

Town of Upton
Council on Aging
Upton Center, October 15, 2012

The Upton Council on Aging's regular monthly meeting was called to order at 9:00 A.M. Those in attendance were: Myra Bigelow, Judi Blanchard, Betty Consigli, Jen DeLuca, Jamie Gardner, Maria Griffin, Judith Katz, Katie Kelley, Priscilla Lukes, Bev Randazzo, and Grace Wadsworth., Holly Whalen.

Myra Bigelow was welcomed as a possible member of the COA. After discussion with Jamie, if she is interested in becoming a member of the COA, a vote will be taken at the next meeting.

The minutes of the September 10, 2012 meeting were accepted as amended.

The Officers of the COA board will be voted on at the next meeting. New board members are needed. If the membership falls below 6, the Center will lose the Formula Grant funding.

Men's Club Supper Volunteer: Grace

Out to Eat Volunteers: October 17 Post Office Pub Judy
October 26 Wenger Farm Grace
October 31 Betty and Beverly to help. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

Jamie reviewed what it entails to be a volunteer at the Men's Club supper. There will be a check list of everything that needs to be done to leave the center the way it was found. If there is any issue with any one, Jamie is to be informed. The doors open at 4:45. If anyone gives the volunteer a difficult time, their name is to be starred.

Out to Eat Volunteers: if no staff is present, the volunteer is considered staff and is expected to be aware of needs of the group and to deal with any problems that arise. If on a trip with no staff person, the cost of the trip will be paid for the volunteer.

Upgrades to the Center: new fish tank is already set up. Research has shown that looking at the fish helps to focus and to discover new things every day.

Welcome Packet. Money from the Formula Grant will be used to buy mini red tote bags which will hold a pen, brochure on the center, the behavior policy, bus rules and other things to be decided.

Medicare Review should be done by all seniors every year. Jamie and Holly are available to sit down with individuals to review their coverage.

Assistance/Fuel help. Please let Jamie know if the Counsel knows of anyone who needs help. They will be contacted with discretion.

SMOC: Re-certification went out. November 1 through April 30. If fit criteria, can get 25% reduction on the electric bill. SMOC is an assistance program, not comprehensive, complete payment of one's bills. It is meant to help a person.

Salvation Army Good Neighbor Energy Fund gives a one time payment of \$275 directly mailed to the

utility company of the person's choice.

The Salvation Army breaks up into service units. Jamie is the Chair person of the SA service unit in Upton. Holly is the social services coordinator. There is one member: George Kennedy and the treasurer is Mike from Unibank. The Men's Club has coordinated the kettle program in the past but are posing difficulties this year. Price Chopper has agreed to let this service unit have kettles on two Saturdays in November. The Men's Club is refusing to do this because Price Chopper is in Hopkinton. Jamie may have to organize the Saturdays if the Men's Club continues to refuse to do it. The season runs from right before Thanksgiving until the week before Christmas. If the volunteers are over 16, they do not have to be supervised. If under 16, supervision is necessary.

The possible dates for the kettle drive are still being determined. COA members volunteered to give their time but Jamie does not want to send a message that the COA can pick up the pieces when other organizations will not do it. In the past, Cub and Eagle Scouts have done it. Jamie is meeting with the president of the Men's Club.

Other sources of holiday funds: Women's Club and the Bloomer Girls. The money is used to buy gifts and food for people. If no other money comes in except from the clubs, it is difficult to respond to all the needs.

Annual COA conference. Jamie, as Director, attended this conference at the Cape. He attended several workshops, including one on "Suicide in Older Adults", "Falls and Medications". He reported that if a senior wants a medication review, a pharmacist will review all medication. It was noted that a senior is in the emergency room every 17 seconds from medication issues; 1 dies every 30 seconds from a fall related to medication. Some take medications long after they are needed.

Another presentation that Jamie attended was "living will, power of attorney." Massachusetts does not have a living will law. A Health Care Proxy is essential and it is very important that the person chosen to be one's Proxy will fulfill the individual's wishes. The next of kin cannot make any decisions if they are not the Health Care Proxy. In the absence of one, the hospital will make the decisions. It was suggested that copies of the Health Care Proxy be put in one's car's glove box, in one's wallet, on one's refrigerator.

Jamie gave a very cogent presentation on the End of Life Ballot Question. The Massachusetts question was modeled on one in Washington State. There are very precise conditions that one must fulfill to choose to end one's life: the person must be of sound mind, have a terminal illness with less than six months to live. They must petition to get the end of life drug. The person must get their own prescription and administer it to themselves. There has to be no chance that the person will survive the illness. The death is not listed as suicide but as the disease. This is not physician assisted suicide. After Washington state passed this law, there was a 22% decline in suicides. This gives people choices so they won't hurt themselves or resort to illegal means. This is not suicide but considered death with dignity. There are very strict criteria. If one is not of sound mind, they cannot make this decision. Life insurance will pay since they pay off the listing on the death certificate. If one has private health insurance for more than 2 years, the policy will be honored.

Another issue from the conference was that of Bullying which is at epidemic proportions and is happening at Senior Centers. An example given was of person coming into an activity and trying to sit down, only to be told that the seats were saved. If anyone hears a person being bullied or treated rudely, if they are not comfortable in handling the situation, they are asked to find a staff person.

Depression can develop with seniors if they don't feel comfortable or welcome.

Fund Raising: Massachusetts has specific laws regarding municipalities and government . The COA is considered a municipalities. No COA member can fund raise. It is considered illegal. If an individual if fined for fund raising, the individual pays the fine, not the Center. An individual cannot solicit money on behalf of the Center. It is against the law.

Bingo: This is not a Center sponsored event because the lottery license is held by the Friend's Group and not the Center. The lottery commission has sent renewals. There is a problem in that the Friends are presently dormant. If they do not want to continue to do Bingo, it will have to be canceled. The Center cannot operate Bingo because it is against the law. COA members can help at Bingo but cannot run it. Jamie will have a meeting with Joy about the situation. If the Friends group disbands, any money from the Friends comes to the Center.

The Center can only receive unsolicited donations.

Jamie's Goal for the COA. Every one will have a job description. Jamie reiterated the need for discretion in what is said inside and out the Center. He encourages people to talk to him if there is an issue or question and they need information or want to hear more fully what the issue is about. Jamie's style is to directly confront an issue or person. He will not tolerate rudeness or bullying. He wants the Center to be a place of welcome. Communication is most important because miscommunication is often the cause of problems.

Behavior Policy is being developed. It will be brought to the Council for review. It will then be presented to everyone who participates in the Center activities and they will be asked to sign the policy.

Computer classes will not be scheduled at this time. Jen and Jamie are available to help anyone with computer issues.

Office coverage: November 7, 1-3 Priscilla

New Web Site: www.uptonma.gov. If anyone has suggestions, please let the staff know any ideas.

Re; Trip Planning. Goal in future is that Chairperson will attend planning meetings since the task of thinking up the trips falls on the staff. If anyone wants to do an impromptu trip, if possible, Jamie would see that it happened.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10.

Respectfully submitted

Katie Kelley
Secretary