



Friends of Newtown Seniors (FONS) Roundtable

July 23, 2024,

Discussion Highlights

Newtown Senior Center

More about Nunnawauk

Rich Simoneau, President, Newtown Housing for the Elderly Inc and Mary Sally, Executive Director, Nunnawauk Meadows joined the roundtable to describe Nunnawauk and answer questions.

What is Nunnawauk?

Nunnawauk Meadows is an independent living community of 134 one-bedroom and studio apartments for seniors and persons with disabilities. It is located on Nunnawauk Road, south of Fairfield Hills. There is a four person staff maintaining the property (e.g. landscaping, snow plowing, etc.) Its initial and operating funding comes from the USDA - Rural Development ("USDA-RD") program. Pre COVID there was a meal program. The residents' association meets monthly.

To be eligible to live in Nunnawauk Meadows, a person must be 62 or older, (or disabled) have income below about \$78,000 or for a couple about \$80,000. Once accepted, subsidies for their rent (currently \$872) are based on income and assets. Applications for the first come first accepted are available online. (<https://nunnawaukmeadows.com/>) Currently there about 200 people who keep their position on the list with an annual re-check of financial eligibility. From application to acceptance can be 3 to 5 years. <https://nunnawaukmeadows.com/pdf/NM-Application.pdf>

Mary Sally, handed out a Nunnawauk Meadows brochure. It includes the following history: *"land was provided by the State of Connecticut in 1975 and 1995. In 1968, a Housing Committee was formed from a group of people who established the non-profit corporation, . . . After acquisition of the land, the money to build the complex was borrowed from the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA), k/n/a USDA Rural Development. . . . The nine members of the 1970 Board of Directors personally loaned the seed money required by the Farmers Home Administration to get the program moving. Actual construction was started in March 1976, and the first tenant moved in the following January."*

Currently the board is looking into a paved path from Nunnawauk to Fairfield Hills. This is a safety concern to provide an alternative to walking the narrow local roads. There is a semiannual fundraiser for Nunnawauk.

Building More Units on the Property

The Board has and will consider expansion. The federal programs, of the type used to establish the Meadows, are not looking for denser, multi-story housing. Preference to maintain the current character and not add multi-story units. Other funding is being considered, including from local banks. With different funding, the expansion would likely have different financial eligibility and support requirements.



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In Case of Emergency

For the discussion part of the meeting, Ned Simpson described a recent event in his community where someone called 911, EMS arrived, but the caller was not able to unlock their door. After asking neighbors, the EMTs broke into the unit. A number of discussion-starter questions were asked of participants. Thirteen written responses were submitted

1 Are you enrolled in Newtown's Smart 911 system?

Only 17% responded Yes. Nearly everyone else asked: "What is Smart 911"?

2. Why would someone not sign-up?

Here again the most common response was not knowing about Smart 911. 42% check not knowing where to start and 25% cited general uncomfortableness with computers. On the survey only one person checked "Don't want to give out my private information" but that concern was voiced at all the discussion tables. News reports of data breaches were commonly cited.

3. Does your Homeowners/Condo Association recommend storage of emergency information?

Of the 38% of respondents live where there is an HOA, one collects emergency contact information for residents.

4. Do you have a Medical Alert device?

None of the Roundtable attendees subscribe to a medical alert device

5. If you fall or have another medical emergency Who would you call?

Call 911 was everyone's selection. In discussion calling near-by family or a neighbor was mentioned.

6. How would you be comfortable with emergency services getting to you?

- 42% Hidden key
- 25% Key lockbox
- 25% Keypad lock
- 17% Phone app that unlocks the door
- 17% Giving a key to a neighbor
- 8% Leaving a door always unlocked

During discussion the thought of leaving one's home unlocked was totally unacceptable to many. There was also a sentiment of let EMTs break in, damage can easily be repaired.

7. If you have to be taken to an Emergency Room, which Hospital would you want to go to?



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Of the seven near-by hospitals, Danbury Hospital was nearly everyone's selection. Bridgeport and New Milford hospitals each had a mention. In discussion, most felt that the patient has no say. The ambulance company will decide where to take the patient.