

Senior Citizens Advisory Committee
Wednesday, December 9, 2009
Town Hall, Old Town Road
10:30 a.m.

Present: William Wilson, Sandra Kelly, Marguerite Donnelly, Dorothy Graham and Janet Merritt. Committee members Robert Closter, Betsy Theve, Gail Pierce and Norm Topf were absent. Deputy Town Clerk Millie McGinnes was present for the recording of minutes.

The meeting was called to order at 10:31 a.m.

Approve Minutes of November 18, 2009 Meeting

Ms. Kelly made a motion to approve the minutes of November 18, 2009. Ms. Merritt seconded the motion and it carried.

5 Ayes (Wilson, Merritt, Kelly, Graham, Donnelly) 0 Nays

The Commission members agreed to amend the agenda to meet with Nancy Dodge as the next item.

Nancy Dodge

Handicapped access

Town Manager Nancy Dodge was present. Ms. Merritt explained that many of the sidewalks and roads in Town are not handicapped accessible and it would prove difficult to navigate a wheelchair. Ms. Dodge explained that most of the roads are state owned roads and the state is obligated to maintain and fund upgrades to their roads. She noted that the Town will receive \$250,000 of stimulus which will be used to resurface a portion of Old Town Road. She stated that Chapel Street is in need of a lot of work, but there is no room in the budget at this time to address it. Ms. Dodge noted that handicapped access is provided to the North Light, plus there is a special wheel chair at the beach pavilion to provide access there. She passed the name and contact number to the Governor's Commission on Disabilities to Ms. Merritt. Discussion ensued regarding hiring a consultant to look at safety issues around the island. Ms. Dodge suggested the Committee apply to BIRA for funding. It was noted that all new structures must comply with ADA requirements, although existing structures do not.

Senior worker(s)

Mr. Wilson explained that the seniors need a coordinator to organize programs and volunteers and to act as a social worker. He stated that the Committee would like to petition the Town for funding such a position. Ms. Dodge stated that she would need the request in February and the request should be followed and presented at the budget hearings in the early spring. She recommended submitting the request routinely if it is not initially funded. Discussion ensued regarding existing assistance available through South County Community Action, such as heating assistance, weatherization and appliance rebates.

The Committee thanked Town Manager Dodge for coming.

FISH

Magnets

Volunteer Outreach

There was no report.

It was decided to invite Betty Fitzpatrick of FISH to the next meeting to discuss additional volunteer outreach.

Daily Contact

Ms. Donnelly reported that the Police Chief was in support of a daily contact program and thought it would be up and running next month. It was suggested that the Police Chief go to Lunch Bunch and Soup Group to discuss the program. Names for the program, such as Fuzz Buzz and Fuzz Buddies, were suggested.

Senior Moments

The month's Senior Moments article will focus on tax abatement. Mr. Wilson noted that the application for the abatement is available in the TNS Tax Office and must be filed by December 31st.

The Senior Moments brochure will be printed and distributed at the library, Town Hall and the community center. It will be revised in the spring.

Update on Activities

The following items were discussed:

- Americore employee Tracy Fredericks and library employee Kristen Bauman should be invited to a future meeting to discuss opportunities and services they may be able to offer to the senior community.
- School Superintendent Robert Hicks should be invited to a future meeting to discuss intergenerational activity opportunities with the school children, such as lunch, art classes and community service projects.
- The Lunch Bunch and Soup Group should be polled to determine whether they would be interested in adding a lunch at the school and if so, how often.
- The Lunch Bunch is now operating under the leadership of a board which is under the Ecumenical Ministries.
- Interstate Navigation provided a lobster lunch and presentation at Lunch Bunch last week.
- A senior at the Block Island School is doing a baking project for her senior project and will be providing Lunch Bunch with baked goods periodically.
- A meeting between the Town Council and Interstate Navigation will be held on December 14, 2009. Ms. Merritt will attend and address additional lights in the parking lot, extending the commuter ticket to a 2 week life, tweaking the schedule and boat cancellation publication.

Correspondence

Letter to BIPCO

A thank you letter to BIPCO drafted by Mr. Wilson was distributed and reviewed, with a few changes made. It will be sent out, with a copy going to the Block Island Times.

Public Input

There was no public input.

Next Meeting – January 13th

The next meeting date is scheduled for January 13, 2010 at 10:30 a.m. The next meeting's agenda will include annual schedule, budget request and elections

With no further business to discuss, Ms. Kelly made a motion to adjourn at 11:50 a.m. The motion was seconded by Ms. Donnelly and carried unanimously.

Millie McGinnes
Deputy Town Clerk

Approved: January 13, 2010