

Commission on Social Services
Meeting Minutes
March 13, 2014

Present: R. DeSimone, C.Tenore, V. Smith, C. Pierce, J. Mabley, B. Corridon, J. Zucker, P. Koellmer, D. Graybill

Chairperson Peg Koellmer called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm.

The minutes of the January 9 meeting were approved.

Social Services Commission Charge: The Commission reviewed the charge of the commission, last updated in June 2001, and discussed the changes presented by Judy Zucker. David Graybill questioned whether the charge should specify the Commission's role in spearheading initiatives, including gathering information and proposing recommendations for new programs. He noted the Commission's past contributions to the development of programs such as Wilton Commons. It was decided that this role is covered by the first and last sentences of the "Purpose" section. Roseann DeSimone questioned whether specific organizations should be mentioned in the "review of programs and budgets" item under "Responsibilities." It was decided that the list should be prefaced by "including, but not limited to." The revised document will be submitted to the Board of Selectman for review and approval.

New Business:

Cathy Pierce reported that "Community Conversations on Mental Health" will take place at the Gilbert and Bennett Cultural Arts Center on three consecutive Wednesdays starting March 19. The purpose of these meetings is to foster discussion of mental health issues, including the availability of services and the problem of stigma.

The Commission will invite Wilton's new Commissioner of Health, Barry Bogle, to attend an upcoming meeting.

Discussion was held regarding changing the time of the Commission meeting to a later hour. A majority of those present favored keeping the 5:30 pm start time.

Liaison Reports:

Trackside/SafeRides: Peg Koellmer reported that both programs are doing well. The annual Trackside fundraiser will be held in the spring.

Wilton Community Assistance Fund: Cathy Pierce reported that the fund continues to be in good shape, thanks in part to a number of unsolicited donations received over the holidays. In recent weeks, she has distributed over \$13,000 in fuel assistance from the Community Assistance Fund.

Underage Drinking Task Force/Public School Health and Guidance: Roseann DeSimone discussed reports of increased stress among students.

Food Pantry: Cathy Pierce reported that the pantry currently is adequately stocked. Upcoming food drives by Kiwanis and the Girl Scouts should provide additional supplies.

Wilton Commons: David Graybill reported that all units are leased and new resident services, including a hair salon and convenience store, are up and running. Furnishings for the lobby, lounge, and chapel will be installed in the spring. The application for Wilton Commons II, an additional 24 units, has been submitted to the state. The new units would offer congregate living, light housekeeping, and one communal meal per day.

The Wilton Commons Board is soliciting letters of support as part of the application for a grant to obtain funding for a pedestrian crosswalk from the Wilton Commons/Trackside complex across the railroad tracks to Wilton center.

Senior Center Advisory Council: Judy Zucker reported on the Council's February 21 meeting. Liz Doty will conduct a survey of Wilton seniors' expectations and interest in new programs.

Comstock Renovation Project: On March 17, the Renovation Project Committee will present to the Board of Selectman the proposal and budget recommendations based on the schematic design. Judy Zucker noted that the Committee is looking for volunteers to speak out in support of the renovation project at the March 25 budget meeting at Middlebrook School.

Stay at Home Wilton: Judy Mabley reported that Barb Quincy is Stay at Home's new president and Phil Richards will serve as its new board chairman. A newsletter that details the Stay at Home programs is available for Wilton seniors.

Youth Council: Virginia Smith reported that a program for parents about cyberbullying will be held at the Wilton Library on Tuesday, March 18. An evening program for parents on "Staying Safe on the Internet" will be presented on March 20. A screening of the film "Anonymous People" will be part of a program on addiction and recovery at the high school on April 23. The Youth Council is raising funds to bring Chris Herren, a former NBA player who is in recovery from addiction, to address students in the fall. Also in the fall, Positive Directions will be conducting a survey of students' substance use patterns. Past surveys have been useful in identifying the extent of substance abuse among the youth of Wilton.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia Smith

