

ROSE CITY SENIOR CENTER

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SENIOR AFFAIRS COMMISSION

Meeting of September 21, 2009

Members in Attendance: Chairperson Gen Bergendahl, Vice Chairperson Olive Buddington, Regular Members, Jacquelyn Randall and Alternate Members Antoinette Gwiazdowski, Frank Jacaruso and Jan Stewart. Attending staff members were Beverly Goulet, Mike Wolak and Anne Barriere.

Absent were Secretary Margaret Aldrich and Regular Member Michael Lahan.

Chairperson Gen Bergendahl determined that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

Minutes: Accepted as submitted.

Communications: none

Human Services Report: Again the City is dealing with budget problems. A department head meeting took place recently with others to follow to try and deal with the City's \$280,00 deficit.

Wind turbines are being planned for the Senior Center as a pilot project to both offset the electric costs and serve as an educational example and inspiration for the public and local students. The Commission requested to meet with those planning the project to more fully understand the details and impact of the project. (The article from the Day newspaper is enclosed.)

Another project that could positively impact seniors is being proposed by Luis DePina, Director of the Recreation Dept. His idea is for the City to take ownership of the YMCA building downtown and reopen it for use as a Community Center for Norwich. This would include reopening the pool which the seniors particularly miss since it closed. The idea is to re-open the building for many of the civic programs previously there as well as review new programs that might apply with the availability of new space. Pricing structures would be changed to include a per-use structure instead of the annual membership the YMCA used. This would help make it more affordable and desirable as a location for local programs and events in the City.

Senior Center Report: We are doing our best here to adjust to the staff cuts, down from 14 to 10. Our annual flu clinic will be this Thursday, Sept. 24th though Backus has said they will only have 130 doses instead of the 200+ they hoped for. (See enclosed note we typed up for people who are still looking for a place to get their seasonal flu shot.) We have plenty of volunteers.

Dana is hosting a Craft Show on Oct 10th and is still looking for volunteers to help in the afternoon from 12-3 manning the Senior Center's tables and then after to help break down everything.

The terms of office for the Senior Affairs Commission has expired and will need to go before the Council for the next 2-year session. Everyone will be asked if they wish to renew and we will send the needed paperwork out when we receive all the responses.

Last meeting there was some discussion regarding our fee structure compared to other senior centers. The enclosed handout shows a comparison with Groton which charges a lower membership fee (called Club Dues) but charges for every class taken which adds up quickly to more than our yearly fee with many of our classes being free. Also, their transportation is \$2 per ride compared to our .50. We also do not charge extra to non-residents but we do allow residents to sign up for trips before open registration begins. Mike will continue to meet at local housing sites to clarify that our yearly membership is a requested donation and that no resident is turned away for non-payment. Non-residents will not be offered scholarships, however. Mike will also continue his efforts to educate local seniors about the Med Ride II program, which offers transportation to out-of-town medical appointments with no fee.

Chairperson's Report/Legislative Report: None.

Other Business: It was noticed that attendance for the TVCCA meals has dropped off again. Commission members were confused as to what was different with the "Special" meals. It was thought that they were homemade in bulk and served from large trays vs. the prepackaged variety served on regular day. A very long discussion covered the meal program and possible alternatives with much information for the members to think about. They will also try out the "new" pre-packaged meals starting in October.

It was noticed that one of the upcoming trips was \$140 and there was concern that seniors on fixed incomes would be priced out of coming. It was asked if there was any drop off in trip registration in general. Mike responded that trip prices are generally where they have always been, the expensive one being to NYC for the Christmas show. We have also been adding a number of local mini-trips, which have been very well received. A recent one sold out in less than 10 minutes, filling both of our large busses.

Old Business: None

New Business: A visitor to our meeting, Elizabeth Hunt, expressed her concerns about receiving notices for Jury Duty after sending letters that she is over the age required to serve. A number on the form should get her through to someone who can take her off the list. Mike said he would help her after the meeting.

Next Meeting: Monday, Oct. 19, 2009, at 9:00 a.m., at the Rose City Senior Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Aldrich

Margaret Aldrich, Secretary

MA/acb