

Minutes – Commission on Aging Meeting March 15, 2021

Submitted by Don Lowe

Meeting called to order at 4:04 pm

Members Present: J. Wey, S. McMahon, R. Hudson, E. Hayes, L. Arnold, J. McRoberts, A.von Plachecki

Members Absent: C. Sperling, J. Garcia

Others Present: D. Lowe, S. Berger, L. Gomez

Senior Center Report

Director Suzette Berger reported meeting with other area Senior Center director's to receive advice on opening. She's planning to open in April by starting slowly. She will start with shopping trips and the Senior Dine program. In May, Suzette will focus on health and wellness and other inside activities. Suzette reported reaching out successfully to the culinary School in New Milford to be a food provider. She is also considering doing a "Men's Breakfast."

Chairperson Janet Wey asked Suzette about the walk around the track program and Suzette said this is a good possibility that that program can happen. Rick asked First Selectman Lowe about the covid-19 virus and how it is currently affecting Sherman. Lowe said that there has been a rise in cases, but they are mostly connected to family groups, not an "outbreak" or from one particular event.

Social Services report

Director Lynn Gomez reported that all is going very well and that she has no new news. She then inquired of the commission as to what "areas you'd like reports on" for the future meetings. Lynn also commented that progress is being made to vaccinate the homebound population in Sherman.

Old Business

ART SHOW: Rick Hudson commented that the commission should follow the plan that Art Von Plachecki had already submitted. A discussion ensued on whether changes are needed to the current waiver in order to better protect the artists' work from being plagiarized. Lynda also explained that there may be a need for a better waiver for the protection of the artists' work. Art inquired as to whether the process "was getting over complicated." He asked if an artist who did not sign a waiver could still submit work. The board's general consensus was that since the waiver protected the artist, that if the artist chose not to sign a waiver that it would be fine.

COA BUDGET: A discussion on whether the COA's budget should be a line item with the Senior Center's budget ensued. Don Lowe reported that there wasn't any issue with it on his Board of Selectmen, but he'd revisit this and that it could be changes for the 2022/23 budget if the COA requested it. He asked that it not be changed for this budget because it would involve a lot of extra work for the business manager during a time when she is focused on the budget itself. A motion by Art: "that the issue of whether to separate the COA budget from the Senior Center

budget would be revisited for how it may affect the 2022/23 budget” was seconded by Rick Hudson. Vote in favor by unanimous decision.

BUS SERVICE: Don Lowe gave an update on the possibility of bus transportation from the Hart Bus Line. It was the board’s consensus that having a “bus stop” for the general population would probably be unnecessary given that few people walk in Sherman and not many people reside in a “downtown” type area. The discussion went to how Hart Transportation might aid driver-challenged seniors with a demand/response type of program. Don asked that Suzette look into this in conjunction with the 5310 Funding that she is granted from the State. She said she would. A discussion on taxi vouchers and funding for Uber services was exchanged. Jeanne also mentioned that FISH is starting to become active again and will provide rides to seniors who are unable to drive to doctor’s appointments. This issue was left with the idea of further researching it.

NEW SENIOR CENTER: Don was asked about any progress on a new Senior Center. He reported that he walked the potential site at Town Meadows/Volunteer Field with contractor Joe Beatty and Mr. Beatty gave a general outline on where the building would best be placed and some general ideas on what was needed. Mr. Beatty said the site lacks electricity and, of course, a septic system would have to be constructed before the building went up. In his professional opinion, these items would pose no difficulties. Don also reported that Joe felt that the site was ideal, that it was flat and there was plenty of room for amenities such as parking. Art brought up a point he made at the last meeting that we need to check if a building can be built on that property. He added that he was sure it could, but it would be smart to check. That was met with agreement by Don and other board members. Don felt that he had done enough research on his own and Ed suggested that it was important for Don not to do too much and too ask for help. Don heartily agreed and suggested that now, with some background work completed, would be a good time to form a committee with the primary objective to decide what needs to be accommodated by the building. Art agreed and also suggested that possibly two committees are needed. One for feasibility as stated, and another for the fund-raising aspect. Art’s suggestion was met with agreement across the board. Although no vote was taken, the board’s general consensus was one of optimism that this project would be good for Sherman.

LUNCH and LEARN: Janet brought up possible planning for a “Lunch and Learn” event. The board decided that it was early for any planning on that yet.

NEW BUSINESS

Janet asked whether anyone could monitor, or if anyone was monitoring the COA’s email account. That email is: COAshermanct@gmail.com Discussion followed and it was decided that the email account would be more closely monitored.

Janet reminded the commission members that the Sherman JCC is having an upcoming ZOOM meeting with State Senator Julie Kushner. Janet said this is an opportunity to let Senator Kushner know of any concerns for Sherman Seniors.

Sheila reminded everyone that there is a prize in an ongoing contest for “the first snowdrops.” Jeanne informed the committee that she already has snowdrops, so she became the winner of a bird feeder!

A motion to adjourn was made by Art and seconded by Rick Hudson. **Meeting was adjourned at 4:59 pm.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by Don Lowe

Next Meeting: April 19, 2021 at 4pm.