

**Commission on Aging  
Regular Meeting  
Monday, August 17, 2015 @ 5:00 p.m.**

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL BY THE COMMISSION ON AGING

The Commission on Aging held a regular meeting on Monday, August 17, 2015 at the Senior Center, 14 Riverside Road, Sandy Hook, CT. Chairman Curt Symes called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

**Present:** Curt Symes, Sheila Torres, Anne Rothstein, Anna Wiedemann, Barbara Bloom, Ruby Ryles, Claire Theune, Leah Lentocho

**Absent:** Joanne Albanesi, Margaret Imbro, John Boccuzzi, Marilyn Place

**Also Present:** Ann Piccini, Dr. Joseph Erardi (Superintendent of Newtown Schools), 1 member of the public

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Mr. Symes referred to an article in "Voices" in which First Selectman, Pat Llodra, was interviewed and made some very important comments with respect to seniors in the community. Details of article in chairman Report. The Town's website will be updated with recent changes in COA Board Members and their contact information. It was agreed that providing phone numbers and email addresses of board members would be helpful to residents.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** Karin Aurelia, 23 Cherry Street, asked whether the money from the grant for the new exercise classes has been received. Ms. Torres stated that Mr. Boccuzzi has talked to WCAAA and the check will be sent by the end of October. She pointed out that at last month's COA meeting money was allocated to pay the instructors out of the gift fund until the grant money was received. Ms. Aurelia suggested that in the future they wait until the grant money comes in before beginning the program. Mr. Symes will add follow-up to grant activities and funding to next month's agenda.

**SPECIAL GUEST – DR. JOSEPH ERARDI – Newtown Public Schools and our Seniors:** Dr. Erardi briefly talked about his 39 years as an educator and 15 years as a superintendent of schools. His philosophy is to always be respectful to the past but to take care of the present and build for the future. Recovery from 12/14 is still going on in Newtown schools as well as the community. Dr. Erardi stated that there are a number of grandparents who are the primary care provider for their children in Newtown. He would like to create a partnership with the commission to provide opportunities for seniors to be involved with students. One option is to

create a speakers bureau where seniors can share their life experiences with students in the classroom. Also, a number of high school classes have empty chairs which can be filled with seniors who can experience what goes on in the classroom. He and Mr. Symes will meet on a monthly basis to discuss offering these options to the senior community. Ms. Torres stated it was a wonderful idea and would like to offer it to seniors. Dr. Erardi reminded everyone that school begins on Thursday, August 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Ms. Wiedemann made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from July 20, 2015**, seconded by Ms. Rothstein and unanimously approved.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** (Attachment A) – Mr. Symes again spoke about Pat Llodra's very meaningful words regarding seniors in the "Voices" article. He pointed out her comments regarding "underserving our seniors" and the need to focus on the totality (5,000) of Newtown seniors. He encouraged commission members to read the Voices August 2nd article (attached) in detail.

Ms. Torres reported that the Community Center Commission (CCC) is getting close to sending out postcards containing the link to website where residents can answer survey questions regarding the new community center. One question will be related to seniors: "Do you believe there should be designated space at the community center for seniors?" The library and its computers will be available to respond to the survey, if needed. She encouraged members of the COA to attend the CCC meetings.

Mr. Symes reported that Charter Revision Commission Members, Dan Wiedemann and Jeff Capeci, made an interesting point regarding the language used on the COA webpage in particular, the words "elderly and aging"; he feels these words do not describe the majority of seniors in Newtown. He asked Ms. Theune and Ms. Bloom to look into the possibility of changing the language to "active seniors". He also asked Commission members to put their thoughts together on this topic.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** (Attachment B) - Ms. Wiedemann presented her report and asked if there were any questions. Ms. Theune asked why there were gaps in check numbers listed. Ms. Wiedemann explained that checks come from the Town's Central Finance Office where checks for all departments/commission are written.

**DIRECTOR OF SENIOR SERVICES REPORT:** (Attachment C) – Due to Ms. Place's absence, Ms. Wiedemann read part of her report. Ms. Place has scheduled Arthur Gottlieb for Sept/Oct/Nov to continue his History Presentations. She is requesting to pay his fee of \$110 per session totaling \$330 from the Gift Fund.

**Ms. Bloom made a motion to allocate \$330 from the Gift Fund to pay Speaker Arthur Gottlieb**, seconded by Ms. Wiedemann and unanimously approved.

The painting of the Senior Center will be done by the new custodian (funding will come from the Public Works budget). The parking lot will either be patched or completely redone depending upon the findings of the space needs survey. Mr. Symes asked for commission involvement in planning the painting of the Senior Center.

**MUNICIPAL AGENT FOR THE ELDERLY:** (Attachment D) – Ms. Piccini reported that she will be doing energy assistance applications soon. There are specific income and asset restrictions that determine eligibility for the program. All liquid assets are counted as well as IRA's if the applicant is 59½ or older. The program is not based on age.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

*Community Relations & Outreach Team Discussions/Motions* (Attachment E) – Ms. Torres would like to form an ad hoc committee to contact the 157 seniors who asked to be on an emergency contact list which they indicated on the Senior Survey. Ms. Wiedemann offered to take the lead and Ms. Rothstein, Ms. Wiedemann, Ms. Bloom, Ms. Lentocha, and Ms. Ryles offered to help with the phone calling. Maureen Will, Director of Emergency Communications, will write a script for COA members to use.

*Community Center Commission Update* – Ms. Torres asked commission members to think about their vision of a designated space for seniors at the Community Center. A multi-purpose space was suggested that could be used for seminars, socialization area, computers, and exercise room. In the past, Ms. Imbro has suggested that programs be offered beyond the hours of the Senior Center.

The COA's Nominating Committee needs to be formed. Ms. Torres will chair the committee and Ms. Wiedemann and Ms. Theune will be members.

*Newtown Arts Festival & Senior Resources Guide* – The registration cost for a table at the festival is 125.00 and pamphlets, Senior Resources Guides, and other items will be available to distribute.

**Ms. Torres made a motion to allocate from the Gift Fund \$125.00 for registration and \$40.00 for supplies at the festival, seconded by Ms. Bloom and unanimously approved.**

*Grants & Fairfield County Community Foundation Update* – Mr. Boccuzzi will be meeting with the Foundation which is based in Fairfield County and is known for helping other not-for-profit organizations.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Ms. Ryles provided an example of a newsletter which she produced called "Newtown Seniors Digest" (Attachment F). She can produce the newsletter on a quarterly or monthly basis. The "Seniors of the Month" in the sample newsletter are only examples of those to be included.

There being no further business, **Ms. Bloom made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 p.m.**, seconded by Ms. Wiedemann and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann LoBosco, Clerk

Att. A

Newtown Commission on Aging (CoA) – Chairman Report – 8/17/15 Meeting

Welcome to our August CoA meeting and the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the enactment of Social Security by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. As I mentioned in opening announcements, we now have one (1) vacancy on the CoA open to any affiliation and a very important message from First Selectman, Pat Llodra, to discuss. I have attached her comments, regarding “underserving our seniors” to this report for your reading. Pat was focusing her comments on the totality (5,000) of our Newtown Senior.

Overall, we have a very full agenda with many important, timely and relevant ics topics to Senior Services, the Municipal Agent and the CoA.

We are very fortunate to have a special guest speaker this evening. Dr. Joseph Erardi, Superintendent of Newtown Schools, asked to join us following a number of very meaningful discussions that we have had over the past months.

We will be reviewing the status of our work-in-process activities by the Outreach Team and Staff Reports with future work on the upcoming Newtown Arts Festival and Senior Resources Guide continuing in August.

Sheila Torres and John Boccuzzi continue to be appointed members of the Community Center Commission (CCC) and our primary CoA representatives. The CCC is developing a survey with relevant Senior Question to the entire Newtown community.

On a related note our participation in the review of the Charter Revision Commission “draft” documentation has raised the question of our CoA Mission terminology. Are we only focused on the “elderly and aging”, as documented, or all seniors age 60 and over.

Finally, our greatest challenge going forward continues to be getting the attention of and effectively communicating with the Seniors of Newtown beyond the Senior Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Curt Symes

Chair, Newtown CoA

Comments by Newtown First Selectman, Pat Llodra, to Voices Reporter, Linda Zukauskas, reported on Aug. 1 & 2, 2015 as part of Press Release: Newtown "Llodra Will Seek Another Term"

The next two years will present hurdles, "We are underserving our seniors. The senior center is inadequate in space and design for our growing senior population."

She continued, "We recognized that years ago and I'm not certain as to the answer but it is at the top of my agenda because it is a quality of life issue for approximately 5,000 residents who enrich our community in a number of ways."

Another part of that goal would be to ensure seniors can afford to live in Newtown.

"We need to keep the conversation going. I'm confident we will find a way. Sometimes it takes a long time to get there but the process allows us to examine the hard questions and come to the right solutions."

Extracted from - [www.VOICESNEWS.com](http://www.VOICESNEWS.com) - Aug. 1, 2015 and Voices Weekender - Aug. 2, 2015

by Curt Symes, Chairman of Newtown Commission on Aging and Senior Advisor

AH. B

SENIOR SERVICES GIFT FUND

DATE	RECEIPTS/DISBURSEMENTS	C/R	C/D	FRANK KNOTTS TRUST FUND	NEW SENIOR CENTER	BALANCE
7/1/13	Beginning Balance					41,995.66
7/22/14	Trust Distribution			609.76		42,605.42
8/1/14	Ck. #14903 Holiday Hill		(270.00)			42,335.42
8/1/14	Ck. #15024 Michael's at the Grove		(200.00)			42,135.42
9/4/14	Ck. #15537 Superior Signs		(340.00)			41,795.42
9/4/14	Ck. #15468 Minuteman Press		(485.00)			41,310.42
9/18/14	Ck. #15611 John Bocuzzi		(61.24)			41,249.18
9/18/14	T-14601 Trust Distribution			491.00		41,740.18
10/16/14	Ck. #16219 Andrea Zimmermann		(281.25)			41,458.93
10/22/14	T-21447 Trust Distribution			609.76		42,068.69
11/13/14	Ck. #16575 Sean McKee- Party Entertainment		(250.00)			41,818.69
11/13/14	Ck. #16578 Michael's At the Grove - Party		(490.00)			41,328.69
11/21/14	T-27757 Cash Receipts	10.00				41,338.69
12/11/14	Ck. #16894 CW Resources - Senior Nutrition Srv		(240.00)			41,098.69
12/16/14	T-30470 Holiday Raffle	71.00				41,169.69
1/28/15	Trust Distribution			598.40		41,768.09
3/4/15	T-43928 P-card		(71.37)			41,696.72
3/19/15	Ck. #18036 Billy Michael		(75.00)			41,621.72
3/16/15	t-45155 Donation - New Senior Center				2,000.00	43,621.72
4/14/15	Ck. #18347 Ethel Kaufman		(100.00)			43,521.72
4/4/15	P-card		(48.99)			43,472.73
4/21/15	Trust Distribution			598.40		44,071.13
5/4/15	P-card - Michael's		(41.64)			44,029.49
5/4/15	P-card - Party Depot		(50.91)			43,978.58
5/4/15	P-card - Christmas Tree Shop		(246.73)			43,731.85
5/8/15	Additional Trust Distribution			279.90		44,011.75
6/1/15	Ck. # 19017 - June 18 2015 Grand...		(110.00)			43,901.75
6/1/15	Ck. # 19017 - July 22 2015 Rosie...		(110.00)			43,791.75
6/1/15	Ck. # 19017 - Aug 05 2015...Empire		(110.00)			43,681.75
6/1/15	Ck. # 18999 - Chines Brush		(150.00)			43,531.75
6/4/15	P-card - Caraluzzi		(5.98)			43,525.77
6/4/15	P-card - Big Y		(25.46)			43,500.31
6/4/15	P-card - Big Y		(16.00)			43,484.31
6/4/15	P-card - Big Y - Credit		14.00			43,498.31
6/4/15	P-card - Big Y		(95.98)			43,402.33
6/4/15	P-card - Lowes		(103.84)			43,298.49
6/4/15	P-card - Hollandia		(128.71)			43,169.78
7/29/15	Ck. # 19722 - Grant Exercise - A/P		(200.00)			42,969.78
7/29/15	Ck. # 19744 - Grant Exercise - A/P		(200.00)			42,769.78
7/29/15	Ck. # 19721 - Grant Exercise - A/P		(200.00)			42,569.78
6/30/15	Ending Balance - Fiscal Year 2014-15	81.00	(4,694.10)	3,187.22	2,000.00	42,569.78
7/6/15		150.00				
7/6/15	Lions Club	1,000.00				
7/20/15	Trust Distribution			598.40		
7/30/15	Ck. # 19532 - White House Speaker		(100.00)			
7/30/15	Ck. # 19567 - Holiday Hill		(310.00)			
7/31/15	Ending Balance - July 2015	740.00	0.00	598.40	0.00	43,908.18

NEWTOWN SENIOR CENTER  
 Director of Senior Services  
 July 18, 2015 - August 11, 2015

Att. C

PROGRAMS	NUMBER OF ATTENDANTS ( July )
Zumba Gold	42
Exercise	235
Floor Yoga (2 days)	75
Chair Yoga (2 day)	70
Cards	69
Mah Jong	28
Chorus	40
Bingo/Keno	18
Lunch	113
Knitting	28
Cards (craft)	16
Quilting/sewing	7
Walk-Ins	12
Billiards/ping pong	48
Trips	28
Newsletter	
Wii	16
Chinese brush painting	
Painting/Art	19
Special events	14
Tai Chi	40
AARP Safe Driving	
Ballroom Line dance	39
Current Events Discussion	58
Spanish Lessons	
Speakers	72
Chair Pilates	28
Strength & Balance	37
Inter-generational w/ CAC	42

Attendance Daily:

Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thurs	Friday
344	256	336	196	265

MONTHLY ATTENDANCE

1397



#### COMPLETED EVENTS:

- Bankers Life Long Term Care July 21
- Arthur Gottlieb Historian Rosie the Riveter July 22
- Arthur Gottlieb Historian Empire State Building August 5
- Saratoga Race Track August 6
- White House Butler speaker August 11
- Bobby Rydell @ Aqua Turf August 12
- Mohegan Sun August 13

#### UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Live Well 6 week seminar July 23- August 27
- WCAAA Medicare update seminar August 19
- Annual Statewide Senior Outing August 24
- Tip, Tricks 'n Technology Sept 11
- Home Energy Solutions Sept 16
- Senior Picnic @ Masonicare Sept 18

#### Upcoming Trips:

- Polka Fest @ Hunt's Landing August 20
- Delaney House and Day Cruise August 26
- Schooner Sailing Sept 9
- The Big E Fair Sept 23
- Aaron Caruso @ Grand Oak Villa Sept 22
- Oktoberfest @ Platzl Brauhaus October 23

#### New programs:

1. Intergenerational craft program w/ CAC every 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday
2. Bible Study Wednesdays @ 2:30
3. Mornings with Marilyn Thursday @ 10
4. Humor w/ Judy Thursday @ 3
5. Cake Nurse w/ Linda Pinckney RN regional Hospice every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday @ 2
6. Bingo sponsored by Lutheran Home once a month
7. Wheel of Fortune sponsored by Home Instead Senior Care once a month

#### More Upcoming Events for Seniors:

- **Financial Planning** presented by Bankers Life Seminar Series
  1. Medical Expenses Tuesday August 1
- **Historian Speaker Arthur Gottlieb** LCSW

July 22	Rosie the Riveter	1:00
August 5	Empire State Building	1:00
Sept 17	Central Park	2:00
Oct 8	Battle of the Bulge	1:00
Nov 17	Eiffel Tower	2:00
- **Live Well** 6 weeks Workshop Learn how to manage your health July 23 – August 27
- **The Joy of Signing** 4 week workshop Aug 6
- **Jamine LaMendola** teacher and singer ASL w/ music October 7 @ 2:00

- **Assistive Technology demonstration on assistive devices.** Sept 10 This is dedicated to increase access & awareness of assistive devices available to people of all ages & disabilities to reduce or remove barriers & increase independence in performing tasks of daily living.
- **"Home Energy Solutions- income Eligible Program"** through the *Energize Ct Initiative* Sept 16
- **Paul Ridegway, retired Probate Judge** , will be presenting: Life Happens "Legacy of Love" on Tuesday Sept 15 @ 1pm. Topics to be covered are:
  1. What happens to my home
  2. Title 19 (Medicaid)
  3. Power of attorney
  4. Living will
  5. Family guarantees/safeguards
  6. Last will and testament
  7. My legacy/My family
- **Aging with Essential Oils** class with Eileen Byrnes Oct 1 @ 2:30. Essential Oils which are natural compounds extracted from plants, are a wonderful way to support the body, emotions and the mind. Something very different but comes with a lot of interest.

**UPCOMING ANNUAL STATEWIDE SENIOR OUTING** @ Holiday Hill will be Monday, August 24 9-4  
The all-inclusive cost this year is \$31 pp. From cherrystone clams to apple pie, swimming, canoeing, horseshoes, ping pong, kayaking, miniature golf, Bingo, dancing etc. something for everyone.

**UPDATE:** SweetHART provided bus transportation free of charge. We will also be using the van.

Also:

I have partnered with Masonicare and Nunnawauk Meadows and will be having a **Senior Picnic** scheduled **Friday Sept 18<sup>th</sup> @ the Gazebo at Masonicare of Newtown.**

This event will be free to all seniors.

A donation will be a non - perishable item or a \$1 towards the purchase of gift cards for the Social Services Pantry..... More info will be in the upcoming newsletter.

The **CHOICES** program (CT's programs for **Health insurance, Outreach, Information and Eligibility Screening**) is offering FREE "New to Medicare" presentations across the state These are designed to provide an overview of Medicare Parts A, B, C and D, information on Medicare Supplement plans and detailed information about the Medicare Savings Program and Low Income Subsidy.

Wednesday August 19 starting at 3pm.

WCAAA will be facilitating the overview.

**Annual Halloween Luncheon, Bingo and Dance with Bob Mel** October 29

3 new exercise programs from the WCAAA grant for the "social isolated".

1. Sunrise exercise Tuesdays @ 9
2. Stretch and Meditation Mondays @ 2:30
3. Qi gong Tuesdays @ 12:45

Started June 6 and June 7

**Update:**

Teachers have been paid for June and July from the gift fund

They were very happy considering we still haven't received the monies from the grant.

All paperwork has been done for WCAAA and is sent in monthly.

New classes doing well:

1. The Bible Study
2. Mornings with Marilyn
3. Inter-generational w/ CAC
4. Humor w/ Judy

Gift Fund:

**I have scheduled Arthur Gottlieb for Sept/Oct/Nov to continue on his History Presentations. I am requesting to pay his fee of \$110 per session total of \$330 from the gift fund**

Flu shot clinics are scheduled at the Center on Sept 15 and 29<sup>th</sup> from 9-12 and Oct 13 from 10-12.

\*\*\*\*\*Starting **Friday Sept 11**, then every Friday @ 2:30 , 4 senior girls from the High School will be volunteering doing their community service by facilitating “ **Tips and Tricks on everyday Technology**” .

Senior members can bring their Ipads, phone, laptops, etc. and the young ladies will help, teach, answer question, hands on help to those who would like computer help. More info will be in the upcoming newsletter. Great program also...inter-generational!

Officer MH McCarthy , myself and 4 senior members did a 30 second **video on the 7 signs of Elder Abuse** for the coalition for Elder Justice in CT. All Coalition members, ( if they chose) in Ct took part in this video. The goal for the Coalition is to help Connecticut be a place without elder abuse, to be aware, how to help, to utilize a collaborative approach to protecting rights and preventing abuse and fraud. The premier showing of the video collage will be at the Statewide Conference this Fall .

Annual Bazaar is scheduled for Saturday Nov 14 from 9-3

Planning for the winter and the Annual Holiday party.

Yearly membership was due July 1<sup>st</sup>.

\$15 pp resident

\$20 pp non-resident

\$5 pp per class drop in fee

Keeping the seniors busy and active.

**Marilyn**





Ann Piccini <ann.piccini@newtown-ct.gov>

### COA meeting August 17, 2015

1 message

Ann Piccini <ann.piccini@newtown-ct.gov>  
To: Curt Symes <CurtSymes@aol.com>

Fri, Aug 14, 2015 at 5:32 PM

Director of Social Services / Municipal Agent for the Elderly

I have completed two Operation Fuel applications. A newly widowed elderly woman who is forgetting to pay her bills was one I was able to get \$500 on her electric bill. Her daughter will help her with the monthly bills. She was on NuStart with Eversource with a payment of \$690 due and Operation Fuel would not pay the \$500 until the additional \$190 was paid to keep her on NuStart. Her daughter paid the \$190 and she will continue to pay \$230 monthly. NuStart is very helpful especially when the person owes over \$2000. They will write off a part of this debt as long as the person pays their payment every month for one year.

Eversource has sent us information for our office to complete NuStart applications. This should help a lot of people. To call Eversource to talk to customer service has been over an hour on hold and the client has to be in our office to say it is okay to talk to social services.

I have completed 53 Renters Rebate applications and have three appointments for next week. The applications will be taken till the end of September.

We are getting our information for the Fuel Assistance Program for the winter of 2015/2016. I received the vendors list of the companies that will participate with the program. I have not received the list for the household incomes. This is a State and Federal Program with income and asset guidelines. It is the income of everyone in the household above the age of 18. Not every senior qualifies as their Social Security and retirement benefits might be high. Any assets over \$10,000 goes toward their income which in most cases makes them over income. If an elderly person lives with other people in the house then the application has to also have their income.

We have completed nine food stamp applications and fifteen Medicare Savings Program.

Respectfully Submitted by Ann Piccini

AH. D

AH. E

## Commission on Aging

### Community Relations and Outreach Team Report – July 2015

**Meeting Date/Time:** Monday, August 10, 2015

**Present:** Anna Weidemann, Margaret Imbro, Joanne Albanesi, Sheila Torres

**Location:** Edmond Town Hall, Mary Hawley Room

#### Key Discussion Points

Team continued to work on Orientation packet, finalizing welcome letter for review by other commissioners. A full kit will be presented at the September meeting. (See draft attached)

Team discussed direction of COA now that we are not certain whether there will be a new Senior Center as part of the new Community Center. The team agreed that we should add the following to the next agenda/discussion with the rest of the commissioners:

1. Determine and decide on timing and funding for painting of current senior center
2. Form ad-hoc committee to work on phone numbers from survey (Anne Rothstein will provide at meeting) so that we complete the work by end of September before winter season.
3. Get list from all commissioners on what their vision would be if we get designated space at the new community center.
4. Begin to offer programs during hours when the Senior Center is not open

**Next Meeting:** Monday, September 14, 2015 @ 2:30 pm. Edmond Town Hall, Mary Hawley Room



# Newtown Seniors Digest

Volume 1 Number 1

Celebrating and Informing Newtown Seniors

September, 2015



## Newtown Seniors of the Month

Jane Smith, 85, has been a Newtown resident for more than 60 years. She is a wife, mother and grandmother and wears one of Newtown's most beautiful smiles. Before retirement she was an executive at ABC company in Avon.

John Haskins, 87, has been a Newtown resident for more than 70 years. He is a husband, father and grandfather. He helps his town by volunteering. Before retirement, he was an executive at the DEF company in Bethel.

Congratulations to both.

## Services for seniors announced at White House Conference on Aging

In a year, 2015, that marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Medicare, Medicaid, the Older Americans Act and the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Social Security, the administration hosted a White House Conference on Aging (WHCOA) on July 13. The conference focused on long-term services and support, healthy aging, retirement security and elder justice.

Several services were announced to enhance the quality of life for older Americans. Among them were launching Aging.gov, a Website to provide older Americans, their families, friends and other caregivers, a one stop resource for government-wide information on helping older adults live independent and fulfilling lives. The Website links to a broad spectrum of Federal information, including how to find



services, long-term care, as well as resources in your community for programs such as Social Security and Medicare.

The Administration announced that by September 2015, Federal

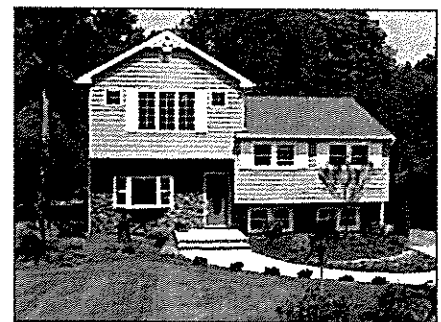
Continued on page 2

## Tips for Aging Successfully at Home

Nearly ninety percent of seniors want to stay in their own home as they age, according to research by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). Even if they begin to need day-to-day assistance or on going health care during retirement most would prefer to stay in their homes.

AARP identified features that a large percentage of seniors find especially important in their later years as they begin to experience reduced eyesight, poorer balance, reduced flexibility and other functions.

Among the important housing features are non-slip floor surfaces, bathroom aides such as grab bars, a personal alert system that allows people to call for help in emergencies, entrance without steps, wider doorways, lever-handled doorknobs, higher electrical outlets and lower electrical switches.



As part of Home Depot's participation in the 2015 White House Conference on Aging, it outlined a number of things to keep in mind as seniors prepare their home for the future.

In the bathroom, Home Depot suggested installing handrails or safety rails, either fixed or portable, to assist tub and toilet use and prevent falls; incorporating 17" high

Continued on page 2

## White House Conference on Aging (Continued from Page 1)

data sets relevant to aging and to elderly Americans will be made easily available on Data.gov, the repository for the U.S. Government's open data. This resource will continuously be updated with datasets on aging, much like it is for other important Administration priorities such as climate, public safety, and education.

The conference addressed the critical issue of aging at home by announcing services to make it easier. Older Americans overwhelmingly prefer to stay in their homes and communities as they age. As the older population grows, housing that meets their needs is increasingly important. To help address these needs, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development released a guide to help older homeowners, families and caregivers



make changes to their homes so that older adults can remain safe and independent.

The U.S. Department of Transportation will launch the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center in the fall. This \$2.5 million

investment will provide technical assistance to improve the availability and accessibility of transportation options that serve the needs of people with disabilities, seniors and caregivers.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Health Resources and Services Administration announced that it will develop an Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias training curriculum next year to build a health care workforce with the necessary skills to provide high quality dementia care and ensure timely and accurate detection and diagnosis of dementia.

The HHS Office of Women's Health will develop related training to help family caregivers maximize their own health and address specific care needs of persons with dementia.

## Tips for Aging Successfully at Home (Continued from Page 1)

high toilet bowls when replacing old toilets, to reduce bending; installing motion activated toilets with slow close lids and integrated night-lighting, reducing motion need and promoting safety at night; installing temperature-censored shower controls, either digital or color coded, to prevent scalding; ensuring mirrors are no higher than 40" off the floor, allowing access of wheelchairs.

Throughout the home, they suggested allowing for wheelchair entry (min of 36") for doorways; placing light switches at a lower height and ensure all areas of the home are well lit or add drop cords to existing switches; using appliances with remotes or smart home systems for ease of control without unnecessary movements; installing handles, grab bars or appropriate molding throughout the home for assistance and reducing falls; establishing access to emergency services without the need for dialing a phone; installing voice activated household intercoms to promote safety in emergencies where there are large distances between areas and low mobility and broadening sound alerts to include a sight activation (when doorbell rings, light blinks).

In the kitchen, Home Depot



suggests raising dishwashers and lowering microwaves, ovens and countertops for easier wheelchair and/or chair access; incorporating motion sensors into kitchen faucets; pulling down shelving incorporated into wall cabinets and installing large cabinet pulls that don't require significant hand mobility (handles instead of knobs or push door/drawer open activators).

A brochure, produced by The National Institute on Aging (NIA), also advises seniors to think about things like a ramp at the front door, grab bars in the tub or shower, nonskid floors, more comfortable handles on doors or faucets, and better insulation.

The NIA indicates that seniors

might be able to get help paying for these changes by checking with their local or State Area Agency on Aging, State housing finance agency, welfare department, community development groups, or the Federal Government. Other resources can be found on their Website: <https://www.nia.nih.gov>



### Newtown Commission On Aging

*The Commission on Aging was established by Ordinance with powers of Commissions on Aging set forth in the Connecticut General Statutes including:*

- Study the needs of elderly and aging persons in Newtown.
- Coordinate programs for the elderly and aging in Newtown.
- Make applications for grants to State and Federal governmental agencies.
- Prepare written opinions on the merits of programs for which grants are proposed.
- Act as agent for other Federal, State or Town Boards, Commissions or agencies or local private groups to carry out programs for the elderly and aging in Newtown as from time to time are specifically authorized by such boards, commissions and agencies and groups