on the part of many of the residents. Despite the reassurances of the DHA that all of this is going to be taken care of, the idea of moving to a strange place, with the ramifications of packing, etcetera, and then, the same on returning for those who wish to do so, is daunting. There are residents for whom there are degrees of physical limitation. Clearly, I do not know everyone's situation, but at tenant meetings, the atmosphere is one of uncertainty and dissatisfaction.

Recently, the snow removal and clearance was abysmal, with this most recent storm, that has changed. The rain helped the melting. I am given to understand, for example, that the cleaning off of the cars and the outdoor parking lot, which is included in their agreement, was inadequate, and only taken care of after many complaints. Our good maintenance man was on top of it, but the work was slow. There are quite a few people who drive, but cannot clear heavy snow off their vehicles. When I first moved there, all the upkeep was done quickly and efficiently by a well-known area company. That has changed.

Plans for the new residence have been offered, which are very attractive, but IF they are approved by the various town offices, particularly the P&Z, it will still take a long time for this to be accomplished. The immediate neighbors must be consulted, for example. The financing is still pending. The meetings with the P&Z will begin very soon. Several of us plan to attend.

The good news is that the proposed building will be self-contained, with indoor laundry facilities, indoor mail boxes, a community center similar to that of The Heights, both now lacking at OTHH. There will also be elevators, according to state housing laws, which would be impossible to create in the present location.

All this being said, many tenants are concerned about HERC, (the Housing Education and Resource Center.) This group will interview each tenant individually. Their purpose is to find out what an individual tenant's need are and will be, for example, wheelchair ramps, and other accommodations. However, it is my understanding that there will also be questions about our personal and financial situations, which seems on the surface to be unnecessarily intrusive. These interviews are to begin within the next few months, even though the plan remains fluid.

Respectfully submitted,


Arden Anderson-Broecking