

COMMISSION ON AGING  
MINUTES  
MAY 18, 2022

Attending: Steven Katz, Presiding; Kip Burgweger; Carol Burns; James Dougherty; Ann Marie Hynes; Amy Jurkowitz; Ellen Wolfson

Staff: Lori Contadino, Laurette Helmer

Call To

Order: Steve Katz called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m. The meeting was held in person.

Minutes: Minutes of the April 20, 2022 meeting were distributed prior to the meeting. The Chair asked if there were any corrections. With no corrections mentioned, the Chair noted the Minutes as accepted.

Special

Guests –

Bump-Outs: Members of the Department of Public Works – Jason Kaufman and Jim Michael – were present to bring the Commission up to date on the construction project involving the construction of bump-outs on Greenwich Avenue and Arch Street that may affect the persons using the Senior Center. They assembled a computer and television screen to make a power point presentation showing the work that the construction project would entail. They used power point slides to show the present configuration of the intersection of Greenwich Avenue and Arch Street and how the project would change that.

Members of the Commission asked several questions focused primarily on the impact of the project on automobile parking for people attending the Senior Center. We were told that there would not be any additional parking on Bruce Place, but two more parking spaces on Greenwich Avenue would be made accessible with ramps that enabled people to move up to the sidewalk. Possible uses of the Senior Center driveway were discussed. It was noted that the drive-through is not usually used for regular traffic but would be used for fire and emergency. One of the project's goals is to improve traffic for both pedestrians and vehicles. We also discussed disabled parking spaces and how to accommodate Senior Center clients.

After the DPW guests had departed and after discussion of some other items, S. Katz asked if the Commission would want to take a position on the bump-out project. He explained that we will need to decide at some point on what we would do. Commission members expressed various personal views on the bump-outs. The issue for the Commission should be whether the project makes it safer for older adults and whether the streets would be completed. It was noted that at Elm Street where bump-outs currently exist, the cars do not follow the traffic

rules for determining who among pedestrians and vehicles has the right-of-way. Steve will send out more background information on the proposed bump-outs.

Dept. of  
Human  
Services:

Ellen Wolfson reported: The Department of Human Services is below budget for operating expenses. They are going ahead with a suicide prevention team, and Lori is receiving training on the team. The department is receiving opiate settlement money and is planning on how to use it. The department will have a table at the Town Party.

Nathaniel  
Witherell:

E. Wolfson reported that the facility is near capacity. There is the potential for a new doctor position. They are offering two booster shots to staff and patients. The Friends of Witherell has replaced its head. Witherell is doing much better financially; it is the only game in town. However, finding staff members has been quite difficult.

SWCAA:

Ann Marie Hynes reported that SWCAA is working on a new mission statement. They are doing more work in county areas where there are less care services. They will hold grant allocation meetings in May, and in June they will select the grantees. SWCAA is also working on online question answering. They have only one unvaccinated employee. They are giving bonuses in thanks for their Covid work.

Friends of  
The Senior  
Center:

A.M. Hynes reported that the Friends are still looking for a donor to wrap up their fund raising.

Senior  
Center:

Laurette Helmrich and Lori Contadino reported an increase in challenging, aggressive behaviors among some members of the Senior Center and complaints. This behavior revolves mostly around the lunches. Some members are reluctant to transition from the drive-thru distribution of meals to indoor pick-up. They want to have the lunches delivered to them and do not want to have to park their vehicles. In some cases, their registration was off, and some people could not get their \$5.00 lunch. Laurette noted that the lunches are available for all members.

L, Helmrich further reported that she has been working alone with Lori Contadino's daughter Christina who has been home from college, and they both have been subjected to verbal abuse. They need more help with the lunches and with messaging, and Amy Jurkowitz offered to help with the messaging. L. Contadino is considering raising the lunch prices. There is also a problem with parking. We have no staff to handle food distribution. We could put tables in the

dining room or outside for seniors who want to park and stay to eat. However, we would need custodial help with setting up and taking down the tables, and we do not have any custodians. Another issue that people are complaining about is the use of masks. One woman who complained about no masks took a mask and pasted it on the kiosk so no one could read the screen. In summary, the seniors are displaying excessive aggressiveness. However, the staff are working very well.

We need a better way to register, and Lori will be working on it. She might ask the First Selectman Fred Camillo for custodial help.

Commission  
Director's  
Report:

Lori Contadino reported

Maria Higbie, our current Customer Service Representative, has retired on May 6, and we have been working with Human Resources to fill 2 open positions:

1. The new 25-hour part-time Commission on Aging Assistant
2. The full-time Administrative Assistant position (reclassified Customer Service Representative). L. Contadino is interviewing candidates for the clerical support position. She had interviewed four applicants, and it looks like one applicant will qualify for the 25-hour per week position. For the full time job of Administrative Assistance, we had over 100 applicants. However, only union members will be interviewed and one hired. To become an Administrative Assistant, union members must take a computer skills test and a written test and then be interviewed.

Age Friendly Greenwich

We are in the home stretch and likely to be the first Connecticut municipality to qualify. Lori Contadino and Steve Katz met with AARP Advisor, Bill Armbruster regarding 2021 Year 2 Action Plan Report. Bill was overwhelmed by the accomplishments made and discussed a strategy for Year 3 Action Plan items.

Dining at 299

The Purchasing Department is currently reviewing the draft RFP for Culinary Services for the Greenwich Senior Center. The RFP will be circulated by the end of the month.

Share the Fare

We are looking at a variety of options. Zipridz had made a presentation to the Transportation Committee that generated a lot of questions. We are also still considering a gift card type of system to cover fares.

Covid

We had three positive Covid cases in two classes. We had a robo call sent to the class members alerting them to the infections.

Marketing

Amy Jurkowitz addressed marketing. The icon of 299 on the Ave is on the building. We are looking at a brand that uses only 299, but we want to include Greenwich in the logo. We are looking at various colors for the logo. A. Jurkowitz showed power point slides as a basis for design, such as mood colors. One proposal is “299 GREENWCH AVE Where Age Is Only A Number.” Another under consideration would have Commission On Aging with 299. We could use it on stationery such as having Greenwich Commission On Aging at the bottom of the page and have just 299 at the top. There then followed a general discussion of the icon. 299 on the Ave was originally the destination. During rebranding of the Senior Center, we took 299 on the Ave for use by the Commission. We will have to have a discussion with other tenants of the building regarding rebranding and the building’s address and who gets to use 299. L. Contadino noted that a sign for an historic building must be approved by the Town, and it would have only the names of the Commission On Aging and the Greenwich Arts Council; no renters will be named. QR codes will have all names of all renters and activities in the building. There might be a donor who could get naming rights.

New

Business Ellen Wolfson stated that we may get virtual reality in the Fall from a school teacher.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 10:31 A.M.

Next Meeting: The Annual Meeting of the Commission will be at 8:30 on June 15, 2022. The next regular meeting of the Commission will be on June 15, 2022 and will follow immediately after the Annual Meeting. Unless COVID numbers worsen, the meeting will be in person at the Senior Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Kip Burgweger  
Acting Secretary