

TOWN OF MIDDLEFIELD
MINUTES OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE
October 17, 2023

PRESENT: David Karl, Town Supervisor, Andy Baugnet, Middlefield Planning Board, Kelly Branigan Middlefield Town Board, Bill Gibson, Neal Newman, Middlefield Zoning Enforcement Officer.

Meeting called to order 6:04 pm.

Motion to approve minutes by D. Karl, 2nd B. Gibson. All in favor.

6 members of the public attended this meeting in person on the topic of Senior Citizen Concerns, and one additional participant attended via zoom.

Topics addressed by the group were as follows:

Lack of public transportation for things like shopping for food and medical appointments. Office for the Aging has great services, but poor transportation. Some services offer transportation but are run by volunteers and are not reliable. Private taxi service is not reliable. The bus system does not service Clark Sports Center.

There is a lack of any type of database showing names and addresses of senior citizens. This could be used in an emergency, help people plan for daily needs, help with senior isolation. People feel the town should perhaps play a role in identifying seniors for this purpose. A known system of communication is needed for emergencies. Vulnerable people need to be identified, and their needs should be known to neighbors and community members. Perhaps a text messaging service would help, but many seniors do not own cell phones, and some own no phone at all.

“Connections” is a 5 year old program at Clark Sports Center. Seniors meet to use the gym, socialize, work on art projects, and share a meal. Currently 200 individuals are signed up as members of the group. The town board provided funds to that program this past year.

1 in 5 seniors in the county live alone, senior isolation is a prevalent and leads to medical problems. It was suggested the Town Board form a Senior Citizen Needs Committee and build it into the structure of the board. In addition, the town website should use and leverage its website for seniors.

It was suggested several times that communication between the town and senior citizens could be strengthened so information is more readily available regarding senior programs and services. Perhaps and annually mailing and/or information posted on the town website is a starting point.

In regards to senior housing, it was suggested that zoning laws address Accessory Dwelling Units so seniors can live closer to someone, which will help end isolation, and perhaps help with transportation and maintenance of property.

Motion to adjourn at 7:25 p.m. by D. Karl, 2nd A. Baugnet. All in favor.

The next meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Committee will be held at 6:00 pm Tuesday November 21, 2023.

The topic of the meeting will be Farmland and Open Space Preservation.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrew Baugnet
Secretary