

SENIOR SERVICE COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Middletown Senior Center

150 William Street

April 3, 2012

5:00 PM

1. Members Present: Councilman Ron Klattenberg, Councilman Philip Pessina, Commissioners: Ed Dypa, Ed Rubacha , Claude Hendrickson, William Wasch, Tom Hutton, Patricia Jackowski

Absent: Annabelle Malone

Staff Present: Stephan Allison, Interim Program Manager and Heidi Geores, Senior Center Staff

Absent: Raymond A. Santostefano, Interim Director

General Public: Representative of Middletown Patch and Middletown Press

2. Meeting Called to Order: Called to order at 5:03.

3. Public Hearing: None

4. Approval of January Minutes: A motion to approve the minutes with corrections from the March 6, 2012 was made by Chairman Ed Dypa, seconded by Tom Hutton and William Wasch.

Departmental Reports:

Director Raymond A. Santostefano: (Absent- a prepared statement was read by Stephan Allison)

- The Municipal Agent handled 23 office visits and 41 telephone requests for assistance, continues to attend the monthly MESP meetings. The expense has been approved by Government and Finance for Laura Runte, Municipal Agent to the Elderly to attend the CHOICES Counseling Training course that will be available this fall. There was a brief discussion regarding the possible merging of the Municipal Agent's position with the ADA Coordinator's. The Commissioners agreed that the two positions should remain separate and that the Municipal Agent should remain housed at the Senior Center.
- There was an issue with the reserved bus rotation schedule where the South Green Apartments trip coordinator failed to notify the Senior Center that one of the participants of a trip uses an electric scooter. This caused four patrons to be bumped from the trip as the presence of the scooter involves the removal of passenger seats on the bus. The affected patrons were refunded their trip fees and promised a free trip on a future date.

Program Updates – Stephan Allison

- New programs continue to be added at the Senior Center, including Ageless Grace, a seated exercise program.
- There were several last minute cancellations to programs for various reasons. Concerns will be brought to individuals running those programs.

Old Business

- **Update on New Senior Center:**

- Councilman Ron Klattenberg indicated that this bullet and the Building Committee Update bullet should have been combined at this point.
- Chairman Ed Dypa brought up a new concern that the Mayor's office has employed another architect to draft a plan for an addition to be built on the front of City Hall which may include space designated as a Senior Center. If this plan were approved, it would render the efforts of the current Building Committee null. There was much discussion among the commissioners. Commissioners were encouraged to impress upon the public the importance of their attendance at the May 1, 2012 meeting in Council Chambers where the plan for the Eckersley Hall building renovation to the Middletown Senior Center will be unveiled.

➤ **Building Committee Update:**

- Councilman Ron Klattenberg walked the commission through an artist's rendition of what the Eckersley Hall building/property would look like as the new Middletown Senior Center.
- An historical consultant has been secured to study and report on the Eckersley Hall building. It is anticipated that the findings of this report will be that the building will qualify as a state recognized historical site. This recognition will afford an opportunity for the city to recuperate as much as 25% of the building costs through tax credits that can be purchased by area industries (i.e.: Pratt & Whitney, CL&P or NU). The report findings will be revealed at the May 1, 2012 meeting in Council Chambers.

➤ **Update on Triad:**

- Chairman Ed Dypa attended a Triad conference and shared information on a speaker who covered the topic of a scam that defrauds vulnerable seniors into signing over any proceeds from their estates upon death using completely legal documents. Interim Program Manager, Stephan Allison and staff member Heidi Geores expressed interest in having this speaker visit the Senior Center.

➤ **Defibrillator Report:**

- This item was tabled until the next meeting.

New Business

➤ **Senior Services Commission / Senior Center Mission Statement**

Chairman Ed Dypa distributed a sample statement:

“The Senior Services Commission shall study the needs of elderly persons in the community in relation to housing, economic, employment, health, recreation and other matters. It shall analyze the services for the aged provided by the community, both by public and private agencies, and shall make recommendations to the Mayor, the Common Council and the Senior Services Administrator as to ways to improve the lives of the senior persons in the community.” He asked that commissioners review this and come back with any alterations for the next meeting.

Miscellaneous:

- Commissioner Claude Hendrickson addressed the group to share that he's been petitioning on the state level for generators to be installed at high rise senior and disabled housings that would make elevator operation possible during times of power outages. It was noted how this situation negatively impacted many Middletown seniors during the October 2011 snow storm when mandatory evacuations of several senior housings were enforced without the use of elevators.

- Commissioner Patricia Jackowski attended an Alzheimer's conference recently. She shared with the commission that there are publications available that may offer valuable information to assist seniors and/or caregivers in times of disaster. Copies of these publications will be procured and distributed to Bruce Driska (Emergency Management), the Senior Center and Commissioners as well as be made available for distribution at the upcoming Health and Safety Fair.

Adjournment: Commissioner Dypa moved to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Claude Hendrickson and Tom Hutton, unanimously passed at 6:09 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Geores