

COMMISSION ON AGING AND DISABLED  
REGULAR MEETING

MARCH 5, 2008

MEMBERS PRESENT

Karen Brecher  
William DeMaio  
Tillie DeMaio  
Lesley Hodas  
Amanda Powell  
Patricia Murray  
Jerilyn Nagel (arrived at 7:10 PM)

STAFF

Dianne Stone  
Teri Snyder  
Gail Whitney

ABSENT

Eunice Scharr  
Patricia Hanbury

ALSO PRESENT

Myra Cohen  
David Nagel  
Charles Francolino  
Ed Danielczyk

I. CALL TO ORDER

Karen Brecher, Chairperson called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM. Karen welcomed Patricia Murray to the Commission as a new commissioner.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Myra Cohen stated that Town Council voted to have the New Meadow project proceed with New Samaritan as the preferred contractor. There is a possibility that the project may expand to include the area where Channel 14 and Newington Art League are presently housed. The project is for approximately 30 to 40 units.

Myra also reported that the Town Manager's budget is ready and the Town Council will review it this weekend. The first budget meeting is March 10<sup>th</sup> and she encourages people to attend these budget meetings.

David Nagel introduced himself as the other Town Council liaison and stated that this is his first meeting. He also serves on the subcommittee for the housing project.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**MOTION: Amanda Powell made a motion to accept the minutes of the regular meeting held on February 6, 2008, Lesley Hodas seconded the nomination, all were in favor, and the motion to accept the minutes of the regular meeting held on February 6, 2008 was unanimously approved with a 7-0 vote.**

## V. STAFF REPORT

Dianne reported that February was a good month. The Lots of Laughs program showed a video tape, the Senior and Disabled Center University continues with a steady group of people watching videotaped lectures on the presidents, the Creative Minds six session program ended and this was sponsored by Newington Health Care Center, a program on good nutrition was held, Stacey Ziebel held a medication use safety program, Marian Amodeo was the speaker at Coffee Talk, there was a Lunch and Learn session on MRSA (superbug), and the eight week program Brain Fitness ended with an interest in continuing this program.

The Information and Referral Center is open and a room is being set up with materials and resources. Two volunteers have been recruited, Maureen Lynch and Marsha Zapatka to staff this room and oversee the resources.

The SeniorNet program is part of a national not-for-profit organization that gives basic computer instruction. The national organization is looking to restructure this program. At the present time the SeniorNet program gets all of its curriculum, software, and licensing through the national not-for-profit organization that charges a \$40 membership fee plus a minimal class charge. They changed this fee structure to be \$10 of every tuition for each class per student but found that their revenues went down. The national not-for-profit organization now wants to charge a flat rate of \$3,600 for this use. Dianne spoke with the Town's IT Department who indicated that this cost is appropriate due to what the cost of the curriculum, software, and licensing would be for the Center to purchase it. The question is now how these monies would be paid. Dianne is applying for two new grants that the legislature has approved for the Department of Social Services for senior centers and municipal agents. \$3,000 needs to be applied for by March 14<sup>th</sup> and another grant for \$1,500 is available. Dianne indicated that the MYSENIORCENTER.COM database is still waiting to hear from the Hartford Foundation of Public Giving regarding receiving these funds. The money from the two grants has to be used by June 30, 2008. Dianne feels confident that these two grants will be approved and some of this grant money will be used towards funding the accreditation fees.

The Commission authorized the purchase of a large screen television for the lounge at the February meeting. This television has been purchased, along with an air hockey game, table soccer, and a DVD.

Dianne indicated she attended a meeting of the Charter Revision Committee. Bill asked if the wording might be unclear regarding the Commission on Aging and Disabled setting policy for the Center but then has to be approved by the Town Council. She stated that the Commission might want to appoint a subcommittee to review the Charter and language on the Senior and Disabled Center.

Jerilyn Nagel asked if there has been any kind of relationship with Newington's Adult Education program and SeniorNet. Diane explained that SeniorNet is based on peer education and people have found that the Adult Education programs aren't the kind of instruction that seniors are looking for.

Dianne introduced Teri Snyder who is a Social Worker at the Senior and Disabled Center. Teri's primary responsibility is adults 55 and older, but most of her clients are 60 and older. She has a caseload of approximately 40 to 60 people and helps them with access to Medicaid and abuse issues. She also oversees the Information and Referral Room and helps provide resources for this room, along with locating on-line resources.

## VI. REPORT OF HUMAN SERVICES

**MOTION: Bill DeMaio made a motion to accept the monthly Report of Human Services for the month of February, Patricia Murray seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion was passed with a 7-0 vote.**

VII. ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON DISABILITY

Diana Robino was not in attendance.

VIII. SENIOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Committee did not meet today.

IX. CLUB UPDATES

Charles Francolino reported that AARP 697 now has 287 members which is down at least 100 from last year. Upcoming meetings will have Irish Music, a bake sale, entertainment by the Manchester Seniors, Marian Amodeo speaking about library resources. AARP gives an annual scholarship to a Newington High School senior; however this year there is a personnel issue and no one is available to review the applications, therefore the scholarship will not be offered this year.

Charlie then spoke on the Tax Aide Program. Four Thursday sessions have been held and counselors have seen 108 people. They have a full schedule through April 10<sup>th</sup>. A special session on the stimulus payment will be held on Tuesday, March 18<sup>th</sup>. There will also be another session scheduled for Tuesday, April 1<sup>st</sup> for regular tax returns and the stimulus payment if necessary.

Karen asked how AARP meetings are advertised. These meetings are advertised in the Rare Reminder, Newington Town Crier, the Center's newsletter, and the local chapter national and state websites.

X. OLD BUSINESS

A. Housing

Myra reported on this during Public Participation. If all goes well, it looks like these units could be occupied by 2011. Teri indicated that the housing commission is once again accepting applications.

B. Strategic Plan

Dianne stated this is going well and is tied-in with the self-assessment.

C. Senior Housing – In-Law Apartments

The Town's Planning and Zoning Commission will change the regulations to revert back to now permitting in-law apartments.

D. Post Office

Dianne has not heard anything about this. Ed Danielczuk reported that he has a copy of a letter from the postmaster to Congressman John Larson asking that changes be made to the post office boxes on Lowrey Place. Apparently this was to be done within a month's time, however the letter is at least one month old.

E. Self-Assessment

Dianne indicating that the accreditation process is ready to start with a kick-off meeting and orientation. She would like to hold this meeting prior to the Commission meeting scheduled for April 2<sup>nd</sup> at 5:00 PM.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Wall of Honor

The Annual Volunteer Dinner is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, May 15<sup>th</sup>. At this dinner the Wall of Honor recipient is honored. Dianne distributed copies of the Wall of Honor Policy and Nomination Form. The Commission approves the Wall of Honor recipient at their May meeting. Applications are available in the Center's office.

Bill stated that for many years the Commission has heard comments about the Cedar Street sidewalk issue. He indicated that Mayor Wright is looking into the Cedar Street corridor/Fenn Road/Maple Hill Avenue section. Bill will keep the Commission updated on this issue. Bill indicated that he was watching the Talk to the Mayor show on Channel 14 and someone called to complain about the \$5 annual Center membership fee. He thought the Mayor handled the call well.

Jerilyn stated that the New Britain Repertoire Theater's performance was snowed out last week and will be holding a buy one/get one free ticket this Friday at 8:00 PM.

Dianne reported that she is a member of the National Council on Aging and the National Institute on Aging. She usually attends their annual conference which is scheduled for March 24<sup>th</sup> in Washington, DC. She has asked for professional development monies from the Town Manager, but has not heard as yet. **MOTION: Bill DeMaio made a motion to allocation up to \$1,000 for conference expenses for Dianne Stone to attend the March 24<sup>th</sup> conference, Lesley Hodas seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion was passed unanimously with a 7-0 vote.**

Dianne reported that a grant has been applied for with Wethersfield and Rocky Hill for Dial-A-Ride to continue out-of-town medical transportation.

XII. AGENDA FOR MAY MEETING

Move Wall of Honor to under Old Business.

XIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Charles Francolino asked if the Commissioners could get name plates since there are so many new faces.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION: Bill DeMaio made a motion to adjourn, Tillie DeMaio seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion was unanimously passed with an 7-0 vote at 8:02 P.M.**

Respectfully Submitted,

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Gail Whitney, Commission Clerk