

SENIOR CITIZEN COMMISSION
December 14, 2012

The Senior Citizen Commission, of the Town of Trumbull, held a scheduled meeting on Friday, December 14, 2012 in the First Selectman's Conference Room of the Trumbull Town Hall.

Members Present: Rachel Yahwak, Chairperson
Helen Weinstein, Secretary
Roberta Bellows, Diane Chiota, Amy DeZeno, Rita Grossi, Joan Melhorn,
Gary Raytar and alternate Dorothy Merritt

Also Present: Jean Fereria, Director; Timothy M. Herbst, First Selectman; John Ponzio, Town Treasurer
Dawn Savo, Assistant Director of Finance and Elaine Yang, Assistant to the First Selectman

The following is a brief summary of the meeting.

A quorum being present the Chairperson called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Public Comments

Sylvia Jones commented that the Commission should have a better representation of seniors who utilize the center, as the purpose of this Board was to address issues relating to the Center.

Several Board members commented that they do visit the Center on a regular basis.

At the request of the First Selectman's Administrative Assistant the following motion was made.

MOTION MADE (Yahwak) and seconded (DeZeno) and unanimously carried to move the agenda out of order to allow for comments by Elaine Wang.

Ms. Wang, advised that the Senior Commission is here to service, not just the Center, but all interests which relate to Trumbull's senior population. Any public comment relative to the Town's senior demographic may be brought before this Commission.

Linda Ciocci welcomed newly appointed members to the Commission as well as the Selectman's new assistant Elaine Wang.

There being no further public comment the meeting's public session was then closed.

Approval of Minutes

Upon review, the following amendments were considered.

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Correct spelling of Rita Grossi's name (first line).

Old Business - Concerning the motion relating to payment to Globe; change vote to 2 opposed.

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Chairperson's Report - Amend first line as follows: L. Ciocci thanked Jean Fereira, staff and volunteers for all their efforts in running the shelter during the hurricane.

Secretary Report: Eliminate duplicate of "well done".

Center Director Report: Correct spelling of Rita Grossi's name.

Edit agenda item "Called to Order and Pledge of Allegiance" to reflect it took place prior to Public Session.

MOTION MADE (Chiota), seconded (Grossi) and unanimously carried to accept the minutes of the November 16, 2012 regular meeting, as corrected.

Secretary's Report

A letter from Joyce Saltes of Stratford commending the Director, Jean Fereira, for her leadership and compassion in assisting seniors during the recent storm was read into the record by Helen Weinstein.

Ms. Fereira expressed her gratitude to her staff and the many volunteers who provided assistance during the crisis.

Meeting Dates and Location

The proposed 2013 meeting dates (copy attached) were distributed. Meetings will now be held in the Town Hall. Noting the usual practice of not holding meetings during the months of July and August, the following motion was made.

MOTION MADE (Melhorn), seconded (Yahwak) and unanimously carried to amend the 2013 meeting schedule to reflect that no meetings will be held during the months of July and August.

The Chairperson requested that Commission members contact her, if they are unable to attend.

Director's Report

The proposed 2013/2014 budget was distributed. Ms. Fereira advised that she has tried to keep budget amounts down. She will be meeting with the First Selectman shortly to go over budgetary line items.

Budget will be reviewed and readdressed at the next scheduled meeting.

It was noted that quilting sessions have been eliminated. The Director informed that this was due to a lack of interest being shown. The rule of thumb is that sessions need to show interest of at least ten to twelve people.

Commissioner Grossi informed the Director that at a recent event there was no one at the door to check tickets. Ms. Fereria responded that she was unaware of this and in the future would seek out volunteers for this purpose.

Report from First Selectman's Office

The on-going issues pertaining to the alarm system were addressed by Elaine Wang. She advised that there are two entrances to the building (the nutrition room and the art class), which are not to be utilized, as they do not meet fire codes. Signage will be posted notifying that these accesses cannot be used.

It was brought to the Commission's attention that there have been instances where the alarm system has been intentionally disarmed to allow for access or to leave doors open. Seniors need to be made to understand that the alarms are in place for safety reasons. Ms. Wang stressed that any mishandling of the alarm system will not be tolerated. She informed that after the first offense a vandalism citation will be issued by the police department.

The Town Treasurer, John Ponzio and Dawn Savo, Assistant Director of Finance, spoke to the budgetary and purchasing process. Mr. Ponzio advised that his main concern is the funds that come in outside of the budgetary process. He noted that without the proper controls in place the opportunity for the misappropriation of funds is created. The Town Treasurer stressed that tighter controls are needed and that funds must be completely accounted for on a daily basis. The establishment of a finance sub-committee was proposed to set accounting and purchasing guidelines. Once in place, recommendations will be brought back to this Commission for approval. The sub-committee will be comprised of Chairperson Yahwak, Dorothy Merritt and Rita Grossi.

Dawn Savo, Assistant Director of Finance, spoke of the Town's purchasing policies. Ms. Savo informed that the policies have been established as part of the Town Charter and a summary of the guidelines was distributed. The purchasing procedures were reviewed and Ms. Savo agreed to attend a meeting of the finance sub-committee to provide further guidance.

A question arose, as to how donations to the Center are handled. Mr. Ponzio responded that the revenues received are placed into the Town's general fund. Donations which have been earmarked for a specific program are utilized for that purpose.

The Town Treasurer informed that it has come to his attention that gambling may be taking place at the Center. He advised staff to be cognizant that gambling is not permissible on Town property.

Old Business

The following Commissioners reported on their visits to neighboring Senior Centers.

Rita Grossi spoke of her visit to the Derby Senior Center, which she found to be a very successfully run operation. She was very impressed with the Center's Director and the programs that she has initiated for Derby's senior population.

Rachel Yahwak also found her meeting with the Director of the Easton Center to be most productive. She, too, had high praise for the Center's Director and all that she has accomplished. She will meet with the Director again next month to obtain further input useful for our upcoming self-evaluation.

New Business

Discussion on the reopening of the kitchen was the next order of business. The Director indicated that the closure was due in part to the operation not meeting food handler requirements, as well other health code violations.

The Board was informed that in order to serve meals, food handlers must be certified. This will probably necessitate the hiring of trained personnel instead of utilizing volunteers, which had been prior practice. A commercial kitchen must also be installed in order to re-establish service, which will be a costly expenditure.

The First Selectman advised that before a great deal of money is spent on extensive renovations, we should first determine if the current location is meeting the needs of our senior population or if we should be looking into relocating to a different facility. Mr. Herbst then suggested that, for a short term solution, a snack bar operation might be a feasible option.

The importance of having a hub for senior socialization was stressed and it was agreed that a snack bar might fill that need. A sub-committee consisting of Dorothy Merritt, Helen Weinstein, Rita Grossi, Gary Raytar, Amy DeZeno and Dee Chiota was formed to determine what requirements will need to be met for a snack bar situation. The Committee will meet and report back at next month's meeting.

The Director then presented the results of the membership survey (copy attached). The survey indicated that there are 616 members of which 172 registered as non-residents and 439 as town residents.

It was agreed that discussion on the Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority be tabled until next month's meeting.

The First Selectman indicated that he is in the process of appointing two new members to the Trumbull Housing Authority Board. Mr. Herbst foresaw a better collaboration between this Commission and the Housing Authority moving forward.

Helen Weinstein advised that amendments to the by-laws are being addressed and that a good starting point has been reached.

The Chair announced that the annual holiday party will be held at the Center on December 21st between the hours of 1-3 p.m.

There being no further business to address a motion was made by Commissioner Melhorn and seconded by Commissioner Grossi to adjourn. The December 14, 2012 meeting of the Senior Citizens Commission adjourned at 11:42 p.m. with unanimous consent.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Trumbull Senior Citizens Commission will be held on Friday, January 25, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. in the First Selectman's Conference Room located in the Trumbull Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Granskog
Clerk of the Commission