

**TOWN OF DARIEN
COMMISSION ON AGING
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 21, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: Joe Pankowski, Chair: Jennifer Geddes, Robin Woods, Ron Heinbaugh, Arden Anderson-Broecking, Amy Squyres, Ray Slavin

STAFF: Olive Hauser, Human Services Director; Beth Paris, Senior Center Director

OTHERS: First Selectman Jayme Stevenson

CALL TO ORDER.

Mr. Pankowski called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

December 17, 2014.

**** MR. HEINBAUGH MOVED THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 17, 2014.
** MS. GEDDES SECONDED.
** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 17, 2014 AS
SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

SENIOR CENTER REPORT.

Ms. Paris presented her report and distributed copies of the February newsletter to those present. (See attached)

HUMAN SERVICES REPORT.

Ms. Hauser said that the department has been busy. She presented her report. (See Attached)

DISCUSSION REGARDING MODIFICATIONS TO OLD TOWN HOUSES.

Ms. Hauser gave a brief update on the status of the Old Town Houses. She said that she had spoken with both Todd McCluskey of Imagineers, and Jeremy about the moving seniors around. The current proposal may be a three story building with elevators, similar to The Heights. No plans have been submitted. She said there had been a number of problems with the shoddy construction at The Heights. There have been concerns

about how Imagineers manage the building. Ms. Geddes volunteered to attend the Darien Housing Authority meetings.

Ms. Anderson-Broecking said that she would not be running for president of the Old Town Houses. She then read a statement giving an overview of the situation (See Attached) and said that she believed that the housing units would remain under State control. Ms. Anderson-Broecking said that she had copies of the housing law available for the Commission members. She pointed out that Imagineers had been the only bid. Copies of the Resident Participation Plans were hand delivered to the residents. She gave a brief overview of some of the rules.

Ms. Stevenson joined the meeting at 9:32 a.m.

Ms. Anderson-Broecking explained that the developers are responsible for the relocation of the senior tenants and their return to the building following the renovation.

Ms. Geddes asked who owns the property at The Heights. Ms. Stevenson said that the Housing Authority owns the property and has given the management over to Imagineers. She said that she was very hopeful that the developer is aware of the challenges of providing housing for the elderly. Arden said that the residents were unhappy with the fact that they have to go through approval for having their toilets repaired.

Mr. Pankowski explained that when a housing unit is turned over to a professional management company, the Housing Authority then would have a change in role from active management to advisory.

Ms. Woods asked what authority the various stake holders have in the project. Ms. Stevenson said that the Board of Selectmen only have the power to seat the Authority members. She said that she was concerned about the residents of the housing and was pleased to hear that Ms. Geddes would be attending the meetings. She suggested that the Commission consider advocacy. Mr. Pankowski suggested that having access to counsel could be beneficial to the residents. Discussion followed.

OLD BUSINESS.

There was no old business to consider at this time.

NEW BUSINESS.

First Selectman Stevenson said that she will be participating in an even on February 28th for ElderHouse. She will be doing a waltz into a cha-cha.

ADJOURNMENT.

**** MS. ANDERSON-BROECKING MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MS. GEDDES SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted

S. L. Soltes

Telesco Secretarial Services

Commission on Aging Report

Darien Senior Program

January 21, 2015

Respectfully Submitted: Beth Paris, Director

January started off with a great New Year Celebration from Ct Entertainment 78 folks came out on a snowy frigid day and enjoyed a hot meal and wonderful, participation music program. Membership renewal and updates are underway along with a program survey. We are attempting to have volunteers available daily to help with this task and are also encouraging folks to call in and we can update cards over the phone.

Working with At Home Darien on what we hope to be an Annual Spring Meeting for us to work on collaboratively as a series: Senior Center Staff tile Living Vtally, Dynamically and happily at Home-speakers have been contacted for a March 11th date.

Health and Wellness Presentations: Ct Pharmacy Sleep Apnea; Synergy Homecare Healthy Cooking and Baking; Stamford Hospital Complimentary Lunch and Learn on Fall Prevention.

New Programs: Human Services start regular weekly office hours. Starting off with Ali Ramsteck introducing her and services to members. AARP will be offering the Smart Driver Course on the 21st; Darien Library will hold a lecture on " First Daughters and Sons"; Presentation by Fred Chang The Japanese Sword: Soul of a Samurai

Budget presented to COA and First Selectman full Board of Selectmen will be at 7:00 on February 3rd.

Program Days: 20

Monthly Caregiver Educational Support Group: 7

At Home in Darien Referral: 3

Caregiver Option Counseling: 8

Mather Evening Use: 10

EMS calls: 1

Highlighted Programs:

1st CLOSED New Year's Day

5th Membership Renewal/Updates begin for 2015

5th Blood Pressure

5th Spanish Conversation Class Begins

6th Intro to I-Pad Class

6th Synergy Home Care : "Healthy Baking"

6th History Presentation : *The Guns of August* -Art Gottlieb LCSW

7th New plicate Bridge Begins

7th Ct Entertainment: Celebrate the New Year-PARTY!

13th Laughter is the Best Medicine with Cookie Martini
14th Ct Pharmacy "Sleep Apnea in Seniors"
19th Closed Martin Luther King Observance
20th Stamford Hospital Lunch and Learn "Fall Prevention"

Highlighted Program Continued:

21st Caregiver Educational Support Group
21st & 28th Let's Talk- Amanda Heffner –Family Centers
27th Darien Library Presents: First Daughters & First Sons
28th Craft-Iris Paper folding – Valentine Project
28th Japanese Sword : Soul of the Samurai

Ongoing Work in Progress:

Spring/Early Summer Program Planning
At Home Darien- Lunch and Learn
Budget Workshop Preparation
Daily Statistics
Membership Renewal/Updates
Staff Meetings

Building Issues: Fireplace mantels have been replaced-Fire places is being used on a daily basis to balance heat out in the building-lobby remains colder due to the automatic door. Cleaning service remains inadequate to building use- Building Attendants continue to take on daily cleaning duties as well as other programing assistance duties.

Meetings Attended: 1/5 First Budget Workshop; 1/12 At Home Darien Advisory Board Meeting; Jan 14th Sexual Harassment in the Work Place Training; 1/21 COA Meeting

Commission on Aging Meeting

Human Services Report

Olive Hauser

1-21-15

- With the colder weather we are making more appointments for Energy Assistance. Looking at the online data base it looks as though a few oil clients may be running out of their benefits. Oil prices continue to be lower than last year, which is good for all of us. Operation Fuel has opened their winter program and those clients who are not eligible because of assets but are for eligible income wise can get a onetime payment up to \$500. I cannot mention often enough that working with ABCD and Operation Fuel has been a pleasure. Both are so professional and responsive. We feel so lucky.
- The holiday programs went well. The number of meals and gifts increased over 20% for each program. The Salvation Army kettle program looked like it was going to come in well below to last year's but actually came in at \$4300 which was about \$700 off last year but very close to all previous year's. The Masons, Boy Scouts Troop 53, the Depot and the Darien Men's Club really helped out and we are very grateful to them.
Asoc.
- Human Services and its commission has begun a strategic planning process. Staff met Debra Hertz in a 2 hour planning session last Thursday to look at programs and opportunities. More meetings are planned.
- The Human Services Planning Council's January meeting was focused on our community's response to and attention to the issue of suicide. Nationally this is a growing concern for all populations. Senior suicide has increased over the years and is certainly an issue to be looked at more closely.
- Thirty-seven seniors had their Medicare Part D coverage reviewed during the open enrollment period and were assed for other services that may be

available to them. Under certain circumstances Medicare Part D coverage can still be changed so anyone with a question should call the office and make an appointment.

- Food insecurity continues to be an issue in all lower income populations but we are seeing an increase amongst our seniors. Snap (state supplemental food program) has been very helpful but still falls below what the true cost of food is. We are referring clients monthly to Person to Person for food, allowing clients to come and stock up on Home Goods once a month and in an emergency will give them Stop and Shop gift cards. We are lucky to have the resources we have to bridge this very significant gap for our seniors who need it.
- This holiday season we had demonstrated for us what social media can do to get the word out about our holiday programs and the needs we had, in a very small way. About the third week into the Christmas toy drive we were running out of toys. Just three volunteers put our need for toys on their face book page. Almost immediately we had many toys coming in daily, promptly filling our need.

In the quarterly report I mentioned what a difference this made. It appears that Jayme has been thinking about this issue too. The town hall really needs to get into the 21st century with the social media issue. There are certainly issues to address when using this technology but this year we will be looking at how to overcome those hurdles and put this technology to work for us. Not just at holiday time but for all our programs. We know that a lot of seniors aren't on social media now but some are and more will be. When used properly we have all seen how very successful this technology can be in informing and reaching people.

*all those
little
details*

NOTES FOR COMMISSION ON AGING:

1 I AM ASSURED THAT OLD TOWN HALL HOUSES WILL REMAIN UNDER STATE SUPRVISION AND/OR CONTROLAS SENIOR HOUSING AND IN A CCORDANCE WITH THE FAIR HOUSING ACT, SEC8-64c. I HAVE COPIES OF THIS LAW WITH ME. THE SAME DEVELOPERS WHO DID THE HEIGHTS, FORMERLY ALLEN-ONEILL, HAVE BEEN USED FOR OTHL. (THEORETICALLY THIS PROCESS OF CHOICE WAS DONE ACCORDING TO LAW BY THE HOUSING AUTHORITY.)

2 THE PLAN HAS NOT BEEN FORMALIZED

3 EVERYONE AT OLD TOWN HALL HOUSES RECEIVED A HAND-DELIVERED DOCUMENT CALLED A "RESIDENT PARTICIPATION PLAN" OR "RPP." IT WAS NOT A 'LETTER' IT WAS HAND DELIVERED, BY ME AND THE BOARD MEMBERS. I HAVE FOUND COPIES OF IT ON THE GROUND, SO CANNOT BE CERTAIN WHTHER IT WAS READ OR NOT. WE HAVE ALSO KEPT RESIDENTS INFORMED AS BEST WE CAN, GIVEN WHAT WE KNOW. WE CAN ONLY CONVEY WHAT WE KNOW. RUMORS ARE OF NO USE, BUT THEY FLY AROUND LIKE MAD, AND BECOME SOMEWHAT EXAGGERATED AS THEY FLY. WE HAVE ALSO DEALT WITH APATHY, WHICH I CALL THE "OSTRICH SYNDROME." WE HAVE BEEN ASKED TO DISTRIBUTE THIS DOCUMENT OUTSIDE SINCE THERE WILL BE CHANGES.

THE TENANTS' BOARD OF DIRECTORS HAS TO SIGN OFF ON TH E RPP, AND UNTIL THIS HAPPENS, NOTHING CAN HAPPEN. IF THEY DO ANYTHING WITHOUT OUR DIRECT PARTICIATION, ONCE THE DOCUMENT IS SIGEND, THERE WILL BE CONSEQUENCES. THE COPIES I HAVE AVAILABLE ARE ONLY THOSE OF DRAFT, AND NOT FOR PUBLICATION OF ANY KIND. THERE WILL LIKELY BE SOME CHANGES, WHICH OTHH'S BOARD WILL REQUIRE IF WE ARE TO SIGN OFF ON IT. ONE OBJECTION IS THAT EACH TENANT WHO EXECISES THE RIGHT OF RETURN WILL BE INTERVIEWED BY THE HOUSING EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTER (HERC). IN THEORY, THEY ARE OUR ADVOCATES. WE WILL BE REQUIRED TO PRODUCE ALL OUR FINANCIAL INFORMATION, WHICH IS NOT NEW - WE HAVE TO DO THAT EVERY OTHER YEAR TO BE RECERTIFIED AD ELEIGIBLE FOR THIS HOUSING, BUT - IN THE RPP, THE PRESENCE OF SOMEONE FROM MANAGEMENT WOULD ALSO BE PRESENT. WE WANT THIS TO BE CHANGED, AS IT APPEARS TO BE A FLAGRANT INVASION OF PERSONAL PRIVACY, AND INFERS THAT THE TENANT WOULD BE LESS THAN HONEST.

4 THIS REDEVELOPMENT IS AN UPSETTING PROSPECT, BUT ONE THAT WILL BECOME A REALITY.THERE NO POINT IS BEING FEARFUL, NOTHING IS GOING TO HAPPEN RIGHT AWAY, VERY LIKELY NOT FOR MONTHS. THERE ISA ROUGH TIMELINE, BUT I BELIEVE THAT THIS ENTIRE PLAN HAS TO PASS THE TOWN PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD, AND THIS COULD RESULT IN CHANGES AND POSSIBLY EVEN DELAYS.

5 WHEN IT DOES THE DEVELOPERS WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR FINDING APPROPRIATE HOUSING FOR ALL RESIDENTS WHO WISH TO RETURN, FOR WHICH

THEY HAVE THAT RIGHT, FOR THE MOVING OUT AND LATER MOVING IN, AND THEY MUST PAY THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE RESIDENT'S CURRENT RENT AND THE AMOUNT OF THE NEW ONE.

6 THE STATE REQUIRES THAT ANY HOUSING OF THIS KIND THAT HAS TWO STORIES MUST HAVE AN ELEVATOR. THERE IS NO WAY SUCH ELEVATORS CAN BE INSTALLED IN THE EXISTING BUILDINGS. ON ONE SIDE, THE OUTSIDE STAIRS ON THE SECOND FLOOR, ARE MADE OF STEEL, AND CAN BE VERY SLIPPERY. THERE HAS BEEN SOME NEGATIVE COMMENT ABOUT THE CHANGE OF LANDSCAPERS AND MAINTENANCE COMPANIES, WHO HAVE NOT BEEN AS CONSCIENTIOUS ABOUT THE APPEARANCE OF THE ROUNDS, WHICH UP TO NOW HAVE ALWAYS BEEN BEAUTIFUL, WITH SNOW REMOVAL AND OHER TASKS DONE THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY. ALTHOUGH THE TIMING OF SUNDAY'S FREEZE WAS A FACTOR, WE HAD A SITUATION WHERE POST 53 WAS CALLED TO HELP A TENANT WHO HAD FALLEN, AND THEY LITERALLY BROUGHT THEIR OWN SAND AND HAD DIFFICULTY GETTING IN AND OUT OF THE PARKING LOT. OUR OWN MAINTENANCE MAN, WHO IS ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HEIGHTS, A MUCH LARGER COMPLEX WAS ALSO CALLED.

7 THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION, AND I WILL BE GLAD TO ANSWER QUESTIONS TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY. THE NEXT MEETING OF THE DARIEN HOUSING COMMISSION WILL BE HELD ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 27TH IN THE COMMUNITY ROOM AT THE HEIGHTS. THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION ARE: JAN RAYMOND, JOSEPH WARREN, PETER BIGELOW, ALLEN DELANEY, AND LARAINÉ GRIGOLO, ESQ. ANYONE MAY ATTEND THE MEETING.