

Commission on Aging
Minutes of the Meeting
December 15, 2008

Present: Chair Christine Robertson; Kathy Brennan; Marion Freer; Alice Kenny; Mary Morrisroe; Sheila Silverman

Absent: Mary Ann O'Grady; Eileen Wilson

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Chair Christine Robertson.

Shop Ridgefield

General discussion on the program "Shop Ridgefield" and the "Ridgefield Rewards" program offered by certain town merchants. Save sales receipts and/or proof of purchases. Submit them to the Ridgefield Chamber of Commerce between November 29 and December 24 to earn up to 10% back on purchases in the form of Ridgefield Chamber of Commerce "Gift of Choice" certificates. Information on the program is available at the Ridgefield Chamber of Commerce. This program is for all, not just for seniors.

Minutes

Minutes of the November meeting were sent to members prior to this meeting for review. The Chair called for comments or corrections. None noted. Marion Freer moved the minutes be accepted as written. Sheila Silverman seconded the motion. All agreed.

Miscellaneous

Chris Robertson advised that members of this Commission had been invited to a meeting of area Commissions on Aging on November 1st. Unfortunately, the notice was placed in the wrong mail box! Chris contacted the Chair and advised why we did not attend and that we would like to be included in future meetings. After discussion, it was decided to send copies of our Senior Services Directory to Commissions on Aging in this area.

Copies of the report on Ridgefield's Fiscal Year 2007 were distributed to members.

Alice Kenny reported on an article in the Washington Post about President Elect Obama's request that "grass roots" groups meet to hold a discussion on health care needs between December 15th and December 31st. Information obtained at these meetings should be forwarded to a group headed by Tom Daschle. She suggested that this Commission could sponsor such a forum. Discussion followed with members in favor of the idea, but hesitant about trying to organize such a meeting at this time of year on such short notice. Alice then requested that members forward their thoughts on health care needs/programs to her via Email or call. She will put our ideas together and forward to Daschle.

Energy Assistance

Carole Konner of Ridgefield Social Services reported that she has received 150 applications for Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP). Basic benefits in (CEAP) range from \$650 to \$925 for homeowners and renters whose heat is not included in their rent. Household using "deliverable" fuels— heating oil, propane, and kerosene—may also be eligible for a one time crisis assistance benefit. There are also "safety net" assistance benefits which may be authorized for household if they use up their initial and crisis benefits. Carol outlined the procedures involved in applying for this assistance and how it is administered. The Contingency Heating Assistance Program (CHAP) is available for people who do not qualify for CEAP. The level of benefits is determined by household income, the number of people in the household, and whether there is a "vulnerable" member of the household. Carol provided members with information about the poverty guidelines. (attached) Many Ridgefielders applying do not qualify because their "liquid assets"---stocks, CDs, IRAs,etc.—are too high.

For those heating with gas or electricity, C.L.&P., U. I., Yankee Gas, and Southern Connecticut Gas all offer assistance to customers—this includes "matching" programs in which the utility matches a payment made by the customer or an energy assistance program. These companies cannot disconnect customers for non payment between November 15 and May 15. (This used to be April 15). Carol reported that the tenants at Ballard Green did not receive their usual gift toward their electric bills this year. Carol has been

working with Ballard Green tenants, getting them set up in the electric company's matching program. She feels they will be "ok".

Carol advised that Mary Ann Baldwin, head of Ridgefield Social Services, has received an anonymous donation of \$20,000 in addition to our \$5,000 contribution to assist those having energy problems. When members commented on the amount of work involved in filing applications for assistance, Carol told us that the applications had to be filed "on line" and that the Town receives a \$ 20 payment per application. Chair Robertson thanked Mrs. Konner for her timely information and wished her good luck in her work.

Alice Kenny reminded members to send her our ideas on health care by Thursday, December 18th.
With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Morrisroe

The next meeting of this Commission will be held on Monday, January 26, 2009, at 9:30 a.m. in the small Lower Level Conference Room, Town Hall.

Anyone requiring accommodation due to disability is asked to contact Chair Christine Robertson on 438-6165