

Town of Sherman
Commission on Aging at the Sherman Senior Center
Monday, July 19, 2021 at 4:00pm

Members Present: Lynda Lee Arnold, Janet Wey, Sheila McMahon, Ed Hayes, Art VonPlachecki, Jeanne McRoberts, Juan Garcia, Rick Hudson (4:33)

Members Absent: Carol Sperling, Suzette Berger

Also Present: Don Lowe, Lynne Gomez

Clerk: Ruth Chen Byrnes

The meeting was called to order at 4:03pm by Chairman L. Arnold.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion to approve the minutes of the regular monthly meeting of June 21, 2021 by J. McRoberts. Seconded by A. vonPlachecki

All voted in favor with the following correction: Page 2 of 6/21/21 minutes, under Feasibility Committee Update, last sentence should read “Ed Hayes stated that everything will be looked at this Town Campus site with the assistance from the engineer.

SOCIAL SERVICES REPORT: L. Gomez completed the CHOICES Medicare Counselor training for Open Enrollment for Medicare 10/15/21 – 12/7/21. L. Rey and she are reorganizing the Reach Out program which allows for volunteers to visit isolated seniors.

L. Gomez also completed a workshop: “Supported Decision Making As A Method to Avoid Guardianship”. Enrollment via ACCESS Health CT up until 8/15/21, is available for seniors up to age 64 and ineligible for Medicare.

A Knox box demo was held at the Town Marketplace Green. A Knox box prevents the first responders from having to break down a door or window to reach a senior with a medical emergency. \$150 one time charge per box. Only vetted responders who are registered have access to the Knox box to get the house key to enter the home. L.Gomez will bring the demo box to the next meeting. Discussion continued on possible sources of funding.

OLD BUSINESS:

Art Show Update: J. Wey stated that the art submissions were photographed and went to the local papers. R. Hudson and E. Hayes helped to hang up the art work. D. Lowe commented that the art show is spectacular.

Feasibility Committee Update: D. Lowe stated that there will be a Town Meeting at 6:30pm on Thursday, 7/22 to vote on approval for an expense not to exceed \$2500 out of the Capital Non Recurring Fund to pay for an engineer to do an initial feasibility examination of the Town Campus site for a new Senior Center.

A vonPlachecki expressed some concerns on what the levels of cooperation are between the Board of Selectmen and the CoA, if both groups are moving together on this project. He would like some CoA members to attend the Town Meeting to support the vote for approving the \$2500 for an engineering study of the proposed site for the new Senior Center between the Town Hall parking lot and the lower level parking lot. He handed out some talking points to the commissioners for consistency in messaging.

L. Arnold shared that she and A. vonPlachecki were approached by B. Ackerman and T. Hollander to meet and discuss looking at senior housing, through a private non-profit company who would then look for a developer, behind the American Pie building, and have the new Senior Center as part of that complex. L. Arnold stated Hollander and Ackerman's goals included saving the town money by keeping them together.

There were concerns with mixing a non-profit project with a municipal building. And also that a viable senior housing project may take years before breaking ground. CoA feels the Senior Center location/building has immediate needs (e.g. danger of speeding cars at the crosswalk, lack of parking, size of kitchen, lack of storage space, etc). The members all felt that B. Ackerman and T. Hollander are two of the finest people to lead a project, but ultimately decided to not meet with them as it may complicate and delay both projects. E. Hayes stated having experience in housing and project management, he would offer his help to B. Ackerman and T. Hollander, but not as a CoA commissioner.

J. Wey asked if there was anything that could be shared about a possible benefactor for the Town Campus site, or is it just a rumor. D. Lowe prefers to not comment on this right now. He has nothing concrete to share at this point. J. Wey shared that both she and C. Sperling prefer the Volunteer Field location for the new Senior

Center but would support the Town Campus site if the engineer felt it would work. The Town Campus site feels like it's being squeezed in between 2 parking lots. E. Hayes shared that if the engineer determines that the Town Campus site will require a tremendous amount for ledgework and therefore costly, the site will not be recommended. Then CoA will revisit Volunteer Field or other potential sites.

L. Arnold and A vonPlachecki will attend Thursday's BoS meeting.
A.vonPlachecki will speak on the talking points.

NEW BUSINESS:

Decision was made to hold a meeting in August if the engineer's report is ready for review.

The decision was made that we would change the locks for the Senior Center doors. R. Hudson volunteered to get to the monthly meetings early and set up the tables.

L. Arnold expressed appreciation to J. Wey for her many years of chairing the CoA.

Adjournment:

S. McMahon moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:03pm.

E. Hayes seconded the motion.

Vote for: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by Ruth Chen Byrnes

Next meeting: Monday, August 16, 2021, 5:00PM at the Sherman Senior Center