

SENIOR CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes

Thursday, October 15, 2015

Present: Kathi Liberman, Kathy Bagley, Erica Texeira, Tony Martino, Joe Mehan, Claire Mehan, Christine Taylor, Chris Skowronek, Barbara Higbee, Henry Higbee, Katie Mezick, Lisa Galipo, Don Jensen, Kevin Farmer, Donna Brown

The meeting was called to order at 3pm. The minutes from the September 17, 2015 meeting were approved unanimously: motion by Barbara Higbee, seconded by Chris Taylor.

Public Comments:

Kevin Farmer, Executive Director of ITN and volunteer Don Jensen spoke about their service that provides rides to persons 60 years and older and those who are 18 years and older and visually impaired. Rides are provided anytime for any reason. Single riders pay a \$40 annual membership fee and families pay \$65. There is a \$3 pick-up fee and then a charge per mile of \$1.50. ITN services 15 towns including Wethersfield. They are in need of clients and volunteer drivers. Drivers use their own cars and are covered by their own insurance and insurance provided by ITN. Volunteers earn ride credits that they can use if they require rides in the future. Clients can create ride accounts to which family members can donate. The value of a donated car can be put toward an account. Clients are billed by ITN. Drivers do not handle cash and there is no tipping. Caregivers ride for free. The service is door-through-door and arm-through-arm, meaning drivers make sure clients get where they are going, though clients must be able to handle themselves and their assistive devices. Drivers do no lifting.

Donna Brown, a member of the Senior Center and Computer Learning Center discussed the need for more space for the Senior Center and the need for a bulletin board that displays Senior Center information at the front of the building. Kathy Bagley said she will look at space for a board. The members of the Committee also looked at the wall space in the front of the building after the meeting. Kathy Bagley noted there is no easy solution to the Senior Center's space needs. Tony Martino noted there has been talk about a parking lot in the back of the building but drainage is an issue there.

Old Business:

- **Financial Update:** Lisa Galipo reported there is a balance of \$1,600 in our account after two recent Rare Reminder ads.
- **Committee Membership:** Kathi Liberman noted there are now two vacancies on the committee since Adele Antoniou retired.

New Business:

- The group brainstormed about a topic for the spring event. Joe Mehan suggested a topic related to the summer sun or fun in the sun. He discussed the need for public information about solar panels. Related ideas included energy conservation. Other ideas included long-term care planning and simplifying technology for seniors. The group will continue thinking about topics and the Committee will decide on a topic at the November meeting.

Committee Reports:

Council Liaison Tony Martino reported:

- A tax incentive was offered to the developer of the Ridge Road apartments. The development

will include 70 units. The property will bring in considerable taxes to the town over time and the developer met with neighbors to address their concerns. The package was passed by the Council.

- The town ended the last fiscal year with a \$1million surplus. This was due to increased back taxes collected by the tax collector, new building permits, and town department savings. \$300,000 will be applied to the town's road program and the \$1m surplus will be set aside for emergency needs. This savings will allow for a better interest rate on bonding for the high school renovations.
- Tony reviewed several new businesses that have opened their doors in town and possible new development.

Wethersfield Housing Authority: Kathi Liberman reported

- 8 residents from the WHA attended the first van trip to Lyman Orchards and had a good time. Residents will also be taking a guided bus tour of historic Wethersfield.
- She is preparing for the energy assistance season and Medicare Open Enrollment.

Clergy: Pastor Chris Skowronek had no report.

Elderly Services Coordinator/Municipal Agent: Chris Taylor reported

- Energy assistance season is beginning soon. The Social Service department is currently helping many residents presenting with shut off notices with Operation Fuel funds.
- She is gearing up for Medicare Open Enrollment season.
- The Dept is planning for holiday programs.
- The DSS bus will be in the Community Center parking lot on 9/1 and will serve approximately 15 clients screening them for Medicare Part D plans and other benefit programs.

Wethersfield Seniors Club: Kathy Bagley reported:

- Talks are continuing with Club members about moving forward with combining the Senior Club and Senior Center programs. She will be meeting with representatives of each of the Club's groups next week to continue discussions.

Senior Center: Lisa Galipo reported:

- Upcoming programs include a first in a series of "Knowledge & Nibbles" talks. This first talk will be about making a move to Assisted Livings. The October Lunch & Learn will be a talk about G. Fox and the Auerbach family presented by the CT Historical Society. The presentation will be held on a Friday and will be a joint effort of the Center and Setback group with approximately 100 in attendance.
- The Mom's Club of Wethersfield will be bringing their children to the Center for trick-or-treating in October and a carol sing with the Rhythmairs in December.
- The recent van trip for senior housing residents to Lyman Orchards was a success with a capacity crowd of 34 attending. The next trip will be to the New Britain Museum of American Art.
- The Center's bus trip to Salem, MA is this Saturday.

A motion to adjourn was made by Barbara Higbee and seconded by Joe Mehan. The meeting was adjourned at 4:20pm.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Galipo