

**COMMISSION ON AGING
MINUTES
JANUARY 20, 2016**

Attending: Patricia. Burns, Presiding; W. Blumenthal; Francis Burgweger; Carol Burns; James Dougherty; Steve Katz.
Staff: Lori Contadino; Laurette Helmrich; Chicky Krois.
Guests: Mark O'Brien

Call To Order: The meeting was called to order at 8:35 a.m.

Minutes: Revised Minutes of the November 18, 2015 meeting with corrections to typographical errors were distributed at the meeting. An additional typo misspelling "does" as "doers" was noted. With that correction the distributed Minutes were approved by Motion duly made, seconded and carried.

Chairman's Report: P. Burns reported that Steve Katz will serve as a subcommittee to review and suggest changes to the Strategic Plan. There is a new plan being proposed for the Post Road Iron Works site for a 300 + unit affordable housing project.

GREATS: L. Helmrich reported that GREATS is in a state of flux. Its President has moved and no one else seems willing to serve as President. GREATS has a fund of approximately \$80,000.00 that the Commission would like turned over to the Friends of the Greenwich Senior Center to manage. There is a concern that GREATS may not have filed its annual 990 tax return for years.

Renovation: The plans for the proposed handicapped accessible ramp for the front entrance has had an initial review by the Town's Historical District Commission. The plan would include a regrading of the front driveway circle to raise the driveway and eliminate the first step. The ramp would proceed from the front entrance area across the front of the building and along the Havemeyer Place side of the building to a new entrance on the side of the building. Three facade and three railing options were presented. The concept of a ramp has been approved. It is hoped that the Commission will approve a specific plan at its February 10 meeting. Planning and Zoning Board of Appeals approval will then be needed for a variance.

Guest Speaker: Mark O'Brien, a local developer, presented plans for a proposed 100 unit senior housing project at 47 Valley Drive. The project would be a combination of market rent units (estimated at \$3,500 to 4,500 per month) and affordable rent units (estimated at \$1,500 per month). Apartments would be about 750 square feet in size. The project would have underground parking, 2 pools, fitness areas,

areas for lecture or arts presentations, a community garden and other amenities. The two proposed buildings would each be six stories in height. The following concerns were raised by Commission members:

- the small size of the units would not be attractive to potential residents;
- willingness of people to pay such a high rent for so small a unit;
- willingness of people to live in such a small unit;
- six stories is more than the four the Town's zoning will allow;
- small units would prevent live in care givers;
- small units would prevent relatives and guests from staying with the resident;
- small size of units would make socializing with relatives and guests difficult;
- small size of units would be offsetting to couples;
- setup could cause isolation of residents rather than integrate them to the community at large.

Mr. O'Brien was invited back to bring us up to date on the project and how member concerns might be addressed.

Social
Services: Nothing to report.

Senior Tax
Relief: The committee is working.

Share The Fare:

The proposed Share The Fare Policy was presented. It was clarified that the notes on Page 3 would not be part of the policy at this time but would be incorporated when the new voucher booklets are introduced. It was noted that for consistency, "vouchers" should be added after each entry of "share the fare". It was also noted that there is a need to add language to allow suspension of sales when budgetary restrictions are met.

MOTION: That the proposed Share the Fare Policy be adopted with the inclusion of language stating: "The Commission on Aging reserves the right to suspend sales of share the fare vouchers to operate within the operating budget for the program". Seconded. Carried.

Senior Center
Director's
Report:

L. Helmrich reported that we are about half way to reaching the \$6,500 goal for purchase of bells for the planned bell choir. We are into the winter session of aqua aerobics at the Boys and Girls Club. The program is oversubscribed and we need to set limits with a registration process and possibly a fee. This led to a discussion on whether there should be a Senior Center membership fee and/or a fee for programs. There is consideration of increasing the age at which members

can join the Senior Center.

Nathaniel
Witherell:

S. Katz reported that Nathaniel Witherell is moving in the right direction.

Director's
Report:

L. Contadino reported that she and Patricia Burns met with the Friends of Nathaniel Witherell. They want to establish a closer relationship with the Commission in terms of partnering on projects like the lecture series. The Red Cross, as part of its restructuring dropped its "loan closet" where people could borrow wheelchairs, walkers, etc. The program was picked up by Access Independence which has storage issues. It was suggested that the program coordinate with Nathaniel Witherell which has many extra wheelchairs, etc and possible storage areas.

Transportation:

Wendy Blumenthal reported that during a focus group at River House an issue was raised as to the length of time participants sometimes spend on TAG vans. TAG has indicated that often people are not ready for pick up when the van arrives causing it to wait and getting behind schedule. River House believes TAG could be better about communicating delays to it or the participants.

NEXT

MEETING: The next meeting of the Commission will be February 17, 2016.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by unanimous motion at 10:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,


James B. Dougherty
Secretary