

Commission on Aging

Town of Weston, Connecticut

Minutes: Monday, December 7, 2020 at 930AM

Present: Commission members Bruce Lorentzen, Helen de Keijzer, Richard Wolf, Francine Goldstein, Alison McElhone, Terry Castellano, Don Gumaer ; SWCAA liaison and Senior Center Director Wendy Petty

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

The meeting convened at 9:37AM.

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

Wendy reported that the flu shot clinic went very well. Approximately 40-50 people were vaccinated.

Alison gave the school update. All schools were in hybrid learning mode at the moment, due to increasing COVID cases locally. On a positive note, COVID vaccines were awaiting FDA approval and were expected to be administered to health care workers within the next few weeks.

Richard gave the facilities update. The entryway ramp is complete with handrails and the door is operating. The handicap bathroom has not yet been installed because it was delivered broken. Wendy said the patio is mostly complete except for plaques.

Terry reported on the tax abatement program. She had a very long conversation with Kathleen Nesbitt. The tax abatement changes that were proposed by Woody Bliss have not gone into effect. The tax programs are the same as last year. Tax deferment applications must be filed each year. Each annual tax deferment payment comes due after 14 years. As per state mandate, if payment is not made, an annual rate of 18% goes into effect. In Weston, there are 19 homeowners on the deferment program. 52 are on the abatement program

Richard asked what is the Town's intention with the abatement program. Apparently the plan is still to do away with tax abatement and freeze programs. Bruce said he will contact the Town to discuss.

Helen said we were also concerned about ensuring that any money saved with these changes would return to the Senior Center/senior Programs. Richard stated the plan is for the money saved to go to general program funds, not to Senior Services.

Allison Lisbon could not attend today's meeting. Wendy gave the Social Services and Senior Center update. She reported that Thanksgiving meals and cookie-making baskets went well. Medicare enrollment ends today. Staff have helped seniors enroll both in person and online. Roy remains busy with driving seniors to and from medical appointments, as well as helping with food delivery.

People are allowed into the Senior Center by appointment only. Classes are held by zoom. Exercise classes are full, as are lost art classes. A Caregiver support group will also be virtual. Linda runs walking club at the track. 66 people showed up for the Thanksgiving drive-thru.

Helen commented on how great a job Wendy, Allison and the Senior Center Staff were doing. She noted that the amount of psychological pressure and anxiety this year has brought emphasizes the need for an outreach worker. Wendy noted that the budgets are due soon, and gave support for an outreach worker.

Bruce reported that Helen has elected to not stay on the Commission for another term. She has served for 12 years, 8 of them as chairman. Helen remarked that it has been a real pleasure and honor to serve with the Commission. Terry and Bruce will remain on the Commission. They are looking for someone to fill the vice chair and other positions.

Wendy would like to set Friends of the Weston Senior Center up for Giving Tuesday, as it is done in other towns. Fran stated it was important to be able to take credit card payments.

Richard reported that P and Z over the next 6 months is going to discuss affordable housing units in Weston. Grant money will be used to hire a consultant for this. Weston is not compliant with the requirement to have affordable housing. Our Commission should be present and offer our input. It is a significant issue for seniors. They want to stay but can't afford to stay in their home.

The meeting adjourned at 1029AM

Respectfully submitted,

Alison McElhone