

TRUMBULL SENIOR CITIZEN COMMISSION
MINUTES
April 27, 2012

Commission members in attendance: Linda Ciocci, Chairperson; Joan Mehlhorn, Vice Chairperson; Helen Weinstein, Secretary; Dee Chiota; Connie Cleary; Amy DeZenzo; Fran Hanna; Gary Raytar (arrived 11:15am); Rita Grossi, Alternate.

Commission members not present: Dorothy Merritt, Alternate.

Non-Commission Members in attendance: Jean Ferreira, Senior Center Director (joined in 10:35am).

Public Attendance: McKenna Chiota, Sally Kiman, Sylvia Jones, Gloria Monaco and Norma Pace.

Meeting called to order: 10:03AM

Public Session: Center member Sally Kiman stated that she had heard that nonresident fees for renewal might be raised to \$20. L. Ciocci stated that the renewal fees would not be discussed with the public and that a decision on fees was to be made in the next month. S. Kiman stated her opinion that many current members could not afford such a fee raise and, therefore, may not renew. S. Kiman added that she had heard that a children's group may begin classes at the Center. L. Ciocci stated that lots of rumors had started. Center member Sylvia Jones stated that she also had heard that the Youth Group was looking for a location, that the contract on the Senior Center was due to expire, and that the Youth Group was "eyeing Priscilla Place"; she added that, in her opinion, locating the Youth Group at the Center was a mistake. She feels that "the seniors had a hard time redoing the building" and she "would not want to have the kids wreck the place." She added that there had been a youth camp at the Center in the past and felt that the Center was damaged as a result. She reiterated that she did not think that the Youth Group should come to the Senior Center.

L. Ciocci closed the Public Session at 10:08AM.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION by J. Mehlhorn to approve the minutes of March 23, 2012 as filed, seconded by D. Chiota.
VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Chairperson's Report: L. Ciocci stated that the Center would host an Open House on Sunday, May 20, 2012 from 1:00-3:00PM, and that the event had been coordinated with the schedule of the First Selectman so that he could attend.

Secretary Report: L. Ciocci provided H. Weinstein with completed surveys, recommending that the Commission disregard those that were unsigned and, instead, follow-up with the signed, negative surveys to discuss how to make these individuals happy. She asked H. Weinstein to read the four signed, negative surveys aloud. F. Hanna asked if it would be best to review the surveys at the next

meeting. L. Ciocci pointed out that there were not many signed, negative surveys. C. Cleary suggested that each person be contacted for further comment. H. Weinstein asked where the surveys came from. L. Ciocci stated that they were submitted with the audit and that the Director just got them. H. Weinstein questioned how the commission could handle them today. C. Cleary stated that if the commission was to respond to the surveys they needed to know the content and urged that they be read aloud if the surveys were not too long. L. Ciocci stated that she wished to address them. H. Weinstein proceeded to read to the commission the surveys from Amy DeZenzo, Irene Iannello, Audry Marks, and Marriette Roy. Criticisms included a desire for menu changes; the need for more trips and for scheduled trips not to be cancelled at the last minute; opinions that the activities are not challenging; requests for a more inviting atmosphere; requests for a more professional, friendly staff; an opinion that the commission meetings were conducted in an unprofessional and argumentative manner; a suggestion that the commission meetings be held at Town Hall; a suggestion that a twice-yearly questionnaire be implemented to gather suggestions on how to improve the Center; a suggestion that the seniors should be urged to participate in volunteerism within the Town and/or with children; requests for the Center to provide coffee, water & cups on an ongoing basis; and opinions that the Center is a dirty, depressing, unwelcoming facility with unkempt grounds.

The commissioners proceeded to discuss many of the points addressed in the surveys. J. Mehlhorn noted that the surveys were nearly a year old and that many changes to the Center had been made since then. She suggested contacting each person to get updated feedback and further suggested that a new questionnaire be sent out. L. Ciocci suggested implementing a twice-yearly questionnaire system. C. Cleary noted that one of the surveyed members was present and asked A. DeZenzo to provide updated feedback. A. DeZenzo questioned why the surveys were being reviewed now. L. Ciocci stated that they were provided to J. Ferreira during the audit. F. Hanna added that the audit of the Senior Center occurred the previous Monday. A. DeZenzo provided suggestions for additional programs that she felt would improve upon the current offerings, including cake decorating, cooking, crafts and computers. F. Hanna added that a ceramics class had been offered in the past and would, in her opinion, be a welcomed addition to programming, and that instructors for such classes possibly could be found through Bullard Havens Institute. R. Grossi stated that she attempted to join in on a line dance class but found it beyond her abilities and suggested that a beginners-level line dance class would be popular. She added that she currently enjoyed the Italian class. J. Mehlhorn noted that the attendance of the chair exercise class has grown steadily. A. DeZenzo offered the name of Gary Koos, who teaches computer classes, as a possible replacement for the former instructor who is recuperating from surgery so that the computer classes currently suspended can resume. L. Ciocci stated that the cost of additional instructors is a factor.

Center Director Report: L. Ciocci noted that the Director had provided a recommendation for the upgrade of the Nutrition Room (i.e., downstairs facility) and Snack Bar (i.e., upstairs facility) to comply with the requirements as outlined by Patrice Sulik of the Monroe/Trumbull Board of Health (BOH). F. Hanna asked if the commission had considered offering prepackaged/microwaveable items purchased in bulk that can be reheated under the current Class I designation for the Snack Bar before undergoing the expense of a Class III upgrade. L. Ciocci replied that the downstairs still needs an update to enable the Director to host dinner dances and special events. C. Cleary stated that the seniors were more interested in the everyday use of the Snack Bar and not as concerned about catering special events; she also questioned the quality of foods procured from, for example, Costco. L. Ciocci stated her opinion that the quality of Costco prepackaged food was very good but that bulk quantities would need storage and that the storage refrigerator/freezer needed to comply with NSF regulations. A.

DeZenzo asked how the current nutrition program was allowed to operate without the NSF-grade appliances and urged the commissioners to consider a less expensive alternate to the pending upgrade as outlined in the Director's report. L. Ciocci called J. Ferreira into the meeting to elaborate.

J. Ferreira proceeded to inform the commissioners, emphasizing that any plan needed to be outlined in writing per the request of the internal auditor. She stated that, according to P. Sulik, the downstairs currently operates as an approved kitchen under CW Resources (the Permittee) and that the stove complies with NSF regulations; the current nutrition program prepares the food off-site and uses the stove to keep meals at the proper temperature for serving. She has been informed that the Senior Center currently cannot override this permit or use this kitchen without obtaining a one-time use permit licensed to the Town. She stated that the NSF requirements would be satisfied with the purchase of a certified refrigerator/freezer (costing approximately \$4500) for the downstairs facility and a certified microwave (costing approximately \$167) for the upstairs facility; if the Center refrained from offering fresh fruits and vegetables, there was no need to purchase an additional prep sink. She added that the Snack Bar cannot operate until the above-mentioned NSF-certified appliances are installed so that the downstairs could store the prepackaged fare which then could be brought upstairs daily for reheating and/or serving. The current upstairs refrigerator cannot be used to store items because it is not NSF-certified. A. DeZenzo asked for clarification on the differences between the Class I, II, and III certifications, and J. Ferreira proceeded to explain the factors that determine each classification. She added that, according to Rich (of the BOH), a certified food handler was necessary to supervise and she believed that the Town would cover the cost for certification and training. F. Hanna suggested that the Director first make a list to get the upstairs open and then see what was needed for downstairs. J. Ferreira reiterated the BOH recommendations which specify the needed purchases to bring the Center in compliance with NSF requirements. A. DeZenzo stated that the commission needed to go through the bidding process and could not just approve purchases. L. Ciocci asked what the typical time frame would be for this process. J. Ferreira suggested that it could take a month at least. She added that pricing needs to be reviewed; she stated that food items offered for sale would need to be priced so that the Snack Bar could operate with a neutral budget. L. Ciocci requested a motion to vote to recommend proceeding with the needed upgrade.

MOTION by C. Cleary that Jean Ferreira prepares a recommendation outlining the requirements needed for purchasing appliances and that Jean Ferreira then proceeds with that recommendation through the bidding process, seconded by J. Mehlhorn.

REMARKS: H. Weinstein cautioned that making a motion on recommending purchases would suggest that the commission was agreeing to pay for the upgrade costs. In her opinion, such large costs should be covered by the Town as the Center was a Town facility. A. DeZenzo agreed but asked for clarification as to what funds were available for use by the commission. J. Ferreira stated that the two accounts have been merged into one Special Agency account and that a Building and Maintenance line item in the budget for the Center was not intended to cover upgrade purchases. She clarified that much of the Special Agency account was designated for programming at the time that the donations and/or newsletter sponsorship fees were collected. A. DeZenzo stated that the only way to fund the upgrade costs would be to request a special appropriation once the commission agrees that they want to pursue the upgrade. J. Mehlhorn urged the Director to continue to price-compare and added that she should check for used appliances as a cost-cutting measure. H. Weinstein asked that the motion be amended to ensure that the upgrade proceed as a Town rather than a commission expense. J. Ferreira agreed that she should request a meeting to present a proposal to the Town on the upgrade. H. Weinstein asked that the previous motion be reread; discussion followed on how to amend the motion to better reflect

the desires of the commission. A. DeZenzo asked for clarification as to the proper procedures to follow for a pending appropriation from the Town. L. Ciocci urged the commission to use more direct language in the motion.

C. Cleary rescinded her previous motion.

MOTION was made by A. DeZenzo that Jean Fereira meets with the First Selectman to discuss the necessary equipment for the opening of the Senior Center Nutrition Center and Snack Bar, seconded by J. Mehlhorn.

REMARKS: G. Raytar suggested that a subcommittee be established so that commission members could attend the meeting. J. Fereira agreed to invite the First Selectman to meet and further stated that the proposal would need to be presented to the Board of Finance following approval by the First Selectman.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by A. DeZenzo that, upon the approval of the First Selectman for the purchase of equipment for the Senior Center Nutrition Center and Snack Bar, the commission formally request that this purchase be put on the agenda of the Board of Finance to appropriate monies needed for the purchase of this equipment, seconded by D. Chiota.

REMARKS: A. DeZenzo stated that a motion was not needed on the bidding process as this step would automatically follow.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

J. Fereira stated that she will put her recommendation in writing and will forward same to the First Selectman. L. Ciocci asked that the Director seek a substitute instructor for the computer classes, adding that Gary Koos was a possible candidate; she also urged the Director to investigate ceramics, cake decorating and cooking as potential new classes.

New Business: D. Chiota requested that the commissioners discuss membership and programming fees. She stated that the Easton Senior Center does not charge fees because it accepts state and federal grants. R. Grossi added that, when she resided in Hamden, she was told that any senior in the state of Connecticut can go to any senior center. D. Chiota clarified that she was told that membership fees must be the same for all members if the center receives federal or state grants. F. Hanna asked if the Trumbull center was precluded from charging fees because of grants used for transportation. J. Fereira clarified that using state and/or federal grant money for building maintenance would prevent a center from differentiating between resident/nonresident in fee costs. She added that The Center at Priscilla Place was cleared from restrictions on membership fees because the building is no longer classified as a school. F. Hanna cautioned the Director to keep potential restrictions in mind when reviewing grants to avoid any issues with membership fees. J. Mehlhorn stated that the Easton Senior Center is attached to a school building and accepts block grants, which is why membership fees cannot be implemented. She added that Shelton charges membership and Fairfield charges for programming but not for membership. L. Ciocci stated that Bethel does not charge a membership fee but that a \$1/class participation fee is required; Monroe charges a membership fee (\$5/resident; \$10/nonresident) and additional program fees. J. Mehlhorn pointed out that the Monroe center suffers from poor participation. L. Ciocci stated that Fairfield charges program fees but not membership fees. F. Hanna stated that the Baldwin Center of Stratford charges membership (\$5/resident; \$10/nonresident) plus \$2-

5 for daily classes and \$25 for 5-week art classes. J. Mehlhorn stated that Shelton charges no class fees but does differentiate with membership fees (\$5/resident; \$7/Valley; \$10/nonresident).

Discussion turned to fundraising. F. Hanna stated that the Easton center holds tag sales that generate large proceeds; J. Mehlhorn concurred. L. Ciocci stated that our newsletter sponsorship raises money for programming. F. Hanna noted that newsletters, dinner dances and registration renewal all contribute to program funding. H. Weinstein added that a line item exists in the budget for programming costs as well.

The next meeting of the Trumbull Senior Citizen Commission is scheduled for Friday, May 25, 2012, at 10:00AM.

MOTION was made by D. Chiota to adjourn the meeting, seconded by J. Mehlhorn.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Adjourned: 11:54: PM

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Donahue, Clerk