

TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON
COMMISSION ON AGING
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2024
SENIOR CENTER

Present: Chairperson Eric Rosenberg, Vice Chairperson Cindy Craig, Commission Members, Kim Crabbe, Mairann Mankowski, Bonnie Berkovich, and Shelley Grendzinski
Alternate members: Beth Angel and Kathy Megan

Also in attendance: Town Council member Jack Solomon, Senior Services Director JoAnn Ewing

Call to Order and Seating of Alternates

Dr. Rosenberg called the meeting to order at 4:04pm

Beth Angel was seated as a regular member in the absence of Carol McLaughlin

Adoption of Agenda

A motion was made to adopt the agenda as written by Mr. Crabbe, 2nd by Ms. Mankowski

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the January 11, 2024 minutes was made by Ms. Craig, 2nd by Ms. Mankowski

Public Comment

Len Johnson, 21 Long Crossing Road shared an article published in the Hartford Courant which stated that falls are one of the highest causes of death in older citizens and Connecticut is one of the top states that has the oldest population. He expressed his concerns that the majority of the Town's budget goes to education, where a small percent is spent on health and human services.

Announcements from the Chair

Dr. Rosenberg announced the resignation of Carol McLaughlin and Ms. Ewing's retirement in March. He asked members to present suggestions and discuss ways the commission can help with the transition of a new Senior Services Director and new assignment of COA membership.

Senior Services Report

Ms. Ewing reported that the Center has been continuing to work with AARP to offer tax preparation assistance to older citizens. She commented that the online scheduling with Operation Fuel is difficult and confusing. She met with Estuary to discuss improvements that can be made for volunteer drivers. Ms. Ewing announced "The Aging Gracefully" series at the Center has begun. This week featured information on dementia. The benefits of home health care verses home care presentation is scheduled for next week and future series are to be announced. Other scheduled events are a Valentines celebration, The Clean Air Shared Energy informational program hosted by Eversource via Zoom, and an ice cream social in May. Ways to support the staff at the Center

was discussed by members. Ms. Ewing suggested members to visit the Center to experience daily activities and just be present. Ms. Angel recommended that the COA contact Town Manager Cox to ask for his input into the selection of the new Senior Center Director, the Chair agreed to do this.

Old Business

Reports from Housing, Transportation and Health & Wellness Groups

Housing: Ms. Craig asked members to consider joining her and Ms. Grendzinski in the working group to improve housing, as a result from Ms. McLaughlin's resignation. Ms. Craig announced that Town Manager Cox has approved the use of the Town Hall's Community Room for the vendor fair which focuses on ways citizens can stay in their homes as they age. A tentative date will be sometime in May.

Transportation: Ms. Berkovich announced the group continues to look into potential possibilities in improving transportation for older citizens.

Health and Wellness: Ms. Crabbe met with the Adult Education Classes Authority with the College of Stanton Island via Zoom to gather information about the Options Program for mature learners. The possibility of another type of town survey to determine what kind of topics and themes the public would like to be included in the program.

EHCC Fundraising Update: Ms. Craig announced a \$2,000.00 pledge was made by Ismet Dedushaj, Owner of Lakeside Restaurant. The possibility of a volunteer/donor appreciation luncheon or dinner at Lakeside was mentioned by Dr. Rosenberg. The committee has now reached their \$15,000.00 goal. A fundraising event with Po's Rice and Spice is in the planning stages. Dr. Rosenberg informed members of a temporary glitch in the UR Community Cares system, therefore he could not report the exact number of new sign-ups. A small number of the informational tear-off sheets have been handed out by the police department and food bank. Ms. Angel is continuing her efforts to help people sign up for the program. Ms. Craig expressed her concerns that people may not sign up for help because they feel they are not in financial distress. Ms. Ewing stated that more work needs to be done on educating the public about the services that are offered, highlighting companionship to citizens who are experiencing loneliness.

Housing Authority: Ms. Grendzinski reported that grant work improvements are continuing to be made. There is now one apartment available with wheelchair accessibility.

Budget: Dr. Rosenberg presented documentation that was presented to the Board of Finance on the behalf of the Commission on Aging. He also announced the year-to-date available budget of \$2,027.56 with expenditures of \$594.44.

New Business

Dr. Rosenberg informed members that he is currently working on creating a contact list of Commission on Aging Contacts from all towns in Connecticut. He has continued to write letters to government representatives to express the need for support to fund Connecticut Energy Assistance.

Public Comment

Len Johnson, 21 Long Crossing Road expressed his concerns for more medical transportation and to start planning and preparing how to support the increasing older population now.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:31pm

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Maynard
Recording Clerk