

# Sherman Commission on Aging

Feb. 6, 2012

## Minutes

**Present:** Jeanette Perlman, Peter Cohen, Carol Voorhees, Lorna Barrett, John Jenner. First Selectman Clay Cope. Sherman Housing Commission member Catharine Cooke and ex-officio Housing Commission member Kate McConaghy. Lynne Gomez, Clerk.

**Minutes:** *The minutes of the November meeting were approved as read. The commission does not meet in December. NOTE: The scheduled January meeting of the Commission on Aging was cancelled due to snow and ice. This meeting, Feb. 6, is a re-scheduled meeting from January. The regularly scheduled February meeting will be held on Feb. 27.*

**Director's Report:** Beth noted that Andrea O'Connor sent a copy of the document which reappointed Jeanette Perlman and Peter Cohen to the Commission on Aging for another 3 years.

Regarding the budget, Beth noted that Thursday March 8 is the date in which the COA budget will be heard by Selectmen. Commissioners voted to OK the budget as presented, which shows no increase.

Beth reported that one of her graduate student interns, Laura Young, resigned her internship based on personal issues. She noted that Lynne and Diana, the other intern, have helped to fill in the gap.

Beth will contact Carol Havens to report that the next regular meeting of the Commission on Aging will be Feb. 27, not Feb. 20 as listed.

Beth and Suzette will be finalizing the budget for the Senior Center and Social Services. Beth proposes to increase Lynne's hours. Lynne currently works 4.5 per week.

Diana has organized the Sherman Emergency Support System, in which all Sherman's residents who are elderly, live alone, or are frail, are listed with

complete emergency contact numbers. Jeanette noted that the Commission on Aging had discussed such a system.

Beth noted that Suzette is doing a wonderful job at running the senior center and works extremely hard. Beth will propose to Selectmen that Suzette become director of the Senior Center and Beth will focus all her efforts on Social Services. Discussion ensued on the best method to handle this change and current trends to eliminate unpaid internships. Beth, as municipal agent, falls under the Health and Welfare section of the town budget. John Jenner suggested that the First Selectman be given an opportunity to input into the proposal. Discussion ensued of the population that Beth serves in Sherman. Jeanette noted that Beth is well-known around the state and well respected. Suzette and Beth will meet to discuss the plan. Jeanette and other commissioners offered support and help as needed.

***Aging Advocate:*** Lorna's "Winter Blues" ran in the Citizen News in January. "8 Tips to Beat Scams" is awaiting publication at the Citizen News. February's column will be "Safety Tips" by Beth and Jill and Lynne. John Jenner will work on a piece on the Old Store for March. Carol Voorhees will work on a piece for April on the Red Hats. Another suggestion was a column on Hungerford, a food pantry started 30 years ago by the Hungerford family. Peter Cohen will do a piece on the Library in Spring, perhaps May. Jeanette will do a piece on the Commission on Aging and its goals and purpose for June. John Jenner will begin work on the Homework Club. First Selectman Clay Cope suggested a possible speaker in Ken Lawson who speaks on privacy issues. Discussion ensued on privacy issues, scams, computer scams and cyberbullying. Beth discussed the possible formation of a Triad, which is a partnership of community-based associations whose mission is to protect the vulnerable. The formation of a Triad in Sherman will be put on the Agenda for the Feb. 27 meeting.

***Housing Commission:*** Jeanette reported that the Housing Commission determined at its most recent meeting that it would be appropriate for the Housing Commission and the Sherman Commission on Aging to work together. Jeanette, a member of the Housing Commission, reported that the town was rejected for the STEAP grant. Other avenues exist for the financing of a survey of a property of interest. No taxpayer money will be used. Beth Trott expressed support for working together.

***Motion:*** A motion was made by Jeanette Perlman and seconded by John Jenner for the Commission on Aging to work jointly with the Sherman Housing Commission by a) putting Housing on the Agenda and b) organize a joint symposium on housing needs and options and generally step up our cooperative work with the Sherman Housing Commission. The motion was approved unanimously. Catharine Cooke, a member of the Sherman Housing Commission noted that the Sherman Housing Commission is open to multiple solutions, including, but not limited to: retrofitting existing outbuildings, rehabilitation of foreclosures, as well as new construction. Multiple solutions exist, she noted, to accomplish the goals of the Housing Commission. Ms. Cooke noted that in England the trend is to retrofit farmsteads which are “absolutely beautiful” and fit into the existing communities.

Discussion ensued of the housing options to take care of the senior population in an affordable manner and within the framework of housing that is appropriate and suitable for the town of Sherman. Catharine noted that, as a specialist in design, Sherman is a unique town and is deserving of a unique approach to housing. It is not a Ridgefield or Danbury. The vision of the Sherman Housing Commission is to provide a very historic, New England vernacular to any proposal. Envision, she suggested, a farmstead that has grown over time that is both economical and beautiful and safe. Structures that would fit into the historic and aesthetic palette of Sherman.

***Symposium:*** Although “Wellness” was the proposed topic for the upcoming spring symposium of the Commission on Aging, the topic of housing was deemed to have a higher priority. A tentative plan for a wellness symposium will be moved to the fall.

***Sherman Oral History:*** John Jenner discussed continuing the project of Oral History for the town. Peter Cohen expressed interest in the ongoing project. He and Louise Edwards, a student who spearheaded the most recent Oral History, will work with John Jenner going forward. Catharine Cooke, who was instrumental in the Songs to Symphony presentation of four farmers lives and history, will also input.

Tabled until next meeting is a review of Commission on Aging responsibilities, bi-laws and goals.

Suzette noted that a few participants in the International Pot Luck dinner expressed disappointment that there were no COA members present. On the agenda for the next meeting is a discussion of COA presence at Senior Center events.

Motion to adjourn was made by Carol Voorhees. Seconded by John Jenner. Unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 10:10

Next meeting: Feb. 27 at 8:30 a.m. at the Senior Center.

Submitted,

Lynne Gomez  
Clerk