

COMMISSION ON AGING

April 4, 2022

Minutes

Present: Gayle Kataja, Jennifer DiSette, Denise Weeks, Philip Markuszka, Beth Hillson, Susan Pearlman

Liaisons Present: Lisa Zerio, Director of Parks and Recreation
Patti White, Senior Services Program Supervisor

Meeting called to order at 5:39 p.m.

Denise Weeks nominated Jennifer DiSette as Vice-Chair of the Commission on Aging. The motion was seconded by Beth Hillson. Voting yes were: Gayle Kataja, Denise Weeks, Beth Hillson, Phil Markuszka, Jennifer DiSette and Susan Pearlman. Motion passed unanimously.

MINUTES:

Minutes of the meeting held on February 7, 2022 were accepted as written.

COMMUNICATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: None

LIAISON REPORTS:

Patti reported that AARP would be holding a general meeting on May 17th to assess whether the chapter will be able to continue to operate.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS: Lisa and Patti fielded questions on the information contained in their written departmental reports.

Denise Weeks asked why the former computer lab was being converted to a gym rather than a lounge type space for seniors to socialize in. Lisa explained that there is an identified community need for more health and wellness programming, and that plans were underway to expand the hours of operation of the café coffee/snack service, and to improve the overall ambiance of the space.

OLD BUSINESS:

Age-Friendly Community Initiative

Jennifer DiSette gave a presentation on the history of the Age-Friendly Community Initiative and the role of the Commission on Aging to help inform new members.

The group reviewed AARP's feedback on the town's AFC plan. Denise raised a concern about pedestrian crosswalk safety in town. Members discussed considering taking a position on the installation of flashing

lights. After a brief discussion Susan suggested that the Commission table this issue until its' May meeting. Denise will contact the Bike Walk Glastonbury group and Lisa and Patti will talk to the town engineer to find out about the town's plans regarding flashing lights to address bike and pedestrian safety.

The group agreed to try to address the action steps detailed in the Year 1 phase of the plan and wait to address larger more complex issues like zoning changes as they become more informed.

Lisa gave an update on the progress being made to meet the AFC Action plan's Year 1 steps, including; funding for new benches with concrete slabs, as well as shade structures, trees, and increased accessibility to town fields/facilities and Pickleball courts.

After discussion on how to best move the AFC initiative forward, the group agreed to invite the members of the Age-Friendly Community Core Leadership Team (CLT) to its' June 6th meeting at the community center, to begin working collaboratively on implementing the AFC plan.

All agreed that Gayle will send an invitation to the CLT members and per Phil's recommendation, the COA will organize the agenda and process for the June 6th meeting at its next regularly scheduled meeting on May 2, 2022.

New Business:

None

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Patti White, Acting Secretary

April 2022 COA Program Report

Parks and Recreation Update:

- Pollinator Pathways Golf Tournament- Friday, June 10th
- Passport to Health Fair- committee meeting being planned to set the date
- Free Pool Passes are available to Seniors (60+)

Social Services Update:

- Food Bank and Fuel Bank continue to assist Glastonbury residents in need thanks to generous donations to Glastonbury Gives – there were 126 Food Bank requests during March 2022.
 - Glastonbury Links Together (formerly known as Interfaith Justice Coalition) continues supplementing with additional grocery gift cards distributed concurrently with Food Bank gift cards
 - Work has begun on the soon to be Self-Select Food Bank. Through a collaboration with Glastonbury Links Together, the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving has awarded a grant in the amount \$25,000.00 for the formation of a Self-Select Food Bank. This Food Bank will provide non-perishable and perishable food items.

- Energy Assistance (heating assistance) application period began on August 2nd. CT Department of Social Services once again relaxed some program procedures making applications easier, especially for people on fixed income (Social Security and/or pensions) who have received benefits in the past two
- Social Services has begun assisting residents with applications for the Homeowners Tax Credit Program. The application period for Homeowner's Tax Credit Programs began on 2/1/22 and ends on 5/14/22 – Applications need to be filed this year, as this was waived for the last two years due to the pandemic. Additional Veteran's Exemption application period runs through 10/1/22.
- The Application period for Renter Rebate Program begins in April and ends on October 1, 2022 – Social Services processed 291 applications for income eligible renters in 2021. Site visits will be done at some of the Elderly/Disabled Housing Sites providing no major changes due to Covid-19.
- "Eye Openers," Low Vision Support Group met **in-person** on 3/25/2022– it was well attended, 12 members were in attendance. This month's speaker was from PAFY (Patient Advocate for You).
- Social/Senior Services continues to distribute Test Kits/Face Masks to residents as requested.

Senior Services Update:

Program Highlights:

The post Valentine's Day party was held with approximately 50 individuals attending. Capacity was limited due to Covid. Our Saint Patrick's luncheon took place on March 22 with approximately 75 in attendance. We took one trip in February to the Garden show at the Hartford Convention Center and a trip to the Cracker Barrel restaurant in March.

The demand for Pedicare service is so strong that we are now offering the service at 30-minute intervals instead of 40 minutes. This is opening up slots to meet the community's needs.

The AARP tax program has served 234 individuals thus far and approximately 50 additional appointments are scheduled to date.

Upcoming Events/Trips:

The Matter of Balance class held its first session on March 29th. We are working with the Connecticut Healthy Living Collective to offer a second class for those on the waitlist.

The film Being Mortal, will be offered as a virtual Screening & Panel Discussion by AARP CT Webinar on July 20th at 12:00.

We will soon begin offering programming at increased capacity and intend to be open on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Saturdays, as soon as we receive the guidance to go forward. This will include the Friendship Circle Memory program.

Based on the community's needs we are also looking at ways to expand the Friendship Circle program to offer two separate sessions two days each week.

Upcoming trip destinations include: Yard Goats games, Ikea & consignment store shopping and Elizabeth Park Rose Gardens. Several trips to shoreline restaurants, museums and boat excursions are now being booked for the spring and summer months.

One-on-one computer assistance is once again being offered both at the center and at individuals' homes through the Chores program.

Upcoming health programs include a presentation by Hartford Healthcare David & Rhoda Chase Family Movement Disorders Center and The American Lung Association who will be starting a Better Breathing Support group for individuals with COPD, Lung Cancer and other respiratory disorders.

The Chores program has provided over 300 volunteer hours of service in this fiscal year thus far. The program has served 35 households. A renewal application of \$9,072 for Title III funding has been submitted. Awards will be announced in June.

An AARP Challenge grant for \$15,000 was submitted to help fund a community garden adjacent to the RCC building which will include musical instruments and benches. Raised beds will be constructed by an Eagle Scout applicant and the harvest will be used to help supplement the Senior Lunch program and Food Pantry on site. Awards will be announced in June.

Plans are underway to begin conversion of the former computer lab into a gym with stationary exercise equipment.