

**Town of Groton  
Department of Parks and Recreation  
Groton Senior Center  
Rules and Regulations**

**I. Introduction**

Programs for senior citizens in Groton originated in the fall of 1967 when the Groton Parks and Recreation Department saw a need for offering services to the elderly. The program began with the Department's sponsorship of the Groton Senior Citizens Club, which was formed to provide social-recreational opportunities for the older person.

By 1972, over 125 persons were involved in the program. As the activities and services grew, the club membership provided volunteer leadership, which became the backbone of senior programs.

Gradually, recreational sessions, a newsletter, a calendar of events, trips and service projects were added. As the program developed, a coordinator was hired by the Parks and Recreation Department to assist in planning, promoting and establishing new programs needed to serve the elderly. A combination of local, federal and state grants made available a 5-day per week hot lunch program, a bi-monthly health clinic, and door-to-door transportation, through the cooperation of other local human service agencies. By 1974, membership increased to over 200 active participants. By 1975, the program for the elderly included: dinner dances, luncheons, picnics, swimming, yoga, chorus, chair-caning, dance, as well as health clinics, blood pressure testing, nutrition, transportation, and social services, community service projects, and many more.

By 1977, 800 elderly had joined as members of the club; over 300 being male. As program needs increased, many activities and programs were extended to weekends and evenings in addition to regular programming being offered Monday through Friday. What started out in 1967 as a social-recreational venture, has developed into a more comprehensive approach to senior citizen services.

On September 26, 1978, the voters of Groton approved a bond authorization for the construction of a 12,900 square foot multi-service senior citizens center on Route 117. Official groundbreaking was held on Saturday, June 16, 1979.

By October 1979, 2800 elderly had registered for an official Town identification card and introduced to available programs for seniors. The center was available to serve the more than 3400-3800 elderly residents of Groton.

Since the opening of the center, programming and support for seniors has continued to expand and advance. This includes the opening of a Computer Learning center for seniors and a new addition built in 1999 to house the Computer Learning Center and new fitness room and handicapped accessible bathrooms. New senior housing in Groton has

added to the need for services for the elderly. The center continues to serve the over 6000 senior residents in Groton.

## **II.**

### **III. Goals and Objectives**

Adoption of the following goals and objectives will guide and assist the Town of Groton in successfully carrying out a comprehensive program for senior citizens:

- 1) Provide leadership and coordination to bring all available community resources together in a comprehensive effort to serve the older adult, extend their continuing independence and to fortify a positive image of aging.
- 2) Provide opportunities for the intellectual, physical, and social development of the older individual through a diversified year 'round multi-service program.
- 3) Provide an atmosphere that will foster socialization and provide an opportunity to develop partnerships with all ages.
- 4) Provide a focal point for adults over 55 to join together in community service projects utilizing their unique skills and talents for the betterment of other segments of the community as well as other residents.
- 5) Encourage participant input in the development of programs, promotion of services, assessment of needs and in the senior center operation.

### **III. General Regulations**

The senior center is a public building under the jurisdiction of the Town of Groton and is therefore subject to all appropriate local, state, and federal rules, regulations, ordinances, etc. regarding such facilities. (For more information, please see Town of Groton Town Policies, Town of Groton building codes, Ledge Light Health District food service codes, etc.)

Organizations that practice discrimination regarding race, color, age, religion, religious creed, sex, physical handicap, national origin, ancestry or marital status will not be permitted use of center facilities.

It is the desire of the Town to encourage individual and group responsibility by center users within the scope of sound management practices, common sense, fairness and with utmost respect for the facility and its individual patrons. This attitude can minimize a potentially excessive list of rules and regulations that could inadvertently stifle enthusiasm and enjoyment.

All rules and regulations shall be administered in a manner that will provide maximum enjoyment while providing for the safety, convenience, and rights of all the center's patrons. Individual privileges will not be extended if they are in conflict with the adopted rules and regulations and/or interfere with the rights and privileges of the majority of the center's patrons.

The following general rules shall be in effect:

- 1) Smoking will not be permitted in the facility.
- 2) Safety of patrons shall be considered in the scheduling of rooms. Signs shall be posted clearly indicating the number of individuals legally permitted in each room, and any specific activity restrictions.
- 3) Gambling will not be permitted in the building or on adjacent grounds associated with the building. There will be no alcohol served in the building or on the Senior Center grounds. Exceptions to this policy for programming at the center must be made by the Senior Center staff in writing to the Director of the Department of Parks & Recreation and to the Town Manager.
- 4) Individuals and/or groups responsible for willful or malicious damage to center facilities or equipment will be required to pay for said damages.
- 5) Abusive language and/or disruptive behavior affecting center patrons or staff, shall be reason to exclude an individual or group from participation in center activities in accordance with a progressive administration of discipline.
- 6) Continual dominance of center facilities and equipment by individuals, to the exclusion of others, shall be discouraged in an appropriate manner by building supervisors.
- 7) Equipment assigned to the center shall remain on the premises unless otherwise indicated. No equipment can be loaned to individuals for off premise use.
- 8) All users of the center shall be expected to reasonably share in the responsibility for its proper use, cleanliness, and care.
- 9) No pets will be allowed in the building.
- 10) All senior citizen activities held at the center will come under the sponsorship of the Senior Center.

#### **IV. Guidelines for Senior Center Use**

##### **A) Use by Senior Citizens**

1) **Eligibility** - The center will serve residents of Groton age 55 and above except the Computer Learning lab which will be age 50. A person less than 55 can be considered for senior center programs and services upon written referral from a physician or a health or social service agency. Letters of referral do not guarantee that a person will be accepted to use the Senior Center facility. Programs or services sponsored by or coordinated through the center can be extended into the community and need not be carried out within the confines of the building. Certain services can be made available to the general public although the primary effort is directed towards senior citizens.

2) **Hours of Operation** - Office hours will be Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Program hours may be offered from 7:30a.m. to 10:00 p.m. based on financial resources. Evening activities can be scheduled up to 10:00 p.m.

3) **Fees and Charges** - There are no membership dues or admission requirements to the center. Any Groton resident ages 55 and above may attend the center. A fee will be charged for specific activities. Non-residents will be allowed to register for classes, trips and select programs and this registration will begin one week after the registration for residents.

4) **Administration** - The Department of Parks and Recreation, through its Senior Center Supervisor, shall be responsible for the daily administration and supervision of the center. Additional personnel will be assigned in accordance with available resources to meet the program needs of the seniors.

**B) Use by Others**

Although it has been explicitly indicated that the primary building use is for senior citizens, the Town of Groton's policy is to make its facilities available as able and within approved operational and fiscal guidelines. Therefore, no specific hours will be set aside for others. Requests will be accepted in accordance with the priority use schedule as time is available.

Non-senior citizen meetings or activities will not be permitted during scheduled senior citizen activities. Meetings or activities requiring a regular schedule will not be permitted for any non-departmental group or organization. Senior citizen activities will at all times have priority.

- 1) Eligibility - Facilities available to non-senior citizen groups will be limited to the multi-purpose room, and accessory facilities (rest rooms, entrance lobby, etc.).

The following groups and organizations will be permitted use as time and financial resources are available for meetings and activities (listed in order of priority):

- a) Groton Parks and Recreation Department adult activities;
- b) Groton official governmental meetings or activities\*;
- c) Groton civic, social, religious and fraternal organizations
- d) Groton Parks and Recreation Department children and youth (quiet, small group).

Center users may charge a reasonable fee, dues or donations may be charged as long as the proceeds are to be for human service or educational, charitable purposes.

\*The Groton Representative Town Meeting has been granted permission to hold their regular monthly meetings on the 2nd Wednesday of each month in the multi-purpose room by Town Council resolution.

- 2) Building Supervision - A non-custodial representative of the Parks and Recreation Department will be responsible for building security and general supervision when Town departments are utilizing the facilities. The representative shall be responsible for normal room "set up." Town departments will be responsible for any extra room arrangements including set up and break down.

The Town reserves the right to determine requirements for extra supervision and/or police coverage depending on the type and size of the event.

- 3) Fees and Charges - Official Town organizations shall not be subject to a fee.
- 4) Building use agreement - All outside organizations shall be required to enter into a rental agreement stipulating responsibility of the users and the Town. The Town reserves the right to require a bond and/or insurance to cover damage, or liability during events.

## **V. SENIOR CITIZENS CLUB**

The executive board and members of the Groton Senior Citizens Club shall serve as volunteers to the Center and contribute ideas to the staff for consideration. The Senior Center will provide space for the Club for its monthly meeting and special events.

## **VI. AMENDMENTS AND REVISIONS**

The Parks and Recreation Commission shall, from time to time, recommend to the Town Council amendments or revisions to these rules and regulations when it is deemed in the best interest of the Town of Groton or the citizens to be served.

Approved by the Parks & Recreation Commission, January, 2010  
MJR: 1/19/2010