

Commission on Aging

Town of Weston, Connecticut

Minutes: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 at 2:30PM

Present: Commission members Bruce Lorentzen, Helen de Keijzer, Richard Wolf, Francine Goldstein, Alison McElhone, Terry Castellano; SWCAA liaison and Senior Center Director Wendy Petty; Social Services Director Allison Lisbon; ; Friends of the Weston Senior Center representative Diana Heisinger

Note: This meeting was held via Google Meet Video Call due to Coronavirus pandemic

The meeting convened at 2:30PM.

The minutes of the last meeting (June 2020) were approved.

Alison and Allison gave a brief explanation of the Weston Schools reopening plans for this year.

Helen suggested that absentee ballot and other useful information from the town clerk should be given to seniors via the newsletter.

Regarding Senior Center reopening, most local senior centers remain closed and are saying they will reevaluate the situation with COVID on a monthly basis in order to plan for reopening. Wendy said the Weston Senior Center would not be opening in September and likely not in October, either, with a few exceptions. There will be Medicare enrollment assistance by appointment. There are outdoor exercise classes and drive-through lunches. There will be a flu shot clinic. Consideration will be given to reopening the center in November for limited activities. The DOH recommendations for senior center reopening include a touchless bathroom, adequate ventilation and that rooms are cleaned after each use.

Bruce said the town is so concentrated on the school reopening that seniors are neglected. We need to advocate for them. We need to put pressure on the town. He is fearful that the needs of seniors will get lost in all of this. Richard agreed, saying that no one will pay any attention to reopening the senior center unless we push for it. We can get people in the gym safely. Wendy asked if anyone can look into the air quality in the Senior Center, citing an article in the WSJ. Richard stated we have a large space with high ceilings and we should be able to have certain activities there. Rules should be in place for any activity. We can say no restroom facilities.

Wendy said we should go through the requirements to open the Senior Center at the October Meeting.

Richard gave the facilities update. Construction for the entrance ramp has started. Concrete is going down tomorrow. Then hand rails. Hopefully by the end of September the project should be done. The budget for this project was 80K and low bid was 57k. Now we can approach Jonathon about other projects, like bathroom renovation. Wendy said she asked Jonathon about help with other projects and she was told there is no money for that right now. Richard and Terry suggested attaching the

safety/health needs, such as automatic faucets, washable surfaces (eg ceramic tile) to the need for bathroom remodel.

Allison gave the Social Services update. She continues to be very busy. The recent storm and power outage created problems for many. Generators weren't working. People needed food and water. Some people needing O2 were without and needed assistance to get somewhere. Some seniors with cognitive impairment who were previously managing, this put them over the edge. She had to make 1 APS referral. Since COVID pandemic began and social distancing went into effect, some seniors in the community are having a lot of difficulty managing in their homes. Sometimes emergency personnel are contacted.

Helen praised Allison and Wendy for doing such an outstanding job supporting the vulnerable seniors in this town. She asked if a community outreach worker could help.

Allison stated it would make more sense to have a community outreach person to assist with vulnerable elderly in the community.

Bruce said perhaps this would be leverage for increasing the funding to social services dept.

Dial-a-ride is up and running.

Friends of the Weston Senior Center report given by Wendy. Adult soccer league raised money for the lunch program, as well as money for the back patio upgrade.

The zoom meeting adjourned at 340PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison McElhone