

Bloomingtondale explores possibility of starting Community Cars program for seniors

Thursday February 9, 2012, 1:59 AM

BY DEBORAH WALSH
STAFF WRITER
Suburban Trends

The local senior citizen community is in the initial stages of exploring whether it can bring an EZ Ride Community Cars program to Bloomingtondale. At last month's Borough Council meeting, Councilwoman Linda Shortman, who is a liaison to the Senior Citizen Advisory Board, said the seniors are looking for publicity for a Community Cars program, which is a quality of life enhancement program where seniors can get transportation to more places than just the doctor's office.

According to Shortman, the seniors are investigating the interest level for such a program and if the interest level warrants such a program, the seniors will be looking for volunteer drivers.

Pat Yannacci, Bloomingtondale Senior Citizen Center director, said the Community Cars

program would provide seniors with more flexible and personalized transportation than is available to them now. Currently some seniors are provided transportation to doctor appointments through Passaic County Para Transit and Catholic Charities.

Yannacci said the Community Cars program could still be used for doctor appointments, but could also be used to take seniors to the movies, to the salon/barber, out to lunch or dinner, and shopping.

Yannacci said the Community Cars program has operated at several locations including the Kip Center in Rutherford and more recently a Community Cars program has been started in West Milford.

"It is working quite well and is funded in a number of areas," she said.

Yannacci said she has been in touch with Sjockier Jackson, who is the Passaic County coordinator for the Community Cars program. To participate, seniors are charged a \$15 annual membership fee. They are also charged an initial pickup fee of \$2.50 and 55 cents a mile. These fees pay for the cars, gas and program administration. The Community Cars program provides cars for the volunteer drivers to use and Yannacci said she will find out whether a Community Cars vehicle could be based in Bloomingtondale.

Yannacci said the volunteer drivers will be screened to ensure they have a safe driving record. Yannacci said once the community's

needs are determined and after she finds out more about the program, she will be looking for volunteer drivers if the program is a good match for Bloomingtondale.

Email: walshde@northjersey.com