

Senior Citizen Commission Meeting – October 23, 2015

Trumbull Senior Citizen Commission
October 23, 2015
10:00 am
Long Hill Conference Room

The Senior Citizen Commission of the Town of Trumbull held a scheduled meeting on October 23, 2015 in the Long Hill Conference Room of the Trumbull Town Hall.

Members Present: Chairperson, Rachel Yahwak; Vice Chairperson, Ron Foligno (entered at 10:15 am); Commissioners Roberta Bellows, Dorothy Merritt, Dee Chiota, Amy DeZenzo, Evelyn Wizner, Maureen Gordon and Gail D'Elia.

Also Present: Senior Center Director, Jean Ferreira and Lynn Arnow, Chief of Staff

Absent: Commissioner Joan Mehlhorn

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am by Mrs. Yahwak followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Status of Kitchen

Mrs. Yahwak requested the Commissioners to put together questions for Mrs. Arnow for this meeting and noted she received a copy of the grant proposal. She noted she was very disappointed because it wasn't filled out. The grant was applied for in 2013 before there was any thought of having a new senior center. On May 8, 2015, Tim Herbst came to the Senior Center and actually promised everyone at a meeting that by September of 2015 there would be a snack bar and kitchen up and running. Nothing has been done. It is now time to get the answers as to what is going on. Mrs. Arnow will present what has or has not happened.

Mrs. Chiota asked what grant was being referred to. Mrs. Yahwak noted it is the \$150,000. She noted she spoke to Anthony Musto and he is appalled that nothing has been done because he went to bat for us in 2013, got us the money, and he basically said that we should have had our kitchen by now. Mrs. Chiota asked if there was a question about Social Services rather than the Senior Center. Mrs. Yahwak noted that was another question. Mrs. Bellows is confused because the application is blank and thought we had received the grant. Mrs. Yahwak stated that was what she was told. Mrs. Yahwak stated she was told yesterday that they are in the process of filling out the grant. Various people are working on it. We have had this since 2013. Mrs. Bellows asked if it was because there needed to be a change the wording in the grant. Mrs. Yahwak stated we have to change it now but in 2013 we didn't

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have to change anything because we were not thinking of a new Senior Center. Now we have to change the wording because we may want to move the equipment.

Mrs. Yahwak stated that on May 8, 2015 the First Selectman promised us that we would have an up and running kitchen, in writing in minutes and on tape, by September 2015 and now we have found out that we don't even have an application filled out for whatever reason. There is something wrong. She would like to know why it wasn't applied for in 2013.

Mrs. Arnow provided a history of the project.

- On May 30, 2012 bonding was approved for \$20,000. Reason for the delay was unknown but in May 2013, the minutes from the Senior Commission talks about the \$20,000 grant, how that funding was going to be used. An architect was going to be hired and start to get some pricing. It is in the minutes that the \$20,000 grant is good for five years. At that time a suggestion was made to purchase a refrigerator with the funding as well.
- In July 2014, the \$150,000 grant was announced. What happened between May 2013 and July 2014, is presumed that the drawings from the architect that were necessary to apply for the grant, as well as getting prices for a cooking kitchen and warming kitchen were done. All of the documents are available from that one year.
- In July 2014 Senator Musto received bonding for a senior kitchen. In that time, it was established it was not as simple as just replacing the equipment. Documentation that the senior snack bar was shut down could not be found in the Health District files or anywhere else. Mrs. Ferreira was requested to provide this documentation. All she could provide was the report from the Health Department checking the deficiencies. Mrs. Sulik did a verbal shut down and did not provide documentation. The kitchen could not be used. Mrs. Arnow would encourage the new health director to inspect the current kitchen to determine whether or not the kitchen is usable.
- In July 2014, an announcement was made about an extra \$150,000 to address all the problems noted by the health district. It would require a significant amount of money, more than \$20,000. Mrs. Chiota asked how we received the \$150,000 bonding when we didn't apply for it? Mrs. Arnow was unable to answer that question and noted that she had to go back and piece together all of this when she came. Mrs. Arnow noted it may have been the drawings for the \$20,000 and that we needed the other money to accomplish this. She did not know how Mr. Musto got the grant. Mrs. Ferreira noted Mr. Musto came to see her and said he could help with a kitchen and if she would like to do a grant. Mr. Rutigliano was also there and she stated that would be great. He said he would take care of it. She felt that he did something in writing at the state level. Mrs. Yahwak agreed he did something and she will call him back because he said he had it done in 2013 which she will verify. Mrs. Arnow noted that he may have started in 2013 but in July 2014 there is an approved grant. Question was asked what "approved grant" means? Mrs. Arnow noted that on July 25, 2013, at the State Bond Commission meeting, there is language that says in Item 10, Section C Trumbull Senior Center for Renovation Improvement to the Kitchen Facilities \$150,000. Mrs. Ferreira noted the money is reserved and we need to apply for the funds. Mrs. Arnow noted it is bonding not a grant that they approved. The state

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bonded it. She also stated that this bond requires matching funds so the town, simultaneously, also bonded money for the project. The town had to cover 1/3 of whatever bond money was used. Mrs. DeZenzo noted one of the problems is there is an issue with wording. The word grant keeps getting thrown out; the word bonding keeps being thrown out and none of us understand what the difference is between the grant and the bonding. Now we have another application. It is the misnomer for us of misusing the grant all the time when it was bonding.

- Mr. Foligno entered the meeting at 10:15 am.
- Mrs. Arnow explained that the language that came out July 2014 was through the Department of Social Services. She showed the Department of Social Services application grant. In 2014, this was a long-standing issue that everyone was trying to move forward and, although she cannot say when the conversation started, the assessment to whether or not you needed a new senior center, has been going on for quite some time. Whether you would build new or moving, clearly that is indicated in the Plan of Conservation and Development that was approved in 2014. That information comes out of a lot of surveys that were done throughout the community and it was strongly felt that the senior center was on the list of things that were needed. That seemed to start the conversation of do we want to renovate the kitchen, can we use this kitchen in a new senior center, do we build it now or do we invest money in renovating. She believes that is when the conversation started. However, when she arrived she went through the DSS application for the \$150,000. In the DSS application it states – Applicants must document sufficient operating funds where the program services will be if available for a minimum of three years. The applicant must be able to continue the use of the facility...for a period not less than ten years. The application goes on to ask whether or not there are any other uses for the intent of the grant so that brought up the question, if we are building a new kitchen will it be used by a shelter and can we allow that. Currently there is a meal program that is run out of the senior center. Is there a clear division of that? This was investigated to make sure there is a difference between snack bar and the meal program that is used and not applied to this. Even the DSS application has language that we needed to clarify if we were to move forward with either a renovation or building a new center. Mrs. DeZenzo questioned if the DSS application was the \$150,000 grant. Mrs. Arnow noted the DSS grant is the original bond that Senator Musto and Representative Rutigliano worked to get. That was through the Department of Social Services. Question was asked as to why it went through DSS. Mrs. Arnow could not answer except to state that may have been where the money was. The Commission would need to ask the two individuals for that information.
- In September 2014, the appropriated Town Council approvals for the First Selectman to apply for the funding. This requires a resolution by the Town Council. This was done on September 4, 2014. Does that include the 1/3 requirement? Mrs. Arnow noted that was required for more funding. The \$20,000 bond contributed to a certain amount of that so we needed to go back to secure local bonding. This needed the approval of the Town Council in order to move forward.
- The town started to make assessments on what was needed to be done. This may have been in September 2014 when communications with the Health Department started with their inspectors to try to get records to find out exactly what needed to be done so the town could

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provide the assessments that are required by the grant such as remediation costs, removal of contaminated materials costs, construction costs, and design costs. All of this was being gathered. There is still a sketchy history of the snack bar inspections but she was able to get a list that stated floors, walls and ceilings must be replaced, cleanable and durable. They must be cleanable, antimicrobial surfaces to go into a kitchen. This was not in the architect's design; we only received rough schematics of drawings. For \$15,000 we just received drawings.

- In between all of this we sat down and had discussions and the First Selectman tried to make some kind of arrangements for using the kitchen. We met with the BOE with their nutrition program director to see if they could bring in food. The town reached out to a few caterers to see what they could do. Even a high end vending company was contacted to bring in salads and fresh sandwiches each day. The problem is not being able to cook in that kitchen, the problem is that it is clearly not up to code and we cannot even serve food from that kitchen. You could in a shelter situation if you were giving food away. If you are going to sell food, and have food prepared in that kitchen, it must be up to code. Therefore, a caterer cannot even come in and serve food in that kitchen. They can in the outer snack bar and dining area if they meet all of the requirements of bringing in the hot trays, making sure that water or steam tables are a certain distance from an electrical outlet. As long as they can meet all those requirements, they can do that. Electrical supply for steam tables is a challenge because of the building electrical system. There were a number of challenges throughout all of this.
- Simultaneously, a building committee was formed to assess whether to build a new facility or renovate the current facility. The language in this bond application was saying two things. One that we needed to occupy the property for ten years and two that there would be a lien on it. Then the question was if we use the bond money on equipment do we have to leave it there. It is primarily for the seniors to use and we didn't want to leave it there. Mrs. Arnow started to investigate whether those bond funds for equipment would allow us to use it in a new facility. It has been difficult to get responses from the state.
- In May 2015 she began contacting the state to answer the questions on this and also has been working with the Town's Facilities Director, Mr. Marsilio and Mr. White to determine what needed to be done to remediate. We did get updated estimates for the commercial equipment to make sure the pricing was on target and it was still within the ball park.
- On May 20, 2015 she started communicating with the State. Carlene Taylor from DSS. We had questions as to if the project is less than \$150,000 is the money still available, is there a lien and could we move that equipment. If we used any of our in-house labor were we allowed to still use the grant funding? Not until the end of June did she receive a response from DSS from the woman who was in charge who stated that for the grant awarded to the Town of Trumbull, no lien is required. Narrative report is required ten years to the end of the contract.
- In August 2015, we were notified bonding had been sent over to the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. They were dismayed to learn it had been bumped when the Town was working with DSS and had received answers and it was moving forward. She started making phone calls to find out why, who could she speak with, do we use the same application,

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and do we have to get a new application? She spoke with Bobby Bergeron and Commissioner Bellows reached out to Representative Rutigliano's office.

- In June of 2015 she met with the Commission and reported and at that time, Mrs. Yahwak was also sitting in on meetings, the Town was trying to determine food services. Vending companies were contacted.
- July of 2015 she presented on the Town Council agenda to get the approval for the renovations. It talks about the Building Committee being underway. If the Building Committee recommends new construction for the center and the grant is available, it would be prudent to wait for the Building Committee's recommendation if it is for new construction. The question at that time was whether or we needed to change the language of the bond. The bonding language clearly states renovation of the senior kitchen, it says there is a lien, and it says that it has to be at that facility. The town wanted written documentation that stated we can move this.
- In July of 2015, updated costs for the kitchen increased approximately \$5,000. They are still questioning the language of the bond. Mrs. Arnow stated that a lien was not required but the wording of the bond statement was still in question. May need to come back in August to change the language of the resolution. Mr. Rutigliano stated that was no problem and he would handle that himself. Mrs. Bellows was working on this with his office and did not receive any return calls to her inquiry.
- In August it was transferred over to DMHAS and on August 17, she and the grant writer reached out to DMHAS several times. She finally received an email back on September 30 from Megan Sopelak, Director, Central Contracts Unit, Business Administration Unit. Mrs. Arnow asked if they should continue filling out the DSS application and she said no they needed to go through DMHAS. She asked for clarification regarding the language of the grant that speaks to the lien and moving the kitchen equipment. We are not reapplying for the money because the bonding is already available; we are just applying to a different department. All the bonding authorizations are good for 5 years.
- Mrs. Arnow's last report to the Commission on September 25, 2015 included that the Town was awaiting confirmation from DMHAS that we could use the funding in the any location.
- On October 5, 2015 she received a confirmation from Miss Sopelak to her questions. Mrs. Arnow read her email with the questions to DHMAS. Answer received is a follows: "I spoke with Steve Kitowicz at the Office of Policy and Management. He confirmed for me that the use of the funds if for the renovation and improvement of the kitchen facilities for the Trumbull Senior Center and does not specify a specific location. In our discussion you had indicated that you were looking to purchase "movable kitchen equipment" to provide the necessary tools for the kitchen to function again. In addition, there may be a move of the Senior Center to a new location in a few years that may require renovation work. You would be able to access the balance of the funds that have not been utilized for the "movable kitchen equipment" to complete the renovation and improvements at the new site for the Senior Center. On your second issue below, since you are a municipality, liens do not apply to your funds." This is the confirmation that was requested.

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- On October 5, Town Council did award the resolution and passed the resolution unanimously to apply for the funding. The grant application is very complex and the town needs information from several areas i.e. from the health department, architect, bids which need to be included in the application. This is a process. There is no completion date at this time.
- Mrs. Chiota stated that Mrs. Sulik was at a Senior Commission meeting and explained why the kitchen was shut down. This should be in the past minutes. This should be about the end of 2012.
- The most complicated part of this is putting it out to bid. Bid specs are written by the Purchasing Director. This is a process and takes time.
- Mrs. DeZenzo thanked Mrs. Arnow for her work on this project and moving it forward. Mrs. Arnow acknowledged the efforts of Senator Musto and Representative Rutigliano to make the situation better and to get the kitchen. She will be working with facilities and purchasing to ask them to move quickly. Update will be provided at the next meeting. DHMAS bond fund requirements were reviewed with the Commission which still relate to having to stay in the building for ten years. This has been resolved.

Discussion was held regarding serving food for the parties. This is overseen by Mrs. Fereira who has been specially trained.

Mrs. Arnow left the meeting.

Past Minutes

Motion was made by Mrs. Chiota, seconded by Mr. Foligno, to approve the minutes of September 25, 2015 as written. Approved unanimously.

Secretary's Report

Mrs. Chiota received a thank you from Joy for the use of the transportation system.

Chairman's Report

Mrs. Yahwak introduced Evelyn Wizner and welcomed her as a new Commissioner.

Budget preparation is underway and Mr. Yahwak, Mr. Foligno and Ms. Merritt will assist Ms. Fereira.

Mrs. Yahwak noted she received a call from a Trumbull resident who wants to change the age requirement at the Senior Center to be able to join at 55. Discussion was held regarding this request. It was agreed that the administration should be informed of this request as it may increase services required at the Center including classes, parking, etc. This may require a change in the bylaws. It was noted 55 seems to be the standard age for seniors; the Center follows the federal level of 60. It was felt that they would like more people using the center and this would definitely change the dynamics of the Center. Mrs. Chiota moved to submit a letter to the First Selectman requesting we change the age

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requirement for the Senior Center from 60 to 55, seconded by Mr. Foligno. All were in favor with Mrs. DeZenzo abstaining. Mrs. Chiota will write this letter.

Ms. Merritt noted she has worked on some new programs. On December 2, there will be a craft workshop for the holiday. Materials will be provided and registration is required. Maximum class size is 15. Motion was made by Mrs. DeZenzo to provide \$75.00 for the supplies and if needed, we will approve additional funding and that enrollment is limited to 15 people for the craft workshop on December 2. Seconded by Mr. Foligno and approved unanimously. Ms. Merritt also is planning a gardening project for the spring. It was suggested programs by the historical society and library be investigated.

Activities include

1. Holiday party is 10/30 at 1:00 pm.
2. Suggestions for the TV being offered were discussed. Perhaps another facility in town would be interested in taking it.
3. Building Committee meeting will be on November 6, 2015 at 11:00 am at the Senior Center. She encouraged everyone to attend. There were about 12 residents at the last Public Hearing.
4. Bingo is 10/23.
5. Birthday Party is 11/12 at 11:00 am.
6. Lunch and a Movie is 11/11. Movie is The Cobbler.
7. Old Post Tavern trip is 11/18.
8. Bingo is 11/20.

Thanksgiving baskets are okay at this time. Help is needed on the Monday/Tuesday before Thanksgiving to help load boxes/baskets into senior's cars.

Everyone is encouraged to fill out the on-line survey.

Director's Report

Ms. Ferreira noted the trip to Westbrook Outlets was provided by GBTA and well liked. The last lunch and a movie was also a hit.

Ms. Ferreira is looking for entertainment for the Christmas party of 12/11. The Commission would like to make a donation to Smile-A-While for their performance. Motion was made by Mrs. Bellows, seconded by Mrs. Chiota, to approve a donation of \$100.00. Approved unanimously.

Ms. Ferreira is looking into having a New Year's Eve party this year. Seniors would like it catered. After receiving information, food cost would be \$22.00 per person. It would start around 4:00 pm and go until midnight. Transportation will need to be addressed. All materials would be included in the cost of the party which would be \$27.00 per person. Mrs. DeZenzo moved that the Center have a New Year's

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Eve Party with the cost being covered by admissions on December 31, 2015 from 4pm to midnight. Seconded by Mrs. D'Elia. Mr. Foligno noted they might need a DJ. Unanimously approved.

New Business

Bus driver's status and transportation for seniors was discussed. Grant restrictions were discussed as to members of the Senior Center and residents of the town in assisted living facilities.

Mrs. Arnow returned to the meeting at 11:40 am.

Mrs. Arnow addressed the concerns involved in expanding the services to all residents. There will need to be a meeting with the assisted living facilities to work out details with their residents. An update will be given at the next meeting.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on November 22, 2015.

Adjournment

Motion was made by Mrs. Bellows, seconded by Ms. Merritt, to adjourn the meeting at 12 noon. Approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Crandall
Clerk