

**TOWN OF DARIEN
COMMISSION ON AGING
REGULAR MEETING
JULY 19, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Joe Pankowski, Chair; Marcie Cleary, Tom Demsey, Peter Eder, Gerri Genovese, Mary McCarthy, Jim Metzger, Suzanne Okie

OTHERS: Beth Paris, Mather Senior Center; Chris Jones, At Home in Darien; Cynthia Hall, Human Services

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Pankowski called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. A quorum was present. He reminded everyone that the Commission does not meet in August.

MINUTES

**** MR. EDER MOVED THE MINUTES OF JUNE 21, 2023**

**** MS. GENOVESE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX IN FAVOR (CLEARY, DEMPSEY, EDER, GENOVESE, MCCARTHY AND OKIE) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (METZGER).**

SENIOR CENTER REPORT AT MATHER CENTER

Ms. Paris presented her report. (See attached)

Mr. Dempsey said that there were a number of people that were bringing broken furniture for repair to the Mather Center. One individual brought in a lamp that he wished to have duplicated and one of the woodworkers was able to duplicate it with the lathe.

Ms. Paris noted that next year, they will have been in their current location for 10 years. Ms. Paris noted that Darien residents do not pay a fee and non-residents pay a membership fee.

HUMAN SERVICES

Ms. Hall then presented her report. (See attached)

Ms. Hall spoke about the Ask a Social Worker program that she holds at the Senior Center on a weekly basis. Many people have questions about potential resources.

- At Home in Darien

Mr. Jones said that the Annual Meeting for At Home in Darien has been set for December 6th at the Library Community Room. He added that they have a number of volunteers who are willing to shop for seniors or perform other tasks and they need to let the senior community become aware that there are volunteers available to help

Mr. Eder said that AARP is going to be focused on Social Security in the coming months. He reminded everyone that AARP offers many excellent resources and displayed some of the materials such as a financial workbook.

SWACAA will be hosting a summit on October 30th.

Mr. Eder spoke about the lack of housing for the low income residents. He also mentioned an app called Nesterly which is a program where older people who have rooms to spare can connect with younger people in need of lower cost housing.

Mr. Eder spoke briefly about the recent Reading of the Declaration of Independence event at Darien High School and said it was well attended.

Mr. Pankowski distributed copies of the proposed meeting calendar to the Commissioners.

**** MS. CLEARY MOVED TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED 2024 MEETING CALENDAR AS PRESENTED.**

**** MR. METZGER SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Pankowski said that there was a need for someone to fill the Vice Chairmanship. He suggested that if anyone had any suggestions to contact him.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. CLEARY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MR. EDER SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:32 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

Town of Darien
Commission on Aging
Regular Meeting
July 19, 2023

Commission on Aging Report
Darien Senior Programs at Mather Center
July 19, 2023
Respectfully Submitted: Beth Paris, Director

The informal use of the Center is growing. Membership Renewal for Darien Residents and Non-Residents is underway. Non-Residents will be capped at 25 percent with a yearly membership fee of \$25.00. Annual Membership will be from July through June each calendar year. We have also included a Registration Waiver Form as well as a Guidelines for participation form for everyone to sign. The Instructor Agreement Policy has been updated and signed by all vendors. Thanks to Marilee Hayes a new logo has been developed now in use on all Senior Programs Documents. We are also utilizing the weekly constant contact with questions for upcoming program ideas and offerings. In the fall there will be several new classes because of this endeavor.

Health and Wellness: Christine Burns, RN Waveny- What you Need to Know about Diabetes; Dr. Mary Riley Podiatrist-Do's and Don'ts of Diabetic Foot Care; 12 Weekly Exercise Classes

Educational and Academic: TECH Help with ray Beth Mason Darien Library; CT Lab-Darien Library Presentation; Beeyond Virtual* Travel- Piran Cutest Town on the Slovenian Coast; Liberty Society Mayflower Compact Virtual* Presentation; Art Gottlieb LCSW- Lighthouse of Long Island Sound; Greg Antwerp --Series from the Attic-Vintage Food Advertisements; Historian Mark Albertson-Declaration of Independence

Creative Pursuits: Acrylic/Watercolor and Oil Classes are off for the Summer will resume in September; Mix Media with Rene Soto; Knitting and Crocheling Mondays; Woodshop Donation Program M/W 1:00-2:30 T 9-12

Entertainment: Alumni Swing Band- Independence Day Celebration; Movie Where the Crawdads Sing; Here's Rosie --Reminisce with Geri Genovese; BINGO FUN- Mondays; Corn hole Tuesdays; Table Tennis Wednesdays; Cribbage Tuesdays; Mahjong Thursdays

Services: Waveny Lifecare Network Blood Pressure and Health Screening 1st Tuesday 3rd Thursday of the month; Ask a Social Worker Tuesdays 11-12 Darien Human Services ; Monthly Caregiver Educational Support Group--Beth Paris; Information and Referral as needed/Requested

Program Days: 20

Family Inquiries: 12

Caregiver Support: 11

Information and Referral: 14

Human Services Referral: 11

At Home in Darien: 5

Ongoing Work this Month

Weekly Constant Contact/Monthly Newsletter

Program Specialist Orientation /Training Continues

Budget Open for 2023-2024

Membership RENEWAL

Implementation of revised Instructor Policy

Registration/Waiver Forms and Participant Guideline forms

Program Planning and Scheduling into the Winter

Daily Lunch Program Supervision
Coverage plan for Staff Vacations

Meetings: Staff Weekly as a team monthly; Department Head 7/11; Department Head Quarterly with BOS 7/18; Senior Center Directors Fairfield County 7/18; COA 7/19

Commission on Aging
Human Services Report
July 19th , 2023

- **Renter's Rebate**

Darien Human Services began accepting applications for the 2023 CT Renter's Rebate Program on May 16. Eligibility requirements are:

1. Must be 65 years of age as of December 31, 2022 or disabled and collecting Social Security Disability payments.
2. One year or more residency in Connecticut.
3. Income must not exceed \$40,300 for a single person or \$49,100 for a married couple.
4. Disabled persons under age 65 must show proof of Social Security disability.
5. If you filed a 2022 income tax return, a copy is required.
6. Proof of income must include:
 - Social Security (Form 1099)
 - Pensions
 - Interest on bank accounts
 - Dividends
 - Wages

We will also need proof of rent and utilities for all 12 months or the months you were renting in 2022. A printout from the utility company and receipt of rent payment from your landlord and canceled checks are all acceptable.

Renters Rebate application deadline is September 7, 2023. Please call us at 203-656-7328 for questions or to make an appointment. The department is open Monday through Thursday from 8:00am to 5:15pm.

- **Mental Health First Aid**

The Town of Darien is offering another chance to attend the Mental Health First Aid 8-hour interactive certification course. This course is designed to give members of the public key skills to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. Like CPR training helps a non-medical professional assist an individual following a heart attack, Mental Health First Aid training helps an individual who doesn't have clinical training assist someone experiencing a mental health crisis. Dates are **August 1st and 3rd, 2023, both days from 8:30am-1:00pm**, at EMS Post 53. Please register by emailing Ali Ramsteck at aramsteck@darienct.gov. This program is being funded by ARPA funds.

- **Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program**

Eligible Seniors Can Receive Discount Vouchers for Locally Grown Fruits and Vegetables
Darien seniors may now be eligible to receive discount vouchers for locally grown fruits and vegetables through the Connecticut Department of Agriculture. Darien Human Services has been designated as a Local Coordinating Agency for the Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) provides vouchers for locally grown fruits, vegetables, herbs and honey to eligible low income seniors. Vouchers can be redeemed at any local Farmers Market. The Darien Farmers Market is held every Wednesday from 10:00 – 3:00 at Goodwives Shopping Center parking lot, 25 Old King's Highway North. Vouchers are valid through November 30th. Interested seniors (60 years of age or older) must be Darien residents and have a maximum household income of no more than 185% of the federal poverty level (\$2,248/month for a single person and \$3,041 for a couple). Proof of income is required. Please contact Darien Human Services at (203) 656-7328 Monday through Thursday 8:00-5:15 to schedule an appointment.

- We currently have 1 Protective Services for the Elderly case which is being referred to Probate Court for Involuntary Conservatorship. We work closely with the social workers from the state assigned to each case. These cases are often very time consuming and require collaboration with various resources and agencies.
- The Medical Loan closet continues to be a great resource for Darien residents for short term loans of wheelchairs, knee scooters, walkers, crutches and canes. A refundable deposit of \$50 (check payable to "Town of Darien") is required for wheelchairs, transport chairs and walkers with a seat. Thirty six households used the loan closet this past quarter versus twenty six the previous quarter. The feedback from residents is positive and they appreciate this convenient resource.

- The staff of Darien Human Services maintains an *Emergency Call List* with the names of vulnerable seniors and individuals with disabilities to contact prior to and after a storm or town wide emergency. We called the list this Monday in anticipation of Tuesday's storm. We now have close to 100 residents on our list. We are requesting that any individual who is vulnerable, or has medical conditions that might make them vulnerable during an emergency, notify Darien Human Services (203-656-7328) so their name can be added to our list.

Respectfully submitted,

Ali Ramsteck, LCSW, Director

**Commission on Aging
Town of Darien
Schedule of Meetings
Calendar Year 2024**

Below is the Commission on Aging meeting schedule. All meetings are generally held on the third Wednesday of the month, except August. Meetings will begin at 9am and will be held in Room 119 of Town Hall. Agendas will be posted on the Town website no later than one day prior to the meeting.

Meeting Schedule

January 17, 2024

February 21, 2024

March 20, 2024

April 17, 2024

May 15, 2024

June 19, 2024

July 17, 2024

No meetings are held in August.

September 18, 2024

October 16, 2024

November 20, 2024

December 18, 2024