

Town of Sherman
Commission on Aging via ZOOM
Monday, February 22, 2021 at 4:00pm

Members Present: Janet Wey, Sheila McMahon, Art VonPlacheki, Jeanne McRoberts, Carol Sperling, Rick Hudson, Lynda Lee Arnold, Ed Hayes

Members Absent: Juan Garcia

Also Present: Don Lowe – First Selectman, Suzette Berger – Sherman Senior Center

Clerk: Ruth Chen Byrnes

The meeting was called to order at 4:00pm by Chairman J. Wey.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion to approve the minutes of the regular monthly meeting of January 25, 2021 by R. Hudson.

Seconded by S. McMahon.

Vote For: Unanimous.

Senior Center Report: S. Berger shared that the Senior Center newsletter went out today. Governor Lamont's office announced that vaccines will open up to age 55 and older effective March 1st. Due to the weather, the Senior Center's internet was cutting in and out. J. Wey stated that an automated phone system is a valuable tool to send important messages to the Sherman seniors.

Old Business: Update on art and photography show.

An announcement will be going out next week in the Town Tribune. All commissioners received a copy via e-blast. The Sherman Library hopes to be open and would like to have a virtual and physical show. For the virtual show, participants will need to submit in jpeg format, a maximum size 4 x 6 image, 1200 x 1800 pixels, 300 dpi. For the physical show, participants need to bring in the piece of art/photo. All submissions must identify the participant's name, and a waiver must be signed. There will not be a reception. Submissions need to be brought to the library on 7/7/21 or 7/8/21. The art show will run from 7/9/21 through 8/25/21. CoA will send a few photos to the area newspapers in advance of the show to generate interest and to spread the word.

Discussion of drive-thru lunch and learn in spring: This will be tabled and discussed when the weather warms up.

Discussion of COA Budget continuing to be under the Senior Center budget or being a stand alone budget line: D. Lowe shared that there was no concerns from the Town Treasurer or Business Manager in leaving the COA budget where it presently is. E. Hayes shared that all other commissions stand alone and is concerned that at some point someone may question why COA is an exception. D. Lowe will further discuss this with the Selectmen during budget workshops. E. Hayes, J. Wey and D. Lowe will meet to discuss in the near future. S. Berger is in favor of separating out the COA budget from the Senior Center.

Update of public transportation for Sherman: D. Lowe spoke with Rich Schreiner of HART transportation who noted that Sherman has a senior van that takes our seniors to neighboring towns for shopping. Does COA think that our seniors would use this service where they would wait at a bus stop to go to a neighboring town and then wait for a ride back to the bus stop? What is the level of interest in this service? HART currently runs a shuttle from New Fairfield to Southeast train station. A shuttle to New Milford is also a possibility, keeping in mind that Sherman seniors would then need to likely catch another bus to get to their destination. The senior would also need to get a ride to the bus stop and back. Uber or another car service might work better for Sherman's needs.

Discussion of Feasibility/Exploration Committee for New Senior Center/Social Services: D. Lowe has spoken to builders and the First Selectman of Bridgewater. Recommendations for the building are: 2 ADA restrooms, 2 offices minimum, working kitchen, reception area, hall for events, outside terrace, vestibule, sidewalks, outside shed, air conditioning. Type of heat, attic, basement are options. The Committee may be asked to go to the public for contributions. Volunteer Field is being considered. A.vonPlachecki reminded all that there may be restrictions on what can be done with Volunteer Field for a period of time due to the state grant received for athletic fields.

J. Wey stated that they looked at all the possibilities for renovating town buildings but nothing was suitable. We likely will have an architect who is willing to donate his/her time. Discussion continued on using a Westchester Modular type company to move this along quickly. Discussion then continued on who would be interested in being on the Feasibility/Exploration Committee.

New Business:

Housing Report sent out by D. Lowe, no comments.

S. McMahan suggested a fishing contest this summer.

Comments by Commissioners:

E. Hayes asked for all to keep people and their families in their thoughts: Ray Kelley's wife is in the hospital, Dale Halas passed, Paul Quinn passed, Charlie Reppenhagen passed.

J. Wey informed the commissioners that the state legislature is deciding on whether or not allow for "no excuse" absentee ballots. She asked if the COA wants to get involved. A lively discussion ensued. The decision was to not get involved as a group.

Adjournment:

A.VonPlachecki moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:18pm.

J. McRoberts seconded the motion.

Vote for: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by Ruth Chen Byrnes
Next meeting: Monday, March 15, 2021