



Town of Sherman
Commission on Aging
Monthly Meeting Minutes
Monday, July 18, 2022

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

Members Absent: Suzette Berger (Senior Center), Dr. Juan Garcia, Art Von
Plachecki

Also Present: Don Lowe – First Selectman, Lynne Gomez (Social Services)

Clerk: Christine Aruza

The meeting was called to order at 4:07 PM by Chairman L. Arnold.

Motion made by: J. Wey moved to approve the minutes

Seconded by: R. Hudson

Vote For: Unanimous

Senior Center/Social Services

L. Gomez advised energy assistance applications will start to get processed August 1st. It is an income eligible process. There are approximately 55 households involved. She also advised that open enrollment for Medicare will occur on October 15th. She encouraged the commission that now is the time to start thinking about these services especially as there are new Medicare plans coming out.

There is a Housatonic Habitat for Humanity program available for senior and veteran homeowners. The “*A Brush with Kindness*” program assists fixed income

homeowners in need with exterior maintenance on their homes in addition to safety improvements and mobility modifications. There is an online sign-up process for interested applicants.

In addition, a new benefits check-up is coming out of the National Council on Aging that covers food, housing, healthcare and transportation. The site (BenefitsCheckUp.org) provides information about and access to available programs. L. Gomez will place an article in the newspapers on how to learn more about the program per a request from S. McMahan. J. Wey inquired if it requires personal information to be inputted. L Gomez advised only a zip code is requested at the outset.

There is also a new, national suicide hotline number available (988) for those in crisis. L. Gomez will run additional articles in both papers for programs such as these and others. Her office will also have information in the Senior Center newsletter as a recurring item. As a general reminder she informed everyone that the pandemic public health emergency has been extended until October 13th.

Per L. Gomez they are also organizing the back-to-school backpacks for 24 Sherman families in need via donations from organizations such as the United Way, the Sherman School and the public. Donations were also made so nine kids could go to summer camp this year.

J. McRoberts complimented L. Gomez on the process of emergency notifications going out to seniors. Per L. Gomez these are not 'robo calls'. Through the Sherman Emergency Support System (SESS) a live person makes the calls to ensure they connect with seniors on the list and verify if they are okay during a national disaster or power outage emergency. They have a list of approximately 60 seniors on the list so far. If they are unable to make contact with a senior on the list a volunteer will go out to the senior's home to check on them. Volunteers can provide transportation to an emergency shelter, food and water in these events.

Ongoing Business:

Working Group Update:

Per D. Lowe there is a meeting coming up this week at 11:00 a.m. There has been little progress on the Schneckenger house as more negative feedback arises.

J. McRoberts referenced A. Von Plachecki's letter about the cost differential between the Schneckenburger house and a new, build-to-suit center. She likes the central location of the house but would like estimated costs on both builds, the costs to run either, and ongoing maintenance costs. She believes the house would be better served to remain as an historic home in Sherman but is open to considering it based on a proper evaluation.

J. Wey inquired if there was pushback from the Sherman Historical Society. Per D. Lowe some of the prior presidents of the historical society are not in favor of utilizing the house for a senior center. However, according to E. Hayes, there are other members of the historical society that he has spoken to that are in favor.

R. Hudson provided an update from the last Board of Selectman (BOS) meeting. He indicated that selectman Joel Bruzinski wanted a checklist that they could go over to ensure they have reviewed and satisfied all important criteria. R. Hudson offered to work with him on it via the working group. According to D. Lowe, selectman Bob Ostrosky wanted concrete information to make appropriate cost projections out one year, five years, 10 years, etc. R. Hudson shared that the selectmen are not against the Schneckenburger house per se – rather they are remaining cautious and hesitant.

E. Hayes advised that from his perspective the two, same concerns raised with the Schneckenburger house – whether in the commission's meetings, the working group or the board of selectman meeting – are the line of sight for the driveway and the ongoing maintenance costs. He cautioned that these answers have been addressed while other members believed the maintenance costs in particular have not been.

Back and forth group discussion continued about the best path forward given ongoing concerns about the property vis-à-vis a new site build. The decision was made to hold the commission's tentatively-listed August 15th meeting if a check list similar to what R. Hudson and J. Bruzinski are working on can be circulated in time for commission discussion during that meeting.

2022 Budget Update:

Per J. Wey the final budget utilization was due and sent in by the end of the fiscal year for Sherman.

New Business:

L. Arnold received a call from Kaitlyn Lyle from the News Times about the senior housing project. L. Arnold stressed it is not a Commission on Aging project. K. Lyle shared she is a new reporter doing an article on it and would be happy to hear regardless from the commission if anyone wishes to comment.

Adjournment:

R. Hudson moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:09 p.m.

J. McRoberts seconded the motion.

Vote for: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by Christine Aruza
Next meeting: Monday, August 15, 2022, 4:00PM at Mallory Town Hall