Report of the
Commission on Aging

To the Mansfield
Town Council
2022
The Committee on Aging was set up by the Mansfield Town council early on. Its name has been changed to the Commission on Aging (COA).

Part of the Charge to the COA is: “The Commission shall advise the Town Council, the Town Manager, and the Director of Human Services as to the needs and concerns of the Senior Citizens of the Town of Mansfield.”

This presentation is intended to fulfill that responsibility for 2022.
Percentage of Seniors

• The percentage of Seniors in the population is projected to continue to increase over the next decade.

• “The U.S. Census Bureau projects Connecticut's age 65+ population will grow from 470,183 (13.8% of the total state population) in 2000 to 794,405 in 2030, constituting 21.5% of the projected total state population.”

Areas of Focus

- All areas of senior concerns are important and should be addressed as opportunity permits.
- The Commission on Aging has chosen three areas to encourage the Town Council to put particular focus on.
Areas of proposed focus

• 1. Aging in Community
• 2. Transportation for Seniors
• 3. The Mansfield Senior Center.
Aging in Community

• Some seniors are able to “age in place”, i.e. live in their long term home

• For others, a better option might be “aging in community” i.e. moving to housing within the community that is more size appropriate, senior friendly and which may have assisted living services like bus service, meal availability and nursing services.
The Commission feels there is a need for more planning for “age related housing” in the Town of Mansfield.
• Summary of major senior housing in Mansfield.
  – **Wrights Way**, which in its inception had many seniors living there, has transitioned to a different housing model. A few seniors have even moved from Wright’s Way and are living at Juniper Hill Village. A few more have moved elsewhere.
Aging in Community

• Summary of major senior housing in Mansfield.
  – **Rolling Hills** Pricier units have been brought in. Many seniors currently living there fear that they will have to move due to higher park fees.
Aging in Community

• Summary of major senior housing in Mansfield.
  – **Glen Ridge:** We have heard that due to aging units, Glen Ridge is replacing and upgrading many of their units. The cost for this will be passed on to everyone living there. The concern is that seniors living on a fixed income will have a difficult time paying a mortgage and/or higher condo fees.
Aging in Community

• Summary of major senior housing in Mansfield.
  – **Juniper Hill Village:** This facility was built with HUD funds and has a long waiting list.
Summary of major senior housing in Mansfield.

- **New facilities development**: The Town’s recent facilities development study stated that one of the potential designs could include 20 units of age restricted senior housing at the renovated Goodwin School site. While this is a positive step, this number is woefully inadequate. Twenty units is not enough.
Summary of major senior housing in Mansfield.

- “Affordable housing” - Seniors in the town of Mansfield need housing that is not deemed “affordable housing” because it meets a particular formula. This has the potential to price seniors on a fixed income out of the market. They need housing that seniors can afford to live in! At this point in time, some of the seniors in the town of Mansfield are being priced out of the housing market. Commission members have shared anecdotal cases were seniors have left Mansfield because the cost to live here is too high.
Transportation

- We are very grateful to have Commission member Will Bigl on the advisory board for WRTD.
Transportation

• Mansfield is a great town to live in, - **IF you are able to drive!**

• We continue to hear horror stories of seniors who are no longer able to drive and the difficulty they have getting to medical and other appointments.
Transportation

• Despite WRTD making some improvements, and the Senior Center providing volunteer drivers, much remains to be done to allow Mansfield seniors who cannot drive to reliably get to their activities and medical appointments.
Senior Center

- We are very encouraged by the recent facilities study that the Mansfield Town Council authorized. The Commission wholeheartedly endorses putting a very high priority on replacing the old Senior Center Building. It is inadequate, hard to maintain and prohibitively expensive to renovate.
“The Commission feels very strongly that the Commission on Aging, the Town citizenry and the Senior Center Staff should have early and continuous input into the design process for a new Senior Center.”
Thank you!

• We appreciate the Town Council taking the time to hear our report and these areas of concern.

• We would be happy to set up a meeting for the Town Council to tour our current Senior Center facility and discuss any areas of concerns for seniors further.