

**DRAFT**  
**TOWN OF DARIEN**  
**COMMISSION ON AGING**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**DECEMBER 16, 2009**

**ATTENDANCE:** Joseph Pankowski, Chair; Mary Giarrantana, Mary McCarthy, Amy Squyres, Tom Valentino, Robin Woods

**ABSENT:** Jennifer Geddes, Ron Heinbaugh, Pat Morgan

**OTHERS:** Beth Paris (Senior Center Coordinator), Callie Sullivan (Board of Selectmen Liaison), Olive Hauser (ex-officio/Social Services Director), Charlie England (Observer)

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Pankowski called the Regular Meeting to order at 9:07 a.m.

**APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MONTH'S MINUTES**

**\*\* MS. GIARRANTANA MOVED TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER MINUTES.**  
**\*\* MR. VALENTINO SECONDED.**  
**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mary Giarrantana announced her resignation for personal reasons. Ms. Squyres, Mr. Pankowski and others thanked Mary for all her contributions and valuable insight.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Callie Sullivan is the new Board of Selectmen liaison. The members welcomed her and look forward to a good working relationship. Their hope is that there will be a good exchange of information that will be beneficial. Ms. Sullivan said this Commission is gaining in importance. She added that there is a liaison for the Police Station and for the Human Services Planning Council in addition to her role. She said she has no agenda and will give input at the meeting when appropriate. She will do a bi-yearly review and report back to the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Campbell stopped by the meeting to greet all.

Ms. Squyres asked if senior issues will be shared with Parks and Recreation as well. Ms. Sullivan said if it would be helpful, yes. Ms. Hauser said that Ms. Swiatek should be involved with the Senior Center as Ms. Paris reports directly to her.

Ms. Sullivan expressed enthusiasm in her new role and looks forward to learning about the senior issues first hand.

Mr. Pankowski said that he would like to see only positions winning a formal vote taken back to the Board of Selectmen, rather than viewpoints that have not been fully discussed. He said that someone's position may appear to dominate during a discussion, but may not prevail when voted on.

Ms. McCarthy asked when the Selectmen have senior issues on their agenda that the Commission members know about the meeting. Ms. Sullivan said it is in the newspaper and added that she will notify Mr. Pankowski a few days in advance of the meeting.

Ms. Sullivan said that there will be key decisions made by Mr. Campbell in February. She suggested that the Commission members attend the January meetings. She said that the budget will be presented on January 25 and there will be meetings on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Sullivan said that Jim Cameron is working on a new website to have e-mail blasts and streaming video. Ms. Hauser added that when you sign up for Channel 79 you will get a TV guide for the week. Mr. Pankowski suggested uploading videos to You Tube as a less-expensive alternative to streaming videos from a website.

### **SENIOR CENTER REPORT**

Ms. Paris gave her December report. She said the phone lines are here and waiting to be installed. The wood shop has been cleaned and reorganized. Automatic towel and soap dispensers were put in.

Some December highlights are as follows:

2<sup>nd</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> - Counseling with an AIP Coordinator

2<sup>nd</sup> - Blood Pressure Screening

9<sup>th</sup> - Medicare Choices program with Inta Adams

9<sup>th</sup> - High Tea with Darien High School Students

16<sup>th</sup> - Noroton Presbyterian Preschool Holiday Concert

21<sup>st</sup> - Holiday Musical Program

23<sup>rd</sup> - Annual Holiday Luncheon at 12 Noon; Santa arriving at 11:30 bringing gift and good wishes. Special meal \$4.00, caroling, and Circle of Light ceremony.

Ms. Paris said that she started programming bi-monthly with Aging In Place and will explore opportunities for collaboration.

She also contacted the Alzheimer's Association to start a Caregiver Support group early spring.

She will begin interviewing volunteers for office positions in January. She has a list of over 60 people from the survey.

Ms. Hauser said that one needs to go to the Senior Center to register for the half-price taxi voucher and once registered no need to return.

Ms. Paris said that after the recent rain storm about six leaks sprung up within the Center.

Discussion followed on Mr. Campbell's idea to move the Senior Center to the Board of Education's (BOE) current location.

Mr. Pankowski asked Ms. Squyres and Mr. Valentino to tour the BOE space and present their findings in January. Ms. Hauser said that Ms. Swiatek should be involved too. Mr. England and Ms. Sullivan offered to tour the space to determine if it is feasible for the Senior Center to move to this location. There may be a large difference in square footage between the two locations.

Ms. Squyres said that there is urgency to do something about the current Senior Center as there are constant, costly repairs.

Ms. Giarrantana felt it is wasted money to fix up the current location.

Mr. Valentino said the Senior Center was not an earlier priority, but it is now. The police station and Weed Beach took precedence.

Ms. Paris added that there are some who will not go to the current building because of allergens, bathroom conditions, and other reasons. However, there are some seniors who want to stay at the present location. The space works.

A 2005 study revealed that over \$5 million will have to be spent to bring the building up to par. Mr. England said that, in addition, to take care of the asbestos, more funds would need to be added.

Ms. Sullivan talked about the Mutual Housing Association (MHA). She said the MHA has the funds to spend on projects they support. Senior housing through HUD opens again in April.

Ms. Hauser talked about Gallivant and Aging In Place. She then said that there is a move to help seniors. There is a statewide number, '211', to call with questions. She said that seniors have been schooled on reverse mortgages to get income. Mr. Pankowski said he knows of a reverse mortgage specialist he believes is good and can be helpful as a lecturer for an upcoming meeting. Ms. Hauser said that there are a number of senior's homes on short sale waiting to be sold and until such time, they are struggling to pay bills. Some have lost their part-time jobs which has worsened their plight.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* MS. SQUYRES MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**

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

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

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:10 a.m.

Next scheduled meeting is January 20, at 9:00 a.m., Room 119, Darien Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,  
Anne Hohlweck