

Meeting Minutes

Commission for the Aging Town of Easton, CT

Monthly Meeting – Tuesday, September 8, 2020
Meeting held in the Easton Library Community Room

The meeting was called to order at 5:03 PM. Present were Cheryl Constand, Linda Dollard, Anne Hughes, Karen Martin, Melinda O'Brien, Lisa Tasi and Alison Witherbee / Municipal Agent for the Aging – Social Services Director. Everyone in attendance welcomed seeing each other in person while maintaining safety protocols.

1. Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the March 2, 2020 meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved via a motion by Linda Dollard and Karen Martin.

2. Ongoing Business

A. MCS Fund Update

There was no new reported data.

3. New Business

A. Municipal Agent's Report

Alison provided copies of communications and letters which she had sent to Easton seniors during the past several months during the Coronavirus pandemic. Information on safety, outreach and contacts were listed, as well as Town communication. The Easton Senior Center has been closed since early spring and has suspended its programs. The ESC van transportation has been available on a per case basis. Alison has been working remotely and calling vulnerable seniors as well as keeping in contact with the town's first responders for any emergency situations. She has reached out to seniors to promote the safety measures and guidelines of the CDC, WHO and State of CT and provided a welcome resource especially at this time to seniors.

The Grocery Bag project, a free program started by SWCCA, has enabled homebound or vulnerable seniors to receive weekly food items. With the conclusion of the project in July, Alison spoke with Lisa Tasi and she made an executive decision to allow it to continue through the month of August. Patti Popp has supported the Grocery Bag project with items from her Easton Farm.

Alison completed CHOICES training and is a certified counselor. She is determining how best to conduct the sessions for Medicare Open Enrollment appointments and Energy Assistance Task Force.

B. SWCCA Report

Alison serves on the SWCCA Advisory Council and Nominating Committee. She has been in contact with various members during the summer. The next meeting of SWCCA will be held tomorrow, September 9th. Alison trusts to get more direction from SWCCA on how they are handling meetings and interaction with the population they serve as well as any updates on the Census 2020, which has been extended until end of September.

C. Other Updates / Discussion

Grocery Bag Project: As Alison mentioned that this is an invaluable outreach during a trying time, it would be great to continue it through October. With discussion, the members agreed to extend this project, on a motion made by Melinda O'Brien and seconded by Karen Martin.

Programs: Members discussed how to restart programs in a safe way during the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic. Previous events held addressed 'Seniors and Driving' and 'Medicare scams and Frauds', along with collaboration by local first responders. Once the ESC is actually opened, perhaps small group events can be held on a first come sign up basis with the required protocol (temperature; tracing) in place. Other locations to host a small group in Easton can also be utilized. More will be discussed over the coming months.

Survey 2020: Back in March, the Survey results were presented and uploaded to EastonCT.gov for sharing. The pandemic slowed any additional discussion by members. It will be looked at again.

Caregiving in the U.S. 2020: Information from AARP and the National Alliance for Caregiving was provided by Lisa Tasi to the members. The number of Americans providing unpaid care has increased over the last five years with nearly one in five providing unpaid care to an adult with health or functional needs, with 23% of Americans saying that caregiving has made their own health worse. Unfortunately, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, mental health issues (anxiety, loneliness) have up ticked.

4. Next Meeting

The Commission's next monthly meeting will be held on Monday, October 5, 2020 at the Easton Library Board Room from 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Agenda will be forwarded to the Town Clerk for proper posting.

5. Adjourn

Melinda O'Brien made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Karen Martin seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved at 6:10 PM.

Submitted by,
Commission for the Aging
L. Tasi