

COMMISSION on SOCIAL SERVICES

Town of Wilton

Minutes of November 14, 2013 Meeting

Attending: Betty Jo Corridon, David Graybill, Peg Koellmer, Judy Mabley, Cathy Pierce, Virginia Smith, Christine Tenore, Michael O'Connell, Judy Zucker and Roseann De Simone

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Peg Koellmer at 5:30 PM

Motion to approve the minutes of the October meeting was made by R. De Simone- second by C. Tenore. The minutes were passed unanimously.

Guest speakers- Lauren Safko and Mike Safko

Lauren Safko, student at Wilton High School gave an overview of the Safe Rides Program of Wilton. The program is a National non-profit organization and is located at Trackside Teen Center. It is in operation every Friday and Saturday night from 10PM to 2AM providing a safe and sober mode of transportation to Wilton's youth. The programs Board of Directors have established policy and procedure encompassing training of all student drivers who are insured under The Boy Scouts of America. Teams of two Wilton High School students (one male and one female) man each car, pick up students from a specified location and drive them home. Student who use the program do not use their names when calling to ensure anonymity. This service is only for Wilton youth and transportation remains within the Town boundaries.

At present there are a total of 70 volunteer drivers utilizing 30 student volunteers per weekend and adult supervision, housed at Trackside, who support the student drivers. Ms. Safko stated that on average there 15 calls per weekend. Community and school support is present- e.g. Wilton Ambulance Corp, Wilton Police Dept., Wilton Youth Council and WHS Administration.

A process is already in place to train junior volunteer drivers so that the program can continue in the future.

Liaison Reports:

Trackside/Safe Rides: Peg Koellmer stated that Trackside once again is coming in at a flat budget. More programs are being planned with the last event- Trunk or Treat and the Halloween Haunted House brought 300 to 400 children participating in the event.

Person to Person: Peg Koellmer attended a luncheon at Bianco Rosa which was sponsored by Person to Person. This organization has taken over the Christian Community Action group- a 501C3 Non- for – Profit organization providing food, rent and clothing to clients. The purpose of the event was for

fundraising. Judy Zucker questioned if the money raised in Wilton will be earmarked for Wilton clients. Peg Koellmer state that funds are distributed to the Norwalk/Stamford demographic area

Wilton Social Services: A question was raised in regard to fundraising for the Wilton Social Services Department. Cathy Pierce stated that historically fund have come via donations and not fundraising. Peg Koellmer stated that the Wilton Warm Up Fund being facilitated by 2 Wilton resident volunteers is no longer soliciting funds. She also stated that the Wilton Community Assistance Fund is the vehicle that is in place to legally utilize tax deductible donations. Presently that organization has an active Board that oversees all of the administrative responsibility and mandated reporting. Peg Koellmer will speak with WCAF in regard to sending out letters for donations to the Warm Up Fund.

Cathy Pierce state that Thanksgiving Baskets are being organized as is the Christmas Tree /Holiday Gift Giving program. Lauren Hughes is in charge of both activities. To date there are requests for 65 Thanksgiving Baskets and over 100 requests for children's holiday gift cards.

Public Schools Health and Guidance: Roseann De Simone stated that Dr. David Bernstein, renowned Forensic Psychologist, presented a Professional Development program to Middlebrook and Wilton High School faculty on safety, security and detection of treats in the school setting. Selected faculty members from both schools were then selected and trained in threat assessment and will act as the schools Threat Assessment Team.

Substance Abuse Task Force: Roseann De Simone stated that she attended the last meeting where 5 adults and 1 student were present. Margaret Creeth will be actively looking to recruit more students to participate in the committee. A tentative agenda of programs and activities was presented and will be discussed more in depth at the next meeting.

Food Pantry: B. J Corridon will contact Lauren Hughes prior to the Commission meeting for updates on the Food Pantry status.

Wilton Commons: David Graybill reported that as of November there are 42 residents at Wilton Commons. Seven apartments remain available. A new Program Coordinator has been appointed and will be available every Tuesday and Wednesday.

Senior Center Advisory Council: Judy Zucker reported that the group had a productive meeting in October. She stated that the Council could use some additional members. She will send the Commissioners the SACA Mission statement. Suggestions as to the appropriate candidates may be sent directly to Judy.

Stay at Home Wilton: Judy Mabley reported that Shannon White spoke at the Wilton Library on the topic of Aging Parents. She also stated that the organization is looking for more community support and donations. Presently 75 families are utilizing the organizations services which reflect the same number as last year.

Youth Council: Virginia Smith reported that October was Red Ribbon Week. She stated that Youth Council will be sponsoring a talk by Dr. Joanne Frieberg- CT State expert t on Bullying/Cyber bullying Policies and Laws on March 18, 2014.

Judy Zucker requested that all Commissioners receive a new directory due to new member's joining the Commission. Peg Koellmer stated that she will distribute the revised directory to all members.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:40 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Roseann De Simone, Co-secretary