

**TOWN OF TRUMBULL
CONNECTICUT**



Commission on Aging Meeting
Friday, March 25, 2022
2:00 pm

The Commission on Aging held a meeting on Friday, February 25, 2022 at the Trumbull Senior Center.

Present: Chairman Michael Ganino, Ron Foligno, Mark Ryan, Jean DaRold, Alissa Heilbrunn (left the meeting at 3:09 pm), Debra Gilbert Taylor and Nancy Lucas

Absent: Evelyn Wiesner

Also Present: Michele Jakab, Director of Human Services; Tori Benoit, Wellness Nurse, Paulette Mack, Interim Executive Director, Stern Village and Police Officer Robert Pysz

The meeting was called to order at 2:06 pm by Mr. Ganino followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

Mr. Ganino welcomed two new Commissioners – Debra Gilbert Taylor and Nancy Lucas.

Presentation by Police Officer Robert Pysz

Mr. Ryan introduced Officer Pysz who spoke on the following topics:

1. Grandparent Scam – caller states that their grandchild is in jail and needs bail money. The Police Department would never make a call like this nor would they ever ask for gift cards. Gifts cards are very hard to track and once they are used, there is no way to get that money back. The banks should be on board with investigating the transfer of large amounts of money and question the reason. You could check with the Police Department or family to see if the request is legitimate. The Postal Inspector often does investigations. They might get a package sent back but rarely money. This would be done on the basis of mail fraud. This is a federal offense and should be reported.
2. Check email addresses when you receive a request for funds. They are always slightly off.
3. It is now paving season and individuals who go door-to-door are illegitimate. They present a good deal, ask for a down payment and never come back or they distract the senior while their partner goes into the home. Reputable businesses have websites, Facebook accounts or they advertise. Anyone soliciting door-to-door needs a permit from the Police Department which requires them to be licensed with a valid ID.
4. Incidents with Health Care aides have been increasing. They may steal from the individual outright, write checks to themselves or write down credit card information. These cases are hard to prove due to circumstances with the senior and their ability to understand what is happening. It is best to have family constantly overseeing what is being done to prevent this from occurring. Investigations are done in these instances by the Police Department but the length of the investigation depends on what needs to be done and sometimes it takes a while to discover an incident has happened.

5. Larcenies from motor vehicles are becoming more frequent. He suggested to park vehicles in plain sight in a well-lit area. Vehicles should be locked at all times which is a deterrent, but if they are determined, they may break a window to gain access. Cameras are a deterrent. Place all valuables out of sight. COVID has made identification of individuals difficult because of the masks.
6. Catalytic converters are also being targeted at the mall. There is a police substation inside the mall and they are the first line of defense. Police do patrol the parking lots but recommend parking close to the buildings under the lights as a deterrent. They have found most of these crimes are being done by juveniles. Crime in the mall is difficult to police because of the size of the building. Stricter laws need to be in place for juveniles which would help the situation.

It was noted there is a new hotline for seniors to call, at the State level, if they feel they need assistance with any scam or fraud concerns. This is a new program recently introduced by the Attorney General. There is also a presentation on April 27 from 11am to 1pm – Learn & Lunch – set up by Social Services to review these same topics which will be done by Officer Pysz.

7. Crime in the mall consists of shoplifting, dirt bikes riding through the mall. Juvenile offenders. Pursuits were discussed with regard to public safety.
8. If you do send money or credit cards in the mail, wrap it so that it cannot be seen through the envelope.
9. If you are looking for a new credit card, give it a couple of weeks to show up and then contact the sender.
10. Packages are being stolen from houses after delivery.

Suggestion was made to check your bank balance every day so that you can identify suspicious activity quickly. Also sign up for credit companies who provide reports so you can check for any fraudulent activity.

11. Home invasions are rare. Don't answer the door unless you know the person. Recommended to call 911 for assistance. Discussion was held regarding a citizen's right to self-defend in their home.
12. Suspicious cars in the neighborhood should be called into the Police Department who can check the situation.

The Commission thanked Officer Pysz for his presentation by providing pertinent information for seniors.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Mr. Foligno moved to approve the minutes of February 25, 2022. Seconded by Mrs. DaRold. Approved with abstentions from Ms. Lucas and Ms. Gilbert Taylor.

Secretary's Report

Mrs. Darold has no report.

Senior Center Director's Report

Mrs. Jakab reported on the following:

1. Mural Update – the grant for the mural will be opened again the Fall.
2. Three more in-person exercise classes and new instructors have been added.
3. The Better Balance program has returned with the students from Sacred Heart.
4. They are still offering ZOOM classes.
5. A Tea Party is being planned. They are looking for male judges to judge the hat competition.
6. The lunch program is great and growing. They will be adding a Monday lunch soon.
7. Transportation is up and running for appointments and programs.
8. Enrollment is approximately 1,000 members. Membership drive will be done in June. Membership is required to do programs at the Center.
9. Available services at the Center were reviewed such as the Wellness Nurse, Food Pantry, Social Services, Medicare and Medicaid assistance, scholarships for financial assistance, transportation to the VA and Veteran benefits assistance. Seniors are encouraged to contact the staff if they have any questions or concerns.

Report from Stern Village

Ms. Mack noted they will be starting a Food Pantry for the residents. There has been a change in meal time which has caused some problems with residents who have medical conditions that require a more substantial meal

earlier in the day. Many residents are financially unable to secure additional food to cover this time. Discussion was held regarding the set-up of the pantry including the purchase of a cabinet that can be locked and unlocked when access is needed by a resident, current transportation options for food shopping to the residents, Trumbull Food Pantry assistance, healthy food options Mrs. Jakab noted they would be able to help with stocking the pantry with some of the donations they receive from the public. At this time, Ms. Mack is working on a refrigerator for some perishable items but it is uncertain this will be an option. Ms. Mack will provide a list of food items to Mrs. Seferi for her assistance. It was also suggested that Trumbull Helps be contacted to see if they would be able to assist in any way. It is a misconception about the need in Trumbull for food assistance and it was also noted how the residents of the town step up when there is a need.

Wellness Nurse Report

Wellness Nurse, Tori Benoit, spoke on her programs at the Senior Center noting she is available several days a week with her schedule posted throughout the building. During those times, she assists seniors with blood pressure checks and, in general, helps seniors navigate the medical field by interpreting medical information from their physicians, reviewing medications and helping make medical appointments for various reasons. She also coordinates a Gardening Club which will be starting soon and has a Walking Program at the Mall.

Topics of Interest or Concern from Members

Mr. Ganino noted he attended meetings of the EDIT Committee because he felt that the aged should be included in the discussions. Through his efforts, the EDIT Committee would like representation so this part of the population is included.

Mr. Ganino noted he would like to speak with Dr. Semmel from the Board of Education regarding programs that would engage seniors with the students and also to consider holding programs specific for seniors in the evening through their continuing education. It was noted the schools have discontinued the practice of seniors in the schools at this time due to the COVID restrictions.

Mrs. Heilbrunn left the meeting at 3:09 pm.

Old Business

1. Mural - previously discussed.
2. Mrs. DaRold noted beginning April 1, artists from the Senior Center will be displaying their artwork in the Town Hall. Discussion was held regarding artwork in the Congregate at Stern Village. Alternative ways to display the artwork was discussed as they are not allowed to hang anything on the renovated walls. It was felt this would inspire the residents and bring happiness as well as being an outlet for creativity.
3. Update on Community Facility Building Committee – Mr. Foligno noted the Hardy Lane location is still being discussed. Hiring a design firm is a next step. There is discussion about the three facilities being considered – Aquatics Facility, Senior Center and Community Center – and what configuration would be best. Cost is variable depending on the size and type of facility. They are looking at 30,000 to 40,000 sq ft. Once a plan is completed, they will be going out to the public to request approval for one year of funding to move forward but the entire project will need to be a referendum for final approval. With the revitalization of the mall, suggestion was made that it might be a viable location with plenty of parking. Mr. Foligno noted one of the original design ideas was to have the facility centrally located. The mall location and the current Senior Center location do not meet that requirement. Suggestion was made that, if it included a teen center which is lacking, there might be less opposition from the public.

Next Meeting

April 22, 2022 at 2:00 pm in the Long Hill Conference Room at Town Hall.

Adjournment

There being no further business, motion was made by Mrs. DaRold to adjourn the meeting at 3:27 pm. Seconded by Mr. Foligno and approved by unanimous consent.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Crandall
Clerk