

Mansfield Commission on Aging Minutes
9:30 AM – Senior Center
Monday, February 8, 2010

PRESENT: K. Grunwald (staff), M. Thatcher, J. Scottron, C. Pellegrine (Vice-Chair), J. Quarto, A. Holinko, T. Rogers, S. Gordon, M. Gerling (staff), C. Phillips, L. Bilokur (guest), E. Poirier, Matt Hart (Town Manager/guest)

REGRETS: J. Adamcik, T. Quinn

- I. **Call to Order:** Vice-Chair C. Pellegrine called the meeting to order at 9:32 AM.
- II. **Appointment of Recording Secretary:** K. Grunwald agreed to take minutes for the meeting.
- III. Acceptance of Minutes of the **January 11** meeting: Request to add Jan Scottron's name as being in attendance. The minutes were approved with that correction.
- IV. **Correspondence** – Chair and Staff: K. Grunwald reported that he has mailed a letter to T. Quinn that will be sent to J. Kenny on behalf of the Commission.
- V. **New Business**
 - A. Long-Range Plan Review: K. Grunwald distributed an Executive Summary of the report with the addition of a section on Status of Action Steps/Update. There was a discussion regarding several aspects of the plan including Services & Support and Health Care Services. M. Thatcher raised the issue of Human Services' offices possibly moving to the Wellness Center, and the potential impact on the use of this space for wellness services. C. Phillips moved (Seconded by J. Scottron) that "the Wellness Center continue to use the available space for senior health and wellness services due to the expanding senior population as identified in the Commission's Long-Range Plan." There was much discussion about how to specify how the space will be used; does it need to be limited to health and wellness? Motion passed unanimously.
 - B. Advisory Committee on the Needs of Persons with Disabilities: K. Grunwald reported that members have been invited to attend next month's meeting.
 - C. Non-profit Agency Funding Requests: K. Grunwald distributed copies of applications from non-profit agencies for review and recommendation by the Commission. Members will review them and present their recommendations at the March meeting.

D. "Other":

-C. Pellegrine expressed a concern that as the Town is currently in the process of hiring two new staff the priority should be for a full-time Social Worker and a Part-Time Coordinator. She feels that there are volunteers that could assist with the Coordinator's position. J. Quarto doesn't feel that she knows enough about it; M. Thatcher feels that we need two full-time staff. M. Gerling feels that it would be very difficult to have a part-time Coordinator, although she agrees with the need for a full-time social worker. Other members agreed that the need is for two full-time staff. Motion: "The Commission urges the town council to seriously consider expanding the social worker's position to full-time licensed clinical social worker, recognizing the increasing needs of the senior population." Motion passed unanimously. C. Pellegrine will communicate these motions to the Town Council.

-Matt Hart raised two items: 1) Relocation of Human Services to the Wellness Center- C. Phillips explained the motion that was passed regarding this. Matt explained that the intent was not to force any changes on the Senior Center, and that the move is not planned at this time. (2) Preliminary thoughts regarding a Community Conversation on Senior Services, co-sponsored by the Commission and the Association. Given that several issues around senior services have been raised recently, the question came up if it would be useful to bring in an impartial facilitator to lead a discussion and develop a plan for the future. This would be a forum to express concerns and develop a plan to move forward. A. Holinko feels that this is a pivotal time for seniors to address these issues and look at new ideas and opportunities and to plan for the future. This may bring other people into the conversation. C. Phillips raised a concern that there is a silent majority and a vocal minority; she worries that a forum like this could be controlled by the vocal minority. M. Gerling does not feel that there is a terrible division, but that what is needed is for seniors to get to know applicants for positions. C. Phillips feels that a lot of people who use the Senior Center did not understand what people were so upset about regarding the personnel issues. C. Pellegrine does not feel that all of these problems could be resolved in a forum. J. Scottron supports use of volunteer drivers, but feels that she was shut down by raising concerns. Matt explained that the issue of volunteer drivers was just raised as an example, and he reiterated that the conversation would be sponsored by the Commission and the Association. T. Rogers acknowledged the concern that the vocal minority goes directly to management and the Council, and feels that they should be referred back to the organizations that represent them. M. Gerling stated that the conversation might be helpful, but T. Rogers cautioned that this could be influenced by a dissatisfied minority. L. Bilokur questions whether or not the Association is representative of the people who use the Senior Center, and she feels that this was exemplified by their lack of support for

restoring the full-time Senior Social Worker's position. C. Phillips stated that these issues have been presented in the long-range plan and in Mansfield 2020; both sides of the issue need to be considered.

Recommendation: The Commission should consider the offer from the town and discuss at the next meeting. L. Bilokur considered including a geriatrician if a forum is to be held.

- M. Hart mentioned the probate court consolidation, and C. Pellegrine spoke to some of the difficulties associated with the consolidation. Requirements for the judge have changed, and there are a lot of details that need to be worked out. The Mansfield/Coventry court is merging with the Tolland/Willington court. Preference is that this will be in a municipal building; no location has been decided on. The move will officially take place on Jan. 1, 2011.

VI. **Optional Reports** on Services/Needs of Town Aging Populations

A. Health Care Services

Wellness Center and Wellness Program – K. Grunwald reminded Commission members that we are continuing to provide a range of wellness services. Interviews for the Social Work position are proceeding.

B. Social, Recreational and Educational

Senior Center – M. Gerling: distributed copies of her monthly report.

Senior Center Assoc. –Tom Rogers: announced that if it is snowing this Wed. the Executive Committee will reschedule to the Friday at 10.

C. Housing

Assisted Living Advisory Committee: no report.

Wrights Way: J. Adamcik stated that there is nothing to report on.

Juniper Hill, Jensen's Park, Glen Ridge: no reports.

D. Related Town and Regional Organizations such as:

Advisory Committee on the Needs of Persons with Disabilities, Senior Resources of Eastern CT: no reports.

VII. **Old Business**

A. Long Range Plan for 2007- 2010: please review the Executive Summary that was distributed.

B. Sub-Committee Report: New Senior Center: no report.

C. Triad: no report.

VIII. **Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 AM.

Next meeting: **Monday, March 8, 2010** at 9:30 AM at the Senior Center.

We will extend an invitation to Waldo Klein to attend the next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Grunwald