

**COMMISSION ON THE AGING  
4 Brush Hill Road  
New Fairfield, CT 06812**

**MINUTES**

**Regular Meeting**

**April 24, 2007**

A regular meeting of the Commission on the Aging was held on Tuesday April 24, 2007 at the New Fairfield Senior Sunshine Center. Maureen Salerno called the meeting to order at 7:30pm. Secretary, Laurie Busse, took the minutes.

**Present:** Maureen Salerno, Chairperson, Katy Johannssen, Bob Alberetti, John Brennan, and Janet Loya. Cindy LaCour and Roberta Ilardo joined the meeting at 7:45 and Kathy Hull joined the meeting at 8pm.

**Excused:** Diane Giardina and Jeannette Sweeney

**MINUTES:**

Janet Loya made a motion to accept the Minutes of the March 27, 2007 meeting as amended, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Bob Alberetti, all in favor.

**CORRESPONDENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**1. Update On The Progress Of The New Senior Center:**

At a joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen (BOS) and Board of Finance (BOF) a petition was submitted requesting the vote for a new senior center go to a Town meeting. The petition, which had 43 signatures, was deemed legal. What this petition did was by-pass the BOF who then adjourned their meeting stating if anyone had questions they should mail them in. Maureen Salerno stated she later attended a BOF meeting and at that meeting the BOF said they were displeased with being cut out of the process stating the petition short circuited the process and prevented the BOF from examining the project and deciding how it would be funded and felt with the millions of dollars being spent their input should play a vital role in the process. The BOF stated they are not against a new senior center they are against the process in which the new senior center is taking and would be looking into the validity of the petition. Further discussion by the Commission included that some members were very surprised to find this petition originated from the Senior Center and that if it goes to a Town vote and people have questions that are not answered, they may very well vote against it.

The Commissioners present who signed the petition stated it was not presented to them that way and it was not their intention to by-pass the BOF, but they were afraid the new senior center would be by-passed and did not want this to happen. The Commission discussed Doug Thielen's Letter to the Editor in the Danbury News Times and talked about the amount of controversy the Town has over the new senior center and there are many untruths floating around that perhaps the BOF should have had the opportunity to discuss this and get all of the truths out to the public. Roberta Ilardo stated she understands how the average citizen feels with all of the different directions the new senior center has taken and it may appear as though the Town did not have a clear vision of what they wanted. Further discussed if the referendum fails; then in August they will have to apply for the grant money all over again.

Kathy Hull stated she had just attended the Town meeting and the referendum for the budget which will include a question for the new senior center will be Saturday May 5. Kathy Hull also stated the Friends of the Senior Center plan on taking out a full page ad in the Citizen News prior to May 5 and they would like to say in their ad that the Commission on the Aging is supportive of the new senior center. Discussion followed. Bob Alberetti made a motion to show our support for the building of a senior center project and ad our name to the Friends advertisement, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Roberta Ilardo, all in favor.

## **2. Community Resources Fair for Seniors and their Families:**

The Fair will be on Saturday June 2, 2007 from 10am to 12 noon. A list of approximately 30 New Fairfield resources who were invited to attend the Fair was handed out with 8 confirmed responses. At this point Maureen Salerno would like to extend the invitation to area resources outside of Town to include elder law attorneys Reynolds and Jones, CTVNA, and Danbury VNA. There was discussion on setting up the Fair with either card tables or round tables as well as categorizing same or similar resources together, for example all of the banks in Town can share one table. There was further discussion on selling bottled water for \$1 (one dollar) to benefit the Friends of the Senior Center and having a raffle for anyone who brought a guest or family member. Maureen Salerno has not yet ordered the signs for the Fair. There was discussion on inviting the local Churches to have a representative present; however, this can be done if they have services that will benefit seniors only.

## **3. Senior Center Breakfast**

The Breakfast will be on May 10 in the Amber Room from 7:45am to 9:00am. There has been a good response, this year there will be approximately 30 tables and last year there were 20 tables. The Commission on the Aging table has 8 people. Dr. Finnerty who is a long time New Fairfield resident will be the guest speaker at the breakfast.

## **4. Older Americans Month:**

Maureen Salerno would like to honor Jeannette Sweeney at the Breakfast on May 10, for everything she has done. Jeannette Sweeney has brought people together for the good of the community regardless of their faith, or political party. Jeannette Sweeney has been on the Commission on the Aging for many years and at one point she may have been a charter member. John Hodge will have a proclamation to present to her at the breakfast on May 10. If anyone has stories of Jeannette Sweeney, please email Maureen Salerno. Maureen Salerno made a motion to honor Jeannette Sweeney as an outstanding older American, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Katy Johannssen, all in favor.

**5. Beacon Hill Project:**

Maureen Salerno along with members of the Sherman Commission on the Aging met with representatives from Hamden about starting a concierge service. It took Hamden 4 years to get the project off the ground and they are still in the very early stages of the project. Bridgewater has started a volunteer chore service and they are not worrying about liability, because they believe that so much good will is being generated by this service.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Kathy Hull requested the Senior Center Report be tabled again until the next Commission on the Aging meeting. Kathy Hull stated there is a big push to get the May/June newsletter out before May 5, which is the date of the referendum. The newsletter will go to everyone over the age of 60 and Kathy Hull is in the middle of updating her database.

Cindy LaCour stated Charlotte Barrows of the Danbury Commission on the Aging inquired when our next Summit will be. Maureen Salerno stated Peter Cohen from the Sherman Commission on the Aging has also inquired about the next neighborhood summit. The Commission discussed having the next neighborhood wide summit after the summer, perhaps in early fall. The tentative dates are on Saturdays September 29 or October 13, 2007.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** --None heard

Cindy LaCour made a motion to adjourn at 8:45pm, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Bob Alberetti, all in favor. Maureen Salerno will be away on vacation from May 25 to June 8, 2007.