

**TOWN OF DARIEN  
COMMISSION ON AGING  
REGULAR MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 18, 2013**

**ATTENDANCE:** Joe Pankowski, Chair; Jennifer Geddes, Tom Valentino, Ray Slavin, Amy Squyres, Robin Woods, Geri Genovese, Mary McCarthy, Ron Heinbaugh

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

**CALL TO ORDER.**

Mr. Pankowski called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. A quorum was present.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES.**

**May 15, 2013.**

**\*\* MS. WOODS MOVED THE MINTUES OF THE MAY 15, 2013 MEETING.**

**\*\* MR. SLAVIN SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MAY 15, 2013 MINUTES AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**June 19, 2013.**

**\*\* MS. SQUYRES MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 19, 2013 MEETING.**

**\*\* MR. SLAVIN SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE JUNE 19, 2013 MINUTES AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**SENIOR CENTER REPORT.**

Ms. Paris presented her report. She explained that the projected date for the Senior Center to move in to the new location has been moved back to February or early March. See attached.

Ms. Paris said that she and Ms. Swiatek had done a walk through of the new space and pointed out that the Senior Center will actually have less room in the new facility. This means that the Art rooms and similar areas will not be able to remain set up. This will require advanced planning for the programming. Ms. Paris and Ms. Swiatek compiled a list of questions for the contractor about various aspects of the project.

More groups have come forward to volunteer to present programs, including CVS Pharmacy and Stamford Hospital.

Ms. Squyres asked if the Commission could receive copies of the questions that Ms. Paris and Ms. Swiatek compiled after their tour of the space. Ms. Paris said she would send copies to the Commissioners.

Discussion followed about the request for programming. Ms. Paris said that there have been some requests for daytime programming that the Center will simply not be able to accommodate because they will not have room for the programs. Ms. Woods commented that she had been able to do a walk through of the new area and that she was quite pleased with the amount of light in the building.

Ms. Paris spoke about the fact that the elevator is still not working properly and takes 50 seconds to go from one level to the next. She said that the current elevator was a cargo elevator, not a passenger elevator. While she was walking through the construction site with the builder, she expressed her concerns about this issue to him. It will be important to have a reliable, State compliant elevator available for the seniors in the new area.

**\*\* MR. SLAVIN MOVED TO HAVE THE DARIEN COMMISSION ON AGING SEND A LETTER TO THE DARIEN BOARD OF SELECTMEN REGARDING THE COMMISSION'S CONCERNS ABOUT THE ELEVATOR FOR THE NEW DARIEN MATHER CENTER.**

**\*\* MS. WOODS SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Pankowski said that it would be important to have a policy decision regarding the fact that the Center needs a passenger elevator first and then figuring out the most economically way of doing it. He pointed out that given the use of the facility, a passenger elevator would be required.

Ms. McCarthy asked if there was a way to get from the first floor to the second floor for the elderly without using the elevator. Ms. Paris said that there was a staircase in the wing or if the person parked in the upper lot, they would be able to come in on the second floor.

The discussion then moved to the issue of the staff being trained in how to handle an elevator breakdown. Ms. Paris said that the State has a number of new regulations regarding elevators.

Easy access to the building will be critical. At the Edgerton site, there have been parking issues. Ms. Paris explained that the staff will park the vehicles for those elderly patrons

who can not walk long distances. When the patron is ready to leave, the staff retrieves their vehicle and brings it to the door for the patron.

### **HUMAN SERVICES REPORT.**

Ms. Hauser presented her report. (See attached).

The transition to the new DDS system for application approval and redeterminations has had some glitches. The DDS is expecting to have the issues resolved in the coming weeks.

The discussion moved to the Special Senior Christmas Gift Program. Ms. Hauser said that her department is looking for individuals who would be willing to provide items for a small wish list for individual seniors. Mr. Pankowski asked if the Commission would be willing to support the Senior Christmas gift basket program.

**\*\* MS. MCCARTHY MOVED TO ENCOURAGE THE MEMBERS OF THE DARIEN COMMISSION ON AGING TO SUPPORT THE DARIEN HUMAN SERVICES SENIOR CHRISTMAS GIFT BASKET PROGRAM.**

**\*\* MS. GEDDES SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Ms. Squyres asked if this Senior gift basket program should be passed along to by word of mouth. Ms. Hauser said that she would be delighted to have that happen.

### **OLD BUSINESS.**

Ms. Woods said that Garson Construction has been hired as the builder for the Senior Center program. The projected completion for the Mather Center now is February or early March. She said that she had been by the new Board of Education space on and it is almost completed.

Ms. Squyres asked if there had been a line item included in the budget for furnishings. Mr. Pankowski said that the fact that the Town would not have to support the Edgerton facility would result in significant savings. This may help with the finances. Ms. Woods will look to see if there is a line item for furnishing.

Mr. Pankowski said that the Commission will continue to monitor the Edgerton site. Ms. Woods said that the reason that the move to the new site was delayed because of the abatement process.

Ms. Paris said that every Senior Center across the nation has to re-purpose itself after the 1980's.

Ms. Squyres said that when Mr. Campbell was First Selectman, he was thinking outside the box when he managed to put all these pieces together.

Ms. Squyres announced that Aging in Place has a new name, At Home in Darien.

**NEW BUSINESS.**

There was no additional business to discuss at this time.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* MS. WOODS MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* MS. GENOVESE SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:51 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes  
Telesco Secretarial Services