

**TOWN OF DARIEN
COMMISSION ON AGING
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 17, 2013**

9:00 AM
RECEIVED
MAY 13 2013
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
DARIEN CT.

ATTENDANCE: Joe Pankowski, Robin Woods, Jennifer Geddes, Ron Heinbaugh, Amy Squyres, Ray Slavin

STAFF: Olive Hauser, Director of Social Services; Beth Paris, Senior Center Coordinator

OTHERS: First Selectman Jayme Stevenson

CALL TO ORDER.

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

FEBRUARY MEETING MINUTES.

**** MR. HEINBAUGH MOVED THE MARCH 20, 2013 MINUTES.**
**** MS. GEDDES SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

SENIOR CENTER REPORT.

Ms. Paris presented her report (See Attached). The first Aches and Pains clinics went very well. The physical therapist had the patients tell them about their aches and pains and then helped them with a 10 minute physical therapy session. Ms. Paris said that there was quite a bit of positive feedback. She added that UB has been working with the Senior Center to schedule dental screenings after the move. Ms. Paris then spoke about the ways that the Senior Center activities are communicated to the seniors, such as the Town website and using newsblasts.

Ms. Paris informed the Commission that the Seniors had formed a Wii bowling team and entered a competition with over 200 teams. The team placed at #76.

HUMAN SERVICES REPORT.

Ms. Hauser presented her report (See Attached). There is serious concern about the proposed legislation to elimination of the Renter's Rebate program. There are many low income and seniors that depend on this program. Also, there have been some reports regarding the termination of Section 8 certificates.

Ms. Hauser pointed out that there has been an increasing need for financial assistance during the last few year. She said that there was an article that listed 27 Darien residents on SNAP in 2006. By 2012, the number had risen to 177. Discussion followed about this increase.

DISCUSSION ON PENDING STATE LEGISLATION.

Mr. Pankowski asked what the Commission could do regarding the proposed cut in renter's rebate. Olive said that there were concerns about Section 8 residents who had already been informed they had lost their subsidies. She explained that the State Commission on Aging was an advocacy group. Apparently the State has re-established the State Department on Aging, which the State describes as "newly formed". Edith Prague has been appointed by the Governor Malloy to head up the new department. Mr. Pankowski pointed out that the State Commission on Aging was non-partisan and distinctly different from the Department on Aging. Discussion followed.

**** MR. PANKOWSKI MOVED TO WRITE A LETTER TO THE LOCAL STATE LEGISLATORS IN SUPPORT OF THE CONTINUANCE OF THE COMMISSION ON AGING.**

**** MR. SLAVIN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ELECTION OF A CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR.

**** MR. PANKOWSKI MOVED TO NOMINATE JENNIFER GEDDES AS VICE CHAIR OF THE DARIEN COMMISSION ON AGING.**

**** MS. SQUYRES SECONDED.**

Mr. Pankowski asked if there were any additional nominations from the floor. There were none.

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE JENNIFER GEDDES AS VICE CHAIR OF THE DARIEN COMMISSION ON AGING PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** MS. SQUYRES TO NOMINATE JOSEPH PANKOWSKI AS CHAIR OF THE DARIEN COMMISSION ON AGING.**

**** MR. HEINBAUGH SECONDED.**

Ms. Squyres asked if there were any additional nominations from the floor. There were none.

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE JOSEPH PANKOWSKI AS CHAIR OF THE DARIEN COMMISSION ON AGING PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

OLD BUSINESS.

The Shuffle – Ms. Woods reported that she had been keeping Ms. Paris updated as the BOE move to 35 Leroy progresses. The Board of Education will be moving to the 35 Leroy facility on April 26th. Regarding the Mather Center, the asbestos removal will start the first week in May. Currently, the schedule projects the Senior Center moving in the facility during late October.

Mr. Pankowski asked Ms. Geddes how the seniors are being impacted by the health care. She recommended that people call their health insurance companies and have them sent a written statement about any changes in healthcare coverage. Many people are being informed that their plan no longer covers certain medications when they arrive to pick up a refill. She said that the hospitals have had their budgets deeply slashed. There have also been discussions about eliminating Husky for adults and reducing the coverage for the children. The WIC program and the Geriatric health programs are also being evaluating by the State legislature. Stamford Hospital was cut by 19 million dollars. It is possible that many of the out patients clinics will be closed.

Ms. Hauser reported that NEON Norwalk and NEON Stamford had been informed that there would be a 10% cut across the board. Ms. Squyres asked who was making the decision as to which funding would be cut because of the sequester. Ms. Hauser said that State legislature was the decision making body. The Southwest Agency on Aging is also working on clarification of the sequester.

NEW BUSINESS.

Mr. Heinbaugh said that he would like to acknowledge all the hard work Ms. Paris did for the Volunteer luncheon.

ADJOURNMENT.

- ** MS. SQUYRES MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** MS. WOODS SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

Darien Senior Activities Center

Commission on Aging Report

April 17, 2013

Respectfully Submitted: Beth Paris, Coordinator

April is Volunteer Recognition Month we honored over 50 volunteers with a Certificate ceremony this year handing out 5, 10, 15, 20 years certificates and pins to everyone in between. Our guest had a wonderful luncheon and entertainment was provided by the talented Bob Gianotti. As we move into the planning of the new center volunteers will play an ever increasingly important role in the day to day operations of the Center. Having them appreciated and recognized is integrall

Several Programs of note this month: Our first Aches and Pains Clinic with Premier Physical Therapy was great success-all appointments for private consultation was filled and folks who were not able to participate are asking to have the clinic again. We are testing the waters to see if monthly clinics are well utilized and what folks want. Hope Street Pharmacy presented a lecture on "Medications that Cause Side Effects" to standing room crowd. They were available to take questions afterward. National Health Care Decision Day "Planning for No Regrets" was wonderfully presented by Visiting Nurse & Hospice of Fairfield County. Participants went away with valuable information. On a lighter note we started a new class *Discussing Animation in the 21st Century*. News of note: Wii Bowling Team made the play offs the team ranked 75 out of 270 teams that made it!

Monthly Caregiver Educational Support Group: 7

Caregiver Options Counseling : 5

Referrals to Human Services: 3

AIP+Gallivant assists: 17

Highlighted Programs April: ,

1st Blood Pressure

2nd Historical Series

2nd French Literature

3rd DCA Flower Arranging

5th AARP Meeting

8th Discussing Animation

9th Premier PT Aches and Pains Clinic

10th Hope Street Pharmacy "Medication Side Effects that Seem like Depression"

11th Volunteer Recognition Party-Entertainment Bon Gianotti

16th National Health Care Decision Day

16th Caregiver Educational Support Group

17th Gold Star Project-Make an Emergency Kit

22nd Lecture w/Complimentary Lunch "How to Live to be 100"

23rd Darien Library Presents: Poetry

26th Ask A Lawyer

30th Methods of Improving Predictions-Tom Gildersleeve

Ongoing Work in Progress:

Program Planning Present/Future

Trend Research

Collaboration/Partnership development

Researching Furniture needs for Mather's

Building Issues: Circulator Pump and piping leading to it failed-no heat to the gym from late March to early April-parts have been replaced;

Meetings Attended: April 4th Comfort Keepers Rep. Dawn DelGreco to discuss partnering; April 3rd Meeting w Sue Swiatek regarding furniture needs; April 10th SWCAA Advisory Board; April 17th COA Meeting;

Commission on Aging
4-17-13
Darien Human Services

1. **"The Heights"** phase 1 tenants have been chosen, notified and vetted. The move-in dates are scheduled for between the April 26th and the middle of June. . There is now one road open on Noroton Ave and one on Elm St. I drove through this past weekend and was quite impressive.
2. The **Renter's Rebate** program has begun and we are currently taking applications. Grants run up to \$700 based on rent and utility payments. There is proposed legislation that will eliminate this program over time, and limit applicants to those who were signed up for the program in 2011. Since we are taking applications for 2012, it may mean that anyone new this year will not be allowed to apply next year.
3. Related to sequestration, we have been told that Legal Services is seeing some letters terminating **Section 8** certificates. We do not know if any of our residents will be affected by this but we will be ready to help, as much as we can. State Legal Services is asking to be notified of anyone facing loss of residence because of the loss of housing subsidies. Jenifer will update us on the impact that the sequestration may be having on the hospitals and our health care system.
4. We met with **Operation Fuel** staff and had a press conference with Bob Duff and Jayme Stevenson to announce our new status as an application site for Operation Fuel. We would like to remind everyone to add a dollar to their electric bill for Operation Fuel. If everyone gave a dollar a month to Op Fuel, they would receive a million dollars a month. Now they receive only \$400, 000 a year. Op Fuel provides a \$500 grant to those who have run out of EAP grant money and those who assets and income are just above those of EAP. Last year and this year they have

run out of funds before the end of their winter program. Their spring program will open on the 15th of May.

5. We have been helping seniors who qualify to sign up for free cell phone service through **Safe Link**. We are also looking into a program called **Assurance** which may be a bit more user friendly than Safe Link.
6. We are still getting questions about and signing seniors up for the Medicare savings programs and SNAP. Needless to say **MSP** is an easier sell than **SNAP**. Food assistance still feels too much like welfare for them.
7. **Camp Connri**, a Salvation Army summer camp has a camp week specifically for seniors. It is free and does not have any income restrictions. It is a beautiful camp and is often used as a retreat center. It is located in Ashford CT. We would love to sign some seniors up for this year's session. Many years ago a couple of seniors from senior housing went every year. They loved it.

Respectfully Submitted,
Olive Hauser
Director