

Town of Sherman
Commission on Aging at the Sherman Senior Center
Monday, September 20, 2021 at 3:30pm

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

Invited: Barbara Ackerman, Ted Hollander

Also Present: Don Lowe, Lynne Gomez, Suzette Berger

Clerk: Ruth Chen Byrnes

The meeting was called to order at 3:36 pm by Chairman L. Arnold.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion to approve the minutes of the regular monthly meeting of July 19, 2021 by J. McRoberts. Seconded by A. vonPlachecki

All voted in favor with the following correction: Page 2, last paragraph, the minutes stated “J. Wey shared that she and C. Sperling (not able to attend) prefer the Volunteer Field location for the new Senior Center...” should be corrected to read that “C. Sperling is not in support of the Town campus location.”

Guest speakers: Barbara Ackerman and Ted Hollander presented a non-profit 55+ senior housing plan (Independent Village of Sherman) to be located on town owned land behind the American Pie/Post Office building. The proposed development would eventually hold 52 units (studio, 1 bedroom, and 2 bedroom, each with a balcony, individual heat and A/C, rooftop deck, and 1800 sq. ft. common room.

Sherman is one of the few towns in Connecticut that lacks senior housing. They would like the Board of Selectmen to bring this proposal to referendum, noting that Sherman seniors make up the bulk of volunteers who have done so much for the town, and now should be cared for and afforded an opportunity to continue to live here.

SENIOR CENTER REPORT: S. Berger stated Carolyn Decker was hired as the Senior Center assistant and is doing a great job. Over 1200 meals year-to-date have been delivered to 30 clients. It is estimated that 12 seniors regularly come to exercise, and 8 – 10 seniors play cards. While some continue to stay home, more and more are participating in activities at the Senior Center. There's interest in evening programs geared for 55+ seniors. The flu clinic went well with three nurses administering the vaccine.

SOCIAL SERVICES REPORT: L. Gomez stated that Energy Assistance applications are under way. There is an app that she uses to gather the information from the applicant. Medicare enrollment kicked off on 9/30/21 and will end on 12/7/21. The Back-to-School program was successful.

OLD BUSINESS:

Feasibility Committee update – Review Engineering report: Several members and D. Lowe met with the engineer at the Town campus site. The potential building is 30 x 80 feet. The bottom level will be the main activity room and kitchen, upstairs will hold offices. The engineer did not provide specifics on blasting ledge. Though not confirmed, the engineer thinks it is possible to tap into exiting well and sewer.

The engineer is requesting specifics as to what the town wants in this building. The current Senior Center is 1400 square feet, and the proposed new building will be 2400 square feet.

Ongoing discussion of Senior Center location: Discussion continued with some commissioners vocalizing their concerns on why Volunteer Field is not receiving the same amount of consideration as the Town campus site. It became clear that the commissioners had differing amounts of information as to the number of potential sites, and the process of evaluation by which some locations are no longer considered. The Town campus site poses more questions as to if the location is feasible and therefore it was chosen to have an engineer look at it. Volunteer Field appears to be an easier location to build on with flat land and open space, but it will require a well, septic system, and power to be brought to the building.

Chairman L.L. Arnold asked for volunteers to form a committee identifying what is needed for this new building, along with a “wish list” of items. C. Sperling, J. Wey, S. Berger, and D. Lowe volunteered.

Comments by Commissioners: S. McMahon shared that effective 10/4/21, some new laws will take effect. Most concerning is the pedestrian crosswalk changes. All vehicles must yield if the pedestrians are close to the crosswalk (not necessarily in the crosswalk) and signal by raising arm and making eye contact. In light of this change, and that evening programs are being considered, the commissioners spoke of the need for better lighting outside the current Senior Center.

S. McMahon moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:10pm. Motion was seconded by J. McRoberts. Vote for: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by Ruth Chen Byrnes

Next meeting: Monday, October 18, 2021, 4:00PM at the Sherman Senior Center