

TOWN OF STONINGTON

HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Commission on Aging

Recreation □ Social Services □ Youth & Family Services

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COMMISSION ON AGING

REGULAR MEETING

July 3, 2008

The regular meeting of the Commission on Aging was held on July 3, 2008 in the Human Services Building Community Room. Members present were: Maryann Bessette, Faith Claspell, Robert Elmer, Toni Potter, Virginia Turek and Jennifer Young. Also attending: Carol Umphlett, Agent For The Elderly, Stonington Human Services, Unable to attend: Stacy Cassata, Kathleen Crockford, Betty Croteau, Karen Hawthorn, Lisa Ryan, and David Schmidt. Guests Attending: Leda Lord and Donna Lord Gorman. Late Arrivals: First Selectman Ed Haberek 4:09

The meeting was called to order by Robert Elmer at 4:02 p.m.

Minutes of the June 4, 2008 meeting were presented. Motion by Toni Potter to accept the minutes and place on file. Seconded by Maryann Bessette. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report was presented by Jennifer Young. The following amounts are available for use: postage: \$1,894.87; reproduction and printing: \$0.00; and program expenses \$95.53 for a budget total of \$1,990.40. There is \$1,269.84 in the post office account and \$207.80 in the postage due account. Motion by Maryann Bessette to accept the report and place on file. Seconded by Virginia Turek. Motion carried.

Carol Umphlett, Agent for the Elderly for Stonington Human Services, presented her report on senior services. Seniors served in June increased 14% since June 2007. 165 seniors were served in 2007, 193 in 2008 (unduplicated people, includes recreation programs). 277 seniors participated in programs in 2007, 273 in 2008. 243 seniors participated in energy assistance, up 25% from 2007's 202 that participated. Of the 345 individuals served in June, the following percentages were seniors: elder and disabled programs 87%, energy assistance 45%, medical assistance 34%, advocacy 69%. Of the 235 households served in June (345 total unduplicated individuals), 55% were seniors, 62% of which were 70 years and older.

Carol presented the June activity report in Alicia O'Neill's absence. A Community Yard Sale was held on June 7th, the proceeds of which benefited the Bryan Bessette Scholarship Fund. Bingo with the drop-in kids was held at Edith K Richmond and was attended by 7 children and 9 adults. A Family Movie Night was held at the Mystic River Park on June 13th. Seven individuals, who made appointments at a May 21st workshop on Living Wills, had their Living Wills done on June 18th. Upcoming events include a trip to the Butterfly Museum and Yankee Candle Shop on July 26th.

Bob Elmer provided the legislative report in Lisa Ryan's absence. The report noted that the state will be providing funding to improve bus connectivity and service to areas of CT. The state will also be providing matching funds to towns for elderly and disabled transportation. Lisa will keep the COA updated on these issues.

OLD BUSINESS

First Selectman, Ed Haberek provided an update on the Stonington Senior Center building project. When the area for the foundation was first dug, there was a problem with debris, but this has been worked out and the foundation has been poured.

Those present discussed the statements of Bruce MacDonald, President of the Board of the PNC, and his statement at the Groundbreaking Ceremony on June 5th that the Senior Center will be named the "Robert A. Granato Senior Annex." Concerns were raised that naming the Center anything other than the "Stonington Senior Center" as outlined in the grant would jeopardize the grant funding. It was noted that as this is a town owned building, a project receiving \$100,000 in town funding, and was officially named in the Memorandum of Understanding, an agreement between the PNC and Town of Stonington on May 9, 2007. This document states that the "Town of Stonington has secured a grant to construct an addition of its property... which is additional space to be used as a senior center...[that] the addition to the building shall be named, 'The Stonington Senior Center,' and shall be used by the PNC for senior activities." In August of 2007, the State of CT stated this wording needed to be on the grant for the grant to be accepted. All present agreed that Mr. MacDonald's suggestion of Robert Granato was merited, and that there are additional names that would be considered as well. However, the Memorandum of Understanding clearly names the building. The suggestion was made that particular rooms of the addition be named after worthy candidates and that these names be agreed upon by all involved parties (i.e. the PNC, Town of Stonington, and as the liaison between seniors and the Town, the COA). Concern was voiced that state employees at the Groundbreaking ceremony witnessed this discrepancy with the previous decision to name the addition the "The Stonington Senior Center." Ed shared that he has learned of new protocols that the State will give concerning State money and Senior Centers. All agreed that there is a possibility that the discrepancy in the project's naming at the Groundbreaking may have been what brought these new protocols about.

At Faith Claspell's request, Ed Haberek will provide a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding to all members of the COA in an effort to present correct information to the community as members of the COA are frequently asked questions concerning the project by the public.

Jennifer Young shared with those present that meals previously served at the PNC by TVCCA are being served at the Westerly Senior Center. Others present shared her concern that these meals should be provided in CT and that this change does not encourage senior services in Stonington and that it is of concern to seniors and taxpayers in the Town of Stonington. Many voiced concerns that previous statements made by seniors on the Mystic side of Stonington stating that the placement of services in Pawcatuck (with Westerly being an additional distance to that) was prohibitive to their participating in programming.

Ed Haberek reported on a meeting of the COA Sub-Committee for Senior Transportation which was attended by himself, Stacy Cassata, Lisa Ryan, and Beth Stewart. There is \$37,911 available to Stonington at the CT Department of Transportation; the State will match Town money for up to that amount. This will be further investigated by the subcommittee.

Ed shared that he is scheduling an operational meeting with the Town and PNC next month. He noted that especially with budgetary concerns within Stonington, he will be focusing on ensuring that services within town are not duplicated, and that a collaborative partnership is developed between all entities providing services to seniors (i.e. COMO, PNC, Stonington Human Services etc.).

Karen Hawthorn has sent a thank you letter to the Mystic Women's Club for the \$250.00 grant awarded to the COA for the purchase of the Wii Interactive Gaming System.

NEW BUSINESS

A recent event involving a Stonington resident and the PNC was discussed. This resident has dementia and goes to Westerly Adult Day Services (WADS). Family members of this individual requested transportation from the PNC to WADS. The first day transportation from the PNC was provided, this resident was picked up by the PNC bus in the morning and a car in the afternoon. When the car stopped in the driveway, the resident got out of the car and fell. Transportation was provided again with Vicki Anderson, Director of the PNC, present to evaluate whether the PNC's transportation was appropriate for this person. She had scheduled a meeting following this ride with the resident's family. When the resident exited the bus, family approached Vicki on the bus to inquire about the scheduled meeting to which the response was the meeting needed to be rescheduled, no reason given, and that the resident will not be provided with transportation by the PNC. The resident's family, staff at WADS and the resident's doctor are in favor of giving it another try, "a fair chance" to see if accommodations can be made to meet the resident's needs. The suggestion was made and all present agreed that since the Town of Stonington contributes \$27,000 a year to the PNC's senior transportation program, and with the increased need that the anticipated programming at the Senior Center will bring, that PNC drivers need to be trained and equipped with the skills necessary to adequately serve the transportation needs of seniors within the town.

Ed Haberek suggested the COA's Sub-Committee on Senior Transportation investigate opportunities for additional means of transportation for seniors in Stonington with the anticipated increase in need related to the Senior Center.

Motion to adjourn by Maryann Bessette. Seconded by Virginia Turek. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

NEXT MEETING – Wednesday, August 6, 2008.

Respectfully submitted,

Faith Claspell, Secretary pro tem