

SENIOR CITIZEN COMMISSION
February 22, 2013

The Senior Citizen Commission, of the Town of Trumbull, held a scheduled meeting on Friday, February 22, 2013 in the First Selectman's Conference Room in the Trumbull Town Hall.

Members Present: Rachel Yahwak, Chairperson
Roberta Bellows, Amy DeZenzo, Rita Grossi, Joan Mehlhorn, Gary Raytar,
Helen Weinstein and alternates Linda Harris and Dorothy Merritt

Also Present: First Selectman, Timothy M. Herbst; John Marsilio, Director of Public Works;
Allen White, Director of Facilities and Jean Ferreira, Senior Center Director

The following is a brief summary of the meeting.

A quorum being present the Chairperson called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Public Comment

Sylvia Jones commented that she received a letter from the First Selectman advising her that if you are a member of the Senior Center Committee, you cannot be appointed to this Commission. Ms. Jones requested an explanation, as to why this is not permitted.

The First Selectman advised Ms. Jones that the reason relates to the checks and balances of government which does not allow for the co-mingling of an Association and a Commission.

The First Selectman then asked to be recognized, as there were a few issues he wished to address.

Mr. Herbst remarked how proud he is of the Public Works Department and Emergency Responders for the excellent job they did in coordinating the storm clean-up. He, therefore, takes exception to the public criticism made by Commissioner Raytar on the handling of the storm response. The First Selectman asked that in the future Commission members contact him directly, if there are any town issues that need to be addressed.

The First Selectman also wished to have an understanding that minutes of previous meetings cannot be changed or altered without the approval of the entire Commission.

Lastly, Mr. Herbst asked that the record reflect that there is no political agenda to the appointments made to this Commission and others, as well. Appointments to the Senior Citizen Commission were based on the candidate's dedication to improving the Senior Center and the senior population at large.

Commissioner Raytar was recognized for rebuttal. Gary Raytar advised that his statements on the storm-clean-up have been taken out of context. He also informed that it was the Clerk who made the initial contact seeking clarification on a motion he made. At that time, he asked the Clerk to include items he brought up for discussion under New Business.

The Chairperson interjected that the New Business item he was referring to involved Stern Village, which this Commission has no jurisdiction over and that she informed Commissioner Raytar of this by

e-mail. Chairperson Yahwak stressed that Senior Citizen Commissioners may attend Housing Authority meetings, as an individual but not as a representative of this Commission.

Commissioner Raytar was then questioned as to whether a meeting with Mr. Holcombe of the Greater Bridgeport Transit has been scheduled. Mr. Raytar responded that he will participate in the collaborative meeting Mr. Holcombe is arranging with Town officials at a date yet to be scheduled.

At this point, Commissioner DeZenko moved that Under Old Business the agenda item, Kitchen Committee be taken out of order to allow for comments by Public Works personnel. This was seconded by Joan Mehlhorn and unanimously carried.

Allen White, the Town's Facilities Director, presented two proposals to bring the kitchen up to health code standards for food serving. The cost figures were estimated at \$110,000.00 for a basic warming kitchen and \$130,000.00 for a full service one.

Commissioner DeZenko suggested that, given the cost, it might be prudent to hire a catering company to handle the entire food service operation. There was agreement that this option could prove to be more financially beneficial. It would also free the Center from the responsibility of food preparation and handling, which involves numerous health issues.

Allen White advised that the catering option would reduce the cost to approximately \$50,000. He noted that the existing counters will still need to be replaced with stainless steel and that he could possibly lower the cost by acquiring them second hand.

Upon further discussion the following motion was made.

MOTION MADE (Bellows), seconded (Grossi) to look into upgrading the kitchen with the intent of hiring an outside caterer to service the Senior Center. Vote: In Favor (6) Yahwak, Bellows, DeZenko, Grossi, Mehlhorn - Abstention (1) Raytar.

The Director of Public Works, John Marsilio recommended that the catering contract be put out to bid and strongly suggested that the Commission collaborate with the Director of Health on the RFP specifications. Mr. Marsilio also indicated that the construction part of the upgrading project could be handled by the Public Works Department.

The Kitchen Committee will update the Board at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION MADE (DeZenko) and seconded (Mehlhorn) to accept the minutes of the January 25, 2013 regularly scheduled meeting, as recorded. Vote: In Favor (6): Yahwak, Bellows, DeZenko, Grossi, Mehlhorn - Opposed (1): Raytar (Opposed, as the Issue he presented under New Business was not included in the text.)

Secretary's Report

Helen Weinstein informed that a letter of complaint was received from Joyce Michaels regarding the uncleanliness of the Functions Room. Follow-up correspondence received from Ms. Michaels indicated

that when she returned this week she found the room to be in good order. The Director agreed to keep on top of it.

Joan Mehlhorn informed that painting materials are still being dumped into the sink. A member of the painting class commented that it is the cleaning service who is not attending to the sink. The Director relayed that Allen White has advised her that as the paints are oil based, materials cannot be cleaned in the sink. Jean Fereira will remind participants again, that they are to use the sink responsibly. She will also speak with Allen White to try to come to some agreement with the cleaning service.

Chairman's Report

It was brought to the Board's attention that termites have been found in the billiards room. The exterminating company informed the Director that due to cold weather issues a thorough treatment has to wait until spring. Director agreed to contact the exterminator to see that the infected areas are sprayed, as soon as possible.

Directors Report

Jean Fereira advised of up-coming events. A special Bingo will be held on March 22nd. Bobbie Bellows, Joan Mehlhorn, Rita Grossi and Rachael Yahwak volunteered to assist. The Commission's March 15th get acquainted coffee hour has been announced in the newsletter. The Director is also looking into sponsoring a 60's Dance.

Ms. Fereira will be presenting the budget to the Board of Finance on March 6th at 2:45 p.m. Any Commissioners who wish to attend may do so.

The Director reported on the two senior transportation application grants currently in progress. The Selectman has been informed that it may be beneficial to have the GBTA continue to process and manage the grant application. This will allow the GBTA to take charge of providing the additional transportation services set by the Town for their senior population.

Special events are being planned in May to celebrate Senior Citizen month. Jean Fereira asked for volunteers to assist her in coordinating these events. A Committee consisting Rachael Yahwak, Linda Harris, Rita Grossi and Joan Mehlhorn offered to work with Director.

The Commission's upcoming "meet and greet" scheduled for March 15th was discussed. Rita Grossi offered to assist the Director in providing the refreshments. The Chairperson asked that all Commissioners make an effort to attend.

At Commissioner Grossi request, the Director will provide her with contact information for any senior residents who have recently moved into Town.

Old Business

The latest draft of the proposed By-Laws was reviewed. The areas noted for editing were, as follows:

ART. V, Sec. 5.2 – Amend to "the fourth Friday of every month".

Art. VI, Sec. 6.4 – Correct typo to read presiding.

Art. V, Sec. 5.5 – Amend to read “the Clerk of the Commission”.

Upon discussion and review the following motion was made regarding the proposed revisions to the wording of Art. II, Sec. 2.1 “General Purposes”.

MOTION MADE (DeZenzo), seconded (Weinstein) and unanimously carried to approve the wording of Art. II, Sec. 2.1, as read by Amy DeZenzo.

The Chair then called for a motion for the approval of the By-Laws.

MOTION MADE (Mehlhorn), seconded (Grossi) to approve the By-Laws of the Senior Citizen Commission, as corrected.

Vote: In Favor (6) – Yahwak, Mehlhorn, DeZenzo, Bellows, Weinstein, Grossi - Opposed (1) – Raytar

MOTION CARRIES 6-1

(Mr. Raytar indicated opposition to the four year term of office, as stated in Art. IV, Sec. 4.2)

Chairperson Yahwak thanked the By-Law Committee for their efforts in bringing this to conclusion. Copies of the approved By-Laws will be distributed at the March meeting.

It was agreed that agenda items Self-evaluation of Senior Center and Audit Report be tabled until the next regularly scheduled meeting.

The next item on the agenda was discussion on the Gatekeepers Program for Seniors. Joan Mehlhorn advised that she spoke with a representative of the Gatekeepers Program. The program is funded by the State with no cost to seniors for any support provided. The people of Gatekeepers work with seniors who are in their homes and need help but don't know how to go about getting assistance. They do not enter a home without first calling to see if they are open to their assistance.

Commissioner Mehlhorn thought there were many positive aspects to the program and has requested additional literature for the Commission's review. There was general agreement that the program had merit and should be looked into further. Commissioner Mehlhorn will try to arrange for a representative from Gatekeepers to speak at next month's meeting. The Director thought it would be beneficial to have feedback from Social Services and will ask them to attend.

Dorothy Merritt, speaking on behalf of the Finance Committee, informed that she has not as yet received clarification from the Finance Department on how use fees should be handled for programs conducted at the Center.

New Business

Copies of the Trumbull Senior Center Information Brochure were distributed for review and discussion at the next scheduled meeting.

Commissioner Bellows led the discussion on Policies and Fees. The sub-committee formed by this Commission has looked into the current policies and fees of the Senior Center. Roberta Bellows provided an overview of the survey conducted on the policies and fees established by Senior Centers in surrounding towns.

The membership fees varied from town to town. Trumbull's current membership fee is \$3.00 for residents and \$10.00 for non-residents. None of the towns charge instructors for use of the building. Instructors are paid in the range of \$30.00 to \$60.00 per hour, depending on the town. Fees to attend classes differed widely from town to town. Liability insurance policy also varied. In Trumbull, instructors are not considered Town employees and must provide their own insurance.

Trumbull does not charge for classes and it was noted that, on the whole, non-residents were participating in the programs more frequently than Trumbull residents. Several Commissioners took issue with Trumbull taxpayers funding programs being utilized largely by non-residents and favored having instructors paid through attendance fees charged to class participants. Elaine Wang, Executive Assistant to the First Selectman, informed that any change in the current payment policy must be approved by the Town.

A list of recommendations drawn-up by the sub-committee for the Commission's review was distributed. Commissioners were asked to look over the recommendations and present their comments and suggestions for consideration at next month's meeting.

There being no further business to discuss a motion was made by Commissioner DeZenzo and seconded by Commissioner Bellows to adjourn. The February 22, 2013 meeting of the Senior Citizen Commission adjourned at 11:50 p.m. with unanimous consent.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Granskog
Clerk