



Town of Sherman
Commission on Aging
Monthly Meeting Minutes
Monday, May 16, 2022

Members Present: Lynda Lee Arnold (Chairman), Janet Wey (Vice Chairman). Commissioners: Ed Hayes, Rick Hudson, Jeanne McRoberts, Sheila McMahon, Art Von Plachecki, Carol Sperling

Members Absent: Suzette Berger (Senior Center), Juan Garcia, Lynne Gomez (Social Services)

Also Present: Don Lowe – First Selectman

Clerk: Christine Aruza

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 PM by Chairman L. Arnold.

Motion made by: R. Hudson moved to approve the minutes

Seconded by: J. McRoberts

Vote For: Unanimous

Senior Center/Social Services Report:

Per S. Berger the International Potluck/Farewell to Lisa Rey has been postponed. The new date is expected to be in the middle of June but has not yet been determined. In addition, the Sherman Senior Center has transitioned to offering congregate meals again on Wednesdays.

The Senior Center also enjoyed hosting the first birthday celebration since the pandemic started. S. Berger advised it was nice to see folks greeting each other again and Brian Redmond entertained everyone on the piano. Birthday parties will continue to be celebrated the first Wednesday of the month.

The new Tech Help program was positive. New clients are signing up for technology help. The instructor will be available for appointments the first Friday of every month.

The ‘Lunch and Learn’ with Lynda Arnold is scheduled for Wednesday, May 25th and is also attracting new clients. Folks have also enjoyed viewing the “Spring into Spring” photographs. S. Berger extended thanks to Art Von Plachecki for the fun project.

Ongoing Business:

Working Group Update:

D. Lowe advised that there is a new development. They are now looking at the Alice Shneckenburger house in the Historic District (14 Route 37 Ctr) for the new Sherman Senior Center. The family would very much like for it to be the new center if possible. The house comes with 6.5 acres. The focus of the current discussion is on the cost required to convert the house from a residence into a municipal building. The driveway has been reimagined (along with a parking lot) by a local contractor and the state department of transportation (DOT).

There are concerns on the board of selectman (BOS) about ongoing maintenance costs and the cost effort to make it into a municipal building. D. Lowe will tour the building tomorrow with Bill Jenks the town building inspector to determine Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance. D. Lowe had previously toured it with a local contractor, Joe Beatty, who is positive about the prospects of using the property for the new center.

J. McRoberts raised a question about how much would be needed to be preserve it as an historic home. D. Lowe acknowledged the concern. He indicated it would also depend on the final cost to purchase the property and convert vis-à-vis the cost of building a new center. The answer is to seek more expertise and information. For example, in addition to the previously mentioned, he consulted the health department about requirements and feasibility of modification to the septic system. The location is ideal.

Discussion then moved to the square footage of the Shneckenburger house. It is approximately 3,000+ square feet and the lower portion of the house would be devoted to the center with office space located on the second floor. There is plenty of space for outdoor patio creation or additional building extension if necessary. A. Von Plachecki voiced concerns about being able to re-size rooms for a large, hall meeting room and the potential structural costs/ability to support anticipated loads. D. Lowe and the working group stated that it would be a necessary part of the inspection.

Ultimately the decision to purchase would need to go to a town referendum. If approved there is someone in the town who has agreed to purchase the house and hold it for the town as a bridge loan.

J. Wey wants all commissioners to be able to see it in order to assess its viability. D. Lowe will send out an invite to the commission to attend the next on-site property review. E. Hayes advised that architect on the working group (Ray Kelly) is in favor of the site. D. Lowe added that the working group as a whole is also in favor, however, work continues on requesting proposals for development of a new center. The commission then agreed to move forward with investigating this option to determine feasibility.

Spring Photo Project Update:

A. Von Plachecki was pleased with how many participants there were in the project. He gave a special thanks to J. Wey and S. McMahon for their help. He brought in all of the submitted photographs for the group's viewing. The commission selected the top, three winning photographs. The three finalists will be framed and put on permanent display in the senior center. Other participants will receive 8x10 prints of their submission. A. Von Plachecki will craft a follow-up article for both papers (*Town Tribune, Sentinel*) with the winners' photographs included.

New Business:

J. Wey inquired about the process for individuals that wish to make donations to the Senior Center for a specific purpose. D. Lowe advised that there is a process and can speak further on it one-on-one.

Adjournment:

J. Wey moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:41 p.m.

R. Hudson seconded the motion.

Vote for: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by Christine Aruza
Next meeting: Monday, June 20, 2022, 4:00PM at Mallory Town Hall