

## Commission on Aging

May 13, 2013

Present: Jeanette Perlman, Peter Cohen, Carol Voorhees, Jill Finch, Lorna Barrett, Cheryl Hawkins, John Jenner. Beth Trott, director social services. Suzette Berger, coordinator senior center. Lynne Gomez, clerk.

Minutes of the April 15 meeting were approved as read.

Senior Center Coordinator Report: Suzette updated the commission on current events at senior center. Discussion ensued on some conflicts arising out of space constrictions. Parking is noted as the biggest problem, especially during library construction. Suzette emphasized that the senior center is for all people and she attempts to accommodate all. As the firehouse and library become available, senior center activities can be located there.

Suzette noted that the Senior Center is saving money through its new newsletter policy, by which it is distributed as an insert in the Citizen News. Younger people are also getting it. Furthermore:

- Suzette requested that a COA member could help with budget creation.
- Volunteer Tea is June 6. Don Lowe will entertain. Discussion of gifts.
- Suzette discussed a possible book club.
- Lorna mentioned value of "Great Decisions".
- Senior Center self-evaluation is planned.
- Suzette was OK'd as title change to Coordinator Senior Center.

Social Services Report: Beth noted that the state will enroll people in health insurance beginning in October. Beth will be trained in enrollment. This is health insurance for those unemployed or underemployed. It is the Connecticut health Insurance exchange. Discussion of health insurance followed. Beth and Suzette will be at the state Office on Aging conference on Friday. Beth is getting information on Medicare into the paper.

Discussion of Sherman's care of its senior population followed. Jeanette noted that there is legislation available to Sherman which would hold back on increases in property tax but Sherman does not take part in it. Many comparable towns have passed legislation and regulations to allow senior affordable housing. Sherman has not. John Jenner suggested that the COA should be advocating to the town for those things.

Jill Finch noted that New Fairfield is poised to apply for funding for senior housing because their first selectman was in favor of it. She noted that John Hodge very quickly assisted New Fairfield's Housing committee in the formation of the 501c3, the pre-requisite to acquiring state and federal funding. If the initiative came from all 3 of Sherman's selectmen, it would come quicker, she added.

Economy of Sherman: discussion of the economic realities of Sherman followed. Why do businesses not come to Sherman? What is the tax and social impact of this reality? Extensive, informative discussion followed. Jeanette noted that in other communities, including one she was involved with, the town put pressure on property owners who maintained impossibly high rents on empty storefronts. The local economy was poorly served by empty storefronts.

Candlewood Lake is identified as a destination location, however, there is no tourism economy in Sherman. Discussion of the lake followed. Discussion of neighboring towns' approach to economic development followed. Discussion on sustainability of the rural ambiance in Sherman followed.

Plenary Session: Saturday, May 18, at 8:30 a.m. at the Senior Center. This breakfast meeting is precursor to a possible Community Volunteer Fair. 15 volunteer leaders will attend. Core objective: all of Sherman's volunteer groups are getting older and there is no plan for replenishment. Also, we would like to encourage more of the younger folks to participate in their community. It will also be a forum to let people know about volunteer opportunities. Carol and Lynne will bring breakfast strata, Beth will do coffee, Lorna bagels.

Oral History: Peter discussed getting ready for the Reception, set for June 21 at 2 pm. Motion to adjourn, 10:40 am. Submitted, Lynne Gomez.