

Commission on Aging
Minutes of the Meeting
June 15, 2009

Present: Christine Robertson, Chair; Kathy Brennan; Alice Kenny Lucas;
Mary Morrisroe; Mary Ann O'Grady; Sheila Silverman; Eileen Wilson

Absent: Marion Freer

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m. by Chair Christine Robertson. The Chair advised that State Rep John Frey could not make this meeting as he has legislative business in Hartford. He will join us for our July meeting.

Minutes

Copies of the May 18, 2009 meeting were sent to members for review prior to this meeting. The Chair asked if there were changes or corrections. None noted. Sheila Silverman moved the minutes be approved as written. Mary Ann O'Grady seconded the motion. All present agreed. Minutes accepted.

SweetHart Bus

Chris advised that the Laszig Fund is now considering requests, including hers for the bus; however, she had been advised that the Fund has just \$42,000 to distribute! Last year we received \$13,000 for the SweetHart bus.

SPIF

Mrs. Robertson advised that the new Gold Card Benefit Guide, effective July 11, 2009, will be going out in the mail. Seventy-five merchants or organizations will be providing benefits/discounts. Chris suggested taking the "Benefit Guide" when shopping and ask for the discount. Comment made on the cost (\$25) to replace a lost card. Chris explained that this is necessary because some people were abusing it by giving their card to non-residents and then asking for "lost card" replacements! Chris advised that \$3500 remained of the \$5,000 this Commission donated to the Senior Energy Fund. She advised that Mary Ann Baldwin of Social Services had requested that this be transferred to the SPIF account to subsidize the Luau and Valentine's Day party. She requested members consider and we will discuss and vote after we meet with First Selectman Marconi.

Senior Tax Deferment Program

First Selectman Marconi advised he was in agreement with this Commission's letter of January, 2007, requesting an increase in the time allotted to pay deferred taxes after the death of the taxpayer before the interest on these taxes increases for 4% simple interest to 18%! (Other changes were also mentioned) He favored an increase to six months, particularly in view of the current house market!

Selectman Marconi discussed the increase in the number of senior taxpayers joining in the Tax Deferment Program, adding that there had been discussion of increasing the income eligible from \$55,000 to \$75,000. With the current increase in those applying, this does not appear feasible. Ridgefield not only has the baby boomers aging but is attracting seniors from Westchester and elsewhere! Chris Robertson questioned how he would like us to recommend the change in the Deferment Program?

The First Selectman advised there were several ways to handle—write to the Board of Selectmen; request an Ad Hoc Committee to consider; request to go on the Meeting Schedule. The request should be to amend Tax Deferment Ordinance 13Y 2-20.

Mr. Marconi also advised that there have been a number of calls about the cancellation of the Saturday bus to the Danbury mall. He mentioned the possibility of hiring one of Baumann's buses for a Saturday 8 to 12 noon trip to the Mall (not a regular trip). but the cost would be \$65 per hour. The Tuesday "medical" bus to Danbury is continuing.

Mrs. Robertson thanked First Selectman Marconi for attending our meeting and advised he would be receiving our recommendation.

Commission Recommendation

After the First Selectman left the meeting, Mary Morrisroe moved that this Commission send a letter to First Selectman Marconi to recommend that the Board of Selectman approve an amendment to Tax Deferment Ordinance 13Y 2-20 to increase the period following the death of a taxpayer to six months before an increase in the 4% simple interest on the deferred taxes. Sheila Silverman seconded the motion. All seven (7) members present agreed. Motion approved.

SPIF Request

Chair Robertson then asked that members consider Mrs. Baldwin's request that the \$3500 Balance of the Senior Energy Fund be transferred to the SPIF account. Much discussion followed. Members mentioned that current gasoline prices were rapidly increasing. Oil is now \$75 a barrel. General consensus of members was that we agreed with Sue Manning's suggestion that the money be kept for this coming winter. Chris Robertson moved that the \$3500 Senior Energy Fund be retained for seniors in need of fuel assistance for the winter of 2009-2010. Mary Ann O'Grady seconded the motion. The seven (7) members present voted in favor. Chair Robertson then requested that the Secretary send a letter to Mrs. Baldwin to advise of this Commission's decision.

Ballard Green/ Congregate Housing Renovation

Eileen Wilson advised that there are problems with the rehab work at Ballard Green, e.g. an 88 year old man has to stand on a chair to turn off his air conditioner. Other problems also are coming up. Questions were raised as to who was responsible for checking for safety hazards, etc. Eileen will prepare a list for the Commission's next meeting. We will follow up.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,