

Haverford Township Senior Citizens Advisory Council Meeting

March 19, 2018

Members Present: Bob Lewis, John Groch, Rose Marie Downs, Mark Cohen, Eli Cohen, Pat Hagen

1. After welcoming new members Mark Cohen and Eli Cohen, Bob Lewis opened the meeting with a discussion of Surrey Services and its Havertown site, which will no longer be available to the agency. Surrey has offered \$2 million in renovations to the former township building in exchange for use of the building as its new Havertown location. Surrey will also assume all building maintenance costs. Parking around the building would be available to the public after 5:00 pm. Bob Lewis encouraged members to think of special features that could be incorporated in Surrey's building plans to provide additional benefits for seniors. Members agreed to support this plan and will strongly recommend that the Commissioners consider accepting Surrey's offer at its next meeting.
2. Bob Lewis raised the topic of limited free parking for seniors, which has been resisted by the Commissioners and police department due to its anticipated expense and bureaucratic inconvenience. Mark Cohen asked whether there is a database with numbers of seniors in the township, which would permit the committee to argue more forcefully for free parking and other projects.
3. Another concern raised was high school taxes and whether mechanisms exist to provide seniors with tax relief and alternative sources of funding to alleviate costs for the township. Other expenses discussed were prescription drug costs. Although relief programs exist for impoverished seniors, many seniors on fixed incomes do not qualify and struggle to buy all of the drugs they need.
4. Bob informed members about AARP services regarding mobile phone service and automobile safety technology.
5. Members expressed discouragement that Commissioners appear to disregard their requests and suggestions. Discussion centered on developing strategies to strengthen the committee's voice. Bob recommended that the committee focus on the Surrey Services proposal and parking for seniors.
6. The next meeting will be held on April 16.

Haverford Township Senior Citizens Advisory Council Meeting

April 17, 2018

Members Present: Bob Lewis, Commissioner Gerry Hart, Jack Dougherty, John Groch, Steve Cohen, Ann D'Antonio, Rose Marie Downs, Annetta Martini, Joe McMonagle, Pat Hagen

1. Township Manager Larry Gentile provided the committee with an extensive tour of the new township facility. His presentation was comprehensive and very helpful for understanding township operations in all departments. Consolidation of all department offices into one building, along with cost efficiencies over the years, has considerably reduced overall township expenses.
2. New members were introduced: Pat Hagen, Joe McMonagle, Gerry Hart (Board of Commissioners liaison to this committee).
3. Members discussed free parking in the township for senior residents. Ann and John will prepare a proposal for commissioners to consider at their next meeting in May. Bob noted that a process for passes is already in place for volunteer firemen.
4. Members agreed that there was a need for better marketing for Surrey Services. Many more seniors could be taking advantage of the beneficial services provided by this organization. This topic will be addressed at future meetings.
5. The next meeting will be on May 15 at 7:00 pm in the new township building.

Haverford Township Senior Citizens Advisory Council Meeting

May 16, 2018

Members Present: Bob Lewis, Commissioner Gerry Hart, John Groch, Ann D'Antonio, Rose Marie Downs

1. The meeting began with a report from Commissioner Gerry Hart, liaison with the Board of Commissioners, regarding the Council's proposal for free parking for senior residents of the township. Initially, commissioners received the proposal favorably, but after seeing the anticipated loss of parking meter income (\$29,000 annually), commissioners balked at the proposal. Council members questioned the accuracy of the estimate and asked Gerry Hart to request an explanation of how that estimate was calculated, to suggest that seniors' parking could be limited to two hours, and to ask the commissioners to reconsider the proposal. Members discussed the possibility of attendance at the next commissioners meeting to support the proposal.
2. Members next discussed the purpose and effectiveness of the Council. Some observed that few residents seem to be aware of the Council's existence. Next, members questioned what kinds of issues were raised by seniors directly to commissioners or the township administration. Seniors often request the services of high school students with household chores, like window-washing and snow removal. A major issue related to this request is liability concerns. Bob Madonna of Surrey Services will be consulted on this issue.
3. Members discussed ways of advertising the Council's outreach to seniors, including an ad in the township newsletter.
4. Topics for the senior seminar planned for the fall (October 9, 10:00 to 12:30) were proposed by members. Suggestions included Bob Madonna of Surrey Services (including a presentation on home security and safety concerns), car technology speaker, Access representatives and/or Tina Garrity to address health insurance issues, Main Line Health representative, COSA representative. Advertising will include commissioners' newsletters and church bulletins. Rose Marie Downs noted churches serving the Havertown population.
5. The next meeting will be held on June 19.

Surrey Services – Meeting Summary (August 6, 2018)

Present: Bob Lewis, Steve Cohen, John Groch, Bob Madonna (CEO)

Volunteer opportunities:

1. Visiting with seniors to provide companionship and to hear their stories
2. Assist seniors with exercise/workout routines
3. Provide respite care for caregivers (weekends)
4. Computer tech support to facilitate contact with family members
5. Performing chores for seniors
6. Seniors mentor at-risk students
7. “Senior” prom – dances for seniors
8. Scavenger hunt fundraiser for Surrey – West Laurel Hill Cemetery – historical figures

Issues:

1. Liability covered for all volunteers
2. Background checks required for students?
3. Transportation for students without cars/licenses?
4. Extra credit (academic) for students in addition to service hours?

Facilitator:

Bob Madonna, president and CEO, available to speak to students about options.

A follow-up meeting was held at St. Joseph’s Prep with coordinators of student volunteer services on August 8. They look forward to meeting with Bob Madonna and expanding student volunteerism with Surrey Services.

Senior Advisory Council Meeting

October 16, 2018

Members present: Bob Lewis, Rose Marie Downs, Joe McMonagle, Pat Hagan, Steve Cohen, Annette Martini, Ann D'Antonio, Jack Dougherty, John Groch

Members reviewed the senior workshop feedback summary provided by Bob Lewis. Approximately 50 people attended. Of particular interest were the following: sources of publicity, sound system needs improvement, overall satisfaction with presentation topics, absence of Part F medigap information, future topics – financial planning, COSA, APPRISE, more about Surrey Services in Havertown, fitness programs, home security, scam phone calls, email and regular mail, and maximizing Social Security and retirement income. Among the lessons learned: some residents do not use email, so a “burn” phone could be used for a certain period of time to register participants in addition to the email system. Members considered scheduling a workshop in the spring but decided that a fall workshop is more realistic. Four topics should be presented.

Members discussed more active participation in commissioner constituency meetings. Members agreed to check their own commissioner's meeting schedule and attend the meetings to assert a presence and express interest in representing the needs of senior residents.

Pat Hagan informed the group that in 2014 the township proposed to charge residents for curb reconstruction when needed to meet code requirements when they move out of the neighborhood. Also proposed was township assumption of ownership of the curbs. This matter should be investigated to make sure a policy favorable to residents is established. Further discussion will take place at the next meeting.

The senior parking privilege proposal is still pending and will be revisited at the next meeting, which will be held on November 20 at 7:00 pm.