

Amended Minutes

Chaplin Senior Center

Board of Directors

132 Chaplin Street

Chaplin, CT 06235

The Board of Directors for the Chaplin Senior Center met on Tuesday, **August 3, 2021**, in the outdoor area at the Senior Center.

Members present: Chairperson Irene Schein, Shirley Rakos, Ann Lewis, Cathy Dietrichsen, Jeanette Haines, Crystal Gephardt, Carl Linkkila, Walter Zlotnick, alternates Robin Hoagland and Dawn Gilbert, Director Lisa Kegler, and Victoria Northrop (recording clerk).

1. Irene Schein called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m.

Alternate Robin Hoagland was seated for Neil Muckenhoupt.

Audience for Citizens: Citizens present for the discussion on Aging in Chaplin were: Ann Chuk, Leslie Ricklin, and Jean Noel.

2. Secretary's Report: the board reviewed the draft minutes of the Meeting of June 1st. Jeanette moved to approve the minutes, Catherine seconded, and they were passed by the Board.

3. AGING IN CHAPLIN DISCUSSION:

Irene led off the discussion on aging in Chaplin by asking those present if there were any challenges or issues of special concern regarding aging in Chaplin.

- a) Victoria raised the issue of the lack of Senior daycare in Chaplin, and the lack of ability for someone who is a fall risk or has other special needs to have social interaction independently at the Senior Center, as it currently would put an unfair burden on the staff there without having legally responsible personnel who could deal with a fall that didn't entail a medical emergency necessitating a 911 call. Ann Lewis said she would look into the State requirements and other Senior Centers' methods of dealing with this situation and finding out options for having a day or two a month when more special needs seniors might be able to participate safely in activities.
- b) Leslie Ricklin raised the important and global issue of aging in place in the community and the lack of senior housing available in Chaplin. As our population ages, a house with ten acres, for example, may be too much of a physical and financial burden for a senior on a fixed income. The Economic Development committee has been discussing

this for some time, and a Committee on Affordable Housing is now being created. **Dawn Gilbert, Ann Chuk and Catherine Dietrichsen** all expressed interest in joining this committee.

Irene mentioned the idea of communal living, where several people with independent smaller budgets pool their funds and share the costs of a larger place to have a room of their own but social, friendly living with people of similar age and interest. The idea of creating a town senior living space in an existing house (i.e. the Gurley Tavern on Chaplin St.) was also raised. This led to a discussion of independent senior housing vs. assisted living, and the extremely high costs of assisted living.

It was mentioned that the PZC changed regulations in the past year to allow accessory apartments or living spaces on a zoned property without it being attached to the house, which might help ease the crisis of space somewhat. Several people said they are more attached to the idea of moving to be near their family as they require senior housing/care than aging in place in their current town. Some people expressed that since not everyone has children, this isn't always an option.

Jean Noel said that the idea of downsizing is intimidating and difficult for some seniors who have lived for half a century in the same space, and expressed concern for having to fit a lifetime's memories into a room or two. Others expressed concern for, in widowhood, being physically and financially able to maintain a larger property. Several ideas were raised as solutions: Carl liked the idea of adding a tiny house or mobile home (granny-pod) on an existing property; others also suggested modifying an existing space such as a large house or commercial property into Senior Housing, renting a room in your house to another senior who needs space or renting to UCONN graduate students to have someone to help keep financially solvent in maintaining a larger property. Victoria expressed concern for people who might be facing this issue complicated by mental illness or dementia. Ann wondered if the Senior Center has a list of our seniors who are living alone and may be facing challenges already.

The committee will take all of these points into consideration and plan to look into solutions and grants, as well as other sources of assistance and revenue.

4. Correspondence: None

5. Director's Report:

Cash on hand: \$146.89

Special revenue account: \$31,213.80

Membership status: 337 members

Dues collection: dues are still waived due to the pandemic until the end of 2021. \$235 in dues have been paid anyway

6. Activities, Social Media and Other Outreach:

The podiatrist visit went well and will continue on a 10 week rotation. There was a large turnout for the K-9 show and it was well received. The Beebopalobop band drew only about 40 people but was lots of fun. A comedian/magician is scheduled for August 9th, and there will be a Farm to Table dinner with the library later in the month. A watercolor class will be offered bi-weekly on Thursdays. There is a plan to honor the volunteers with a party and baby celebration. Tai Chi and Sit and Stretch classes continue and are going well. Haircuts and styling are being offered every other Thursday, and there are two upcoming trips in September to a Seafood Festival and a Hudson River cruise.

7. Assistant Director Position: The Board agrees that there is more need than ever to add/increase the hours of a new assistant director and, in the next budget cycle of the town, to allow for this cost in the town budget. There was some discussion of the number of hours needed – 3 hrs/wk was not sufficient, 10 might be better, and the end goal would be to have the assistant work the same hours as the Director, although that would entail benefits. The addition of the assistant for more hours was put forward as a motion by Ann Lewis and seconded by Jeanette, then passed by the Board. A second motion was put forward to have the Board and Director be directly involved in the hiring process this time, with 2 members and Lisa taking action in the hiring. This motion was put forward by Ann and seconded by Catherine, then approved by the Board.

8. Kitchen Window AC Unit: the kitchen window AC unit was approved by the board of health, and a motion was made by Ann Lewis, which was seconded by Crystal and approved by the board to purchase and install (including adding an outlet) the unit.

9. Landscaping Needs: while we ran out of time for full discussion of this topic at this point, Leslie Ricklin made a recommendation that the Senior Center be involved with the Library's and other towns' efforts help the Pollinator Pathways movement by incorporating bee and butterfly friendly plants and native plants in the garden layout. Lisa Kegler also mentioned that it's becoming increasingly difficult to carry out all landscaping/gardening and that there will probably be a need for additional assistance.

10. Next Meeting Date: September 7, 2021 @ 9.30 a.m.

11. Adjournment: the meeting was adjourned at 10.56 a.m.

Minutes submitted by Victoria Northrop, recording clerk

Amendments:

Added Carl Linkkila to Board members present

Changed "Committee on Senior Housing" to "Committee on Affordable Housing" in Aging in Chaplin, part b

Changed "senior apartment" to "accessory apartment" in Aging in Chaplin, part b