

**COMMISSION ON AGING
REGULAR MEETING
4:00p.m.
NOVEMBER 7, 2007
STONINGTON HUMAN SERVICES BUILDING COMMUNITY ROOM**

Minutes

The regular meeting of the Commission on Aging was held on November 7, 2007 in the Human Services Building Community Room. Members present were Maryann Bessette, Betty Croteau, Faith Claspell, Robert Elmer, Lisa Ryan, Virginia Turek, and new member Toni Potter. Also in attendance were Alicia O'Neill, Beth Stewart, and Carol Umphlett of the Human Services Department, First Selectman-Elect Ed Haberek, and Vicki Anderson and June Strunk from the PNC. Members not present were Stacy Cassata, David Schmidt, and Jennifer Young.

The meeting was called to order by Robert Elmer at 4:04 p.m.

Minutes of the October 3, 2007 meeting were presented. Motion by Maryann Bessette to accept the minutes and place on file. Seconded by Virginia Turek. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report was presented by Bob Elmer in treasurer Jennifer Young's absence. The following amounts are available for use: postage: \$4,304.00, reproduction and printing: \$1,100.00, and program expenses \$1,945.38 for a budget total of \$7,349.38. There is \$2,543.50 in the post office account and \$284.98 in the postage due account. The senior activities balance is \$648.15. As promised, Carol Umphlett investigated the \$68.85 amount listed as an event consumable in September and confirmed that it was for refreshments for the folding of "Gray Matters" and the elder law workshop. Motion by Maryann Bessette to accept the report and place on file. Seconded by Virginia B. Croteau. Motion carried.

Beth Stewart noted that she will ask Jennifer Young to utilize documents provided by the finance department as their figures are more accurate than those being utilized presently for the treasurer's report.

Alicia O'Neill provided her report on senior activities. 23 attended the trip to Quincy Market and 17 attended the Yellow Dot program held at Stonington Arms on October 15, the largest turnout to date. 21 attended the AARP Safe Driving classes held on the 16th and 17th of October. 14 seniors and 10 youth participated in an intergenerational activity between Pawcatuck Middle School students and seniors at Edith K. Richmond. Upcoming events include a workshop for family members and caregivers entitled, "What Can Hospice Do For You?" to be held on November 28th at the Stonington Human Services Building.

Carol Umphlett reported that she is presently processing many applications for energy assistance. She also shared that members of Stonington's TRIAD chapter attended the annual TRIAD conference during which the FBI delivered a presentation on many topics including welfare fraud and conservatorship. Carol noted that this conference was well-attended with over 200 present. She will be attending CHOICES training during which she will learn about changes in Medicare Part D taking place in 2008.

Lisa Ryan reported on senior legislative issues. She noted that on even-numbered years, the legislature handles budgetary and finance issues and that it will be unlikely that there will be as many bills in 2008 as in 2007 for the CT Coalition on Aging to track. Lisa reminded members to complete and mail in surveys to the Coalition on Aging she provided at last month's meeting that will help the Coalition identify which issues to track during 2007-2008.

OLD BUSINESS

Bob Elmer read aloud a letter to him from the President of the PNC Board of Directors, Bruce MacDonald. This letter extended an invitation to any member of the COA to attend meetings of the PNC. The letter welcomed any suggestions the COA might have related to the senior center and senior-related programs. Vicki Anderson voiced the PNC's desire to communicate with the COA throughout the project. She noted that software will be utilized that provides a detailed record of individual's ages and programs attended while at the senior center as a means of meeting the grant's requirement that proof be provided that the senior center is serving those 62 and over.

As requested by the Commission at last month's meeting, Bob sent a letter to First Selectman Brown suggesting a need for a committee or board independent of the PNC to oversee the operation of the senior center. As Ed Haberek will be taking office November 20th and he was present at the meeting, he shared with those present that he is in favor of the idea and sees the need for a sub-committee that would provide a means of collaboration between all the agencies within the town that provide services to seniors. He noted collaboration on such issues as the mission of the senior center, the project as a whole, programming ideas, and fundraising events would be wise as the facility is town funded. Beth Stewart noted that there are many benefits to utilizing such a collaborative effort and voiced her opinion that it will relieve pressure on the PNC Board as well as minimize the duplication of efforts and programs to provide for the needs of seniors within Stonington. Mr. Haberek voiced a desire for transparency with the financial aspects of the project to ensure that town residents are aware of how tax dollars are being spent. Bob Elmer questioned Mr. Haberek on logistics of forming a "sub-committee." In response, Carol Umphlett was asked and agreed to draft a list of suggested members for the sub-committee that would represent all agencies serving seniors within the town.

Carol Umphlett provided clarification to a handout she provided to Commission members regarding "L.I.N.K.S." (Linking Interests and Needs of Kids and Seniors). This is a program developed by a teacher at Pawcatuck Middle School that encourages children to think of seniors and increase interaction between these two age groups. They have adopted the senior center as their project this year.

NEW BUSINESS

In response to information shared at last month's meeting regarding the prevalence of depression in the senior population, Lisa Ryan provided a handout to all present that outlined information for a holiday support group being held at Avalon at Stone Ridge on Thursday evenings from 6-7:30 between November 1st and January 3rd.

Lisa also noted that a transportation forum will be held on Thursday, November 15th from 9-12 at the Rose City Senior Center. During this forum, AARP CT and the CT Association for Community Transportation will address transportation services provided to seniors. Ed Haberek questioned how the transportation needs of seniors within town are presently met. Beth Stewart noted there is a dire need for additional services, especially for the disabled.

Lisa provided those present with the Connecticut Long-Term Care Needs Assessment which provides vital information regarding seniors within the state. It identifies gaps in senior services and noted areas in need of improvement (transportation, housing, healthcare, dental care and mental health).

She also provided information on the "Step by Step" fall prevention program that will be provided at the new senior center.

Lisa provided information pertaining to a new state program called "Empowering Older People" which is an Evidence-Based Disease Prevention Program that aims to increase knowledge and behavior among professionals and seniors concerning chronic disease self management and fall prevention.. Lisa noted that this program will empower seniors to be proactive with the health care and acts as good hospitalization prevention.

Lisa provided handouts to those present regarding "Freedom Phone" which provides services to seniors via phone that includes 24/7 access to personal emergency first responders, a nurse or doctor, access to medical records, appointment reminders, assisted phone dialing and e-mail messaging. Lisa noted that this company would consider reducing the price if a large group of people wanted to sign-up.

Bob Elmer questioned whether Vicki Anderson felt there was a need to advertise the need for food donations to the PNC's food pantry in the upcoming edition of "Gray Matters." Beth Stewart informed those present that the "Gray Matters" policy is that information pertaining to agencies within town that have their own newsletter are not advertised in "Gray Matters" as it becomes an administrative issue and leads to the duplication of information.

Ed Haberek noted that the town would like to hold a ceremony for WWII vets within town. The Town Clerk's office should be contacted with any names of WWII veterans.

Bob Elmer noted that a nominating committee for the election of officers for the COA for 2008 will be forming as elections will take place in January. Bob encouraged Commission members to consider who would best serve as officers and noted that Faith Claspell will be unavailable to serve as secretary next year.

Motion by Virginia Turek to adjourn. Seconded by Betty Croteau. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned 5:23 p.m.

NEXT MEETING – Wednesday, December 5th, 2007.

Respectfully submitted,

Faith Claspell, Secretary