

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

REVISED MINUTES

Regular Meeting

February 27, 2007

A regular meeting of the Commission on the Aging was held on Tuesday February 27, 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, Cindy LaCour, Vice Chairperson, Kathy Hull, John Brennan, Katy Johannssen, Diane Giardina, Bob Alberetti, Jeannette Sweeney, and Roberta Ilardo,

Excused: Janet Loya,

MINUTES:

Cindy LaCour made a motion to accept the Minutes of the January 23, 2007 meeting, 2nd by Kathy Hull, all in favor.

CORRESPONDENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS—None Heard

OLD BUSINESS:

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

The construction drawings have been completed. John Hodge was in front of the Planning Commission last night with the revised plans, which received a positive referral for the 8-24 request. In March the Town is scheduled to appear in front of the Zoning Board of Appeals and Inland/Wetlands Commissions. A referendum is required in the next 4-6 weeks to insure the grant. Maureen Salerno stated she spoke to John Hodge and he will have costs estimates to present at the next Board of Selectmen (BOS) meeting. The next BOS meeting is on Thursday March 8 at 7:30pm in the High School. Kathy Hull, Roberta Ilardo, and Maureen Salerno will try to attend this meeting. The prior COA Minutes reflect that John Hodge is aware of the Senior Center's concerns regarding wear and tear on furniture and other equipment that belongs to the Senior Center if the Town's Boards and Commissions should use the new Senior Center as their meeting place.

2. Report On Review Of The Senior Center Grant Proposals—John Brennan:

John Brennan stated there are two grants for the Senior Center, the first is in the amount of \$448,00 for both a Community Room and a Senior Center and the second is the Small Cities Grant in the amount of \$650,000, which is for a Senior Center only. John Brennan explained the wordings on the grants are very vague and that one does not preclude the other. In other words, none of them specify if you have one you can't have the other and the grant for \$448,000 specifies a Senior Center and a Multipurpose Room. The definition of a Multipurpose Room was not given and the grants do not address the upkeep of the furniture. The previous minutes show that John Hodge is aware of the Senior Center's concerns of wear and tear on the furniture. Kathy Hull stated she has heard concerns about fulfilling the grants. There was discussion on the proposed hundred million dollar renovation project to the schools, and if the residents would be wondering if they can afford to update the schools and have a new Senior Center.

3. COA Support Of A Beacon Hill Village Type Program

Beacon Hill Village is an all-encompassing concierge service created by residents located in the Beacon Hill section of Boston, MA who want to grow old in the homes they live in. Beacon Hill Village differs from a retirement community in that the members of Beacon Hill continue to live in their own homes and their neighbors can be of any age whereas in a retirement community everyone is over the age of 50 or 60. Beacon Hill Village offers many different types of free and discounted services. The free benefits include weekly car service to the grocery store and special health clinics. Discounted benefits include housekeeping, computer advisors, and handyman services. The membership fee is \$550 a year for a single person and \$750 a year per couple. Lower income residents receive a \$100 a year discount on membership and \$250 credit towards services. Beacon Hill Village receives grants and donations from private organizations. These charges are very urban and it may be closer to \$2,000 for a married couple living in New Fairfield. The Area Agency on Aging believes there are grants and funding available for this type of program.

The Commission discussed this type of program benefiting the 1,800 residents in New Fairfield who are over the age of 60. The Commission cannot take on this project, because they would have to form a private nonprofit organization, however, Maureen Salerno stated she would like to pursue this with the support of the Commission. So far she has spoken to key people within the Community such as John Petrone, a limo service, the President of WestConn, the YMCA and Frank Kelly of Danbury Hospital. Maureen Salerno will be meeting with the Towns of Sherman, New Milford, New Fairfield and Hamden. Hamden, CT will be speaking about their program similar to Beacon Hill Village called "Aging at Home". This type of program can be tailored to meet the specific needs of a community.

Roberta Ilardo made a motion that the Commission on the Aging supports the Beacon Hill Village type program, 2nd by Kathy Hull, all in favor.

4. Citizen News Article:

Ellen Burnett is very interested in publishing "Aging in Place" articles. She would like Maureen Salerno to write a column on a regular basis and Maureen Salerno's name and credentials will appear above the article. Maureen Salerno expressed she did not want her credentials shown, but agreed to have them in.

5. Older Americans' Month:

May is Older Americans' Month. Jeannette Sweeney stated the "Friends of the Senior Center" are having a breakfast at 7:45am on May 10 in the Amber Room. The cost of each table is \$85 and there will be 8 people at a table and one will be the waiter. The waiter's "tip" will be a donation to the "Friends of the Senior Center". The Commission discussed having a Commission on the Aging table, Bob Alberetti volunteered to be the waiter. Maureen Salerno stated she has an early meeting that day and could not attend. Cindy LaCour and Katy Johannssen have their own table with VNA. If no one can attend the breakfast they can make an \$80 donation that will go directly to the "Friends". Maureen Salerno and John Brennan stated they would split the table.

There was discussion on having a "Resources Fair" and highlighting the Town's senior services such as the Hart Bus, Library delivery service to shut ins, and Meals on Wheels. Anyone who brought their adult child would have their name entered into a raffle. The campaign can include highlighting older Americans within the community. Leo McIlrath has a video titled "Aging in Place".

NEW BUSINESS:

Kathy Hull distributed the yearly Senior Center Report stating the activities at the Senior Center has become more and more varied, which included a PowerPoint Presentation from the Resident State Trooper, Peter Farr, on "Scams and Fraud Programs for seniors." The Senior Center has an "Intermingling" Program where they go and visit the elementary schools in Town. Attendance for January 2007 is up by more than 400 people from January 2006. Meals served have also increased significantly. Last year they received a grant for a software program entitled "My Senior Center". This software has been installed, anyone who uses the senior center will be given a card with a bar code, a touch screen will appear on the computer and they select the activities they want to participate in.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Tom Dube is associated with the Good Sheppard Lutheran Church in New Fairfield and would like the COA to support him in his venture to have 25-30 units of elderly low income housing so folks who can't afford to stay here can stay here. The Church would purchase and own the land, not the Town. Tom Dube does not have land yet, but has prospects such as the October House and the

property on Route 37 where the dilapidated cottages are. The Trinity Lutheran Church has connections to other Lutheran Churches in Massachusetts who have done this type of housing. State law requires every Town to have 10% of affordable housing and New Fairfield has about 4%. There was discussion on the difference between low-income housing and affordable housing. Some of the drawbacks are when people hear low income housing they automatically think of slums, regardless if it is just for the elderly. The Commission discussed the Catholic Diocese of Bridgeport tried to do something similar and it was shot down in a Referendum. The consensus of the Commission is they believed something like this would benefit the senior citizens of New Fairfield. Maureen Salerno stated when the Lutheran Church has a solid foundation for this project we will officially endorse them.

Maureen Salerno made a motion to encourage the Lutheran Church in their program development to try to see if they can bring low-income housing for senior citizens to New Fairfield, 2nd by Bob Alberetti, all in favor

Cindy LaCour made a motion to adjourn at 8:45pm, 2nd by Bob Alberetti, all in favor.