

WEST HARTFORD SENIOR CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING

MINUTES - JANUARY 30, 2024

Members Present: Noreen Bachteler, Eileen Rau, Kevin Ryan, Mary Reilly, Kaye Straw
Staff Present: Rebecca Sears, Kevin Farmer, Robin Clare
Absent: Beth Rocco, Anne Massucco, Rosemary Cleary, Mary Silverberg,
Keren Paquette
Guests: From the Community: Judy Small

The meeting was called to order at 10:02AM by SCAC Co-Chair Noreen Bachteler. Due to this past January 16th snowstorm and cancellation of Senior Center activities, today's meeting is considered a "Special Meeting". The minutes of the December 19, 2023 meeting were approved as written. The Chair's Report was moved by consensus to accommodate the schedules of those reporting on the below.

Seniors Job Bank

Robin Clare reported that in 2023 the Seniors Job Bank saw a huge increase from 500 to 740 job seekers. Unfortunately, their database has no way to track who actually got jobs – something they're hoping to rectify in the future. Robin has stepped up their marketing of the Job Bank by going to several towns' Chamber of Commerce meetings to raise awareness and interest. In 2024, the Job Bank will be adding volunteer job opportunities for the first time. Also, there are Board member positions that need to be filled. SJB no longer accepts transportation requests and those are referred to ITN. The question was asked about background checks being done on the workers and Robin reported that they cannot legally do background checks, however they encourage the hiring people/companies to do background checks and contact references.

Senior Centers

Becky Sears reported that the next Bulletin will be ready in about 3 weeks. The new Senior Center bus order was completed and delivery is expected to be this Fall. Three new treadmills were recently delivered and installed at the Bishops Corner site from a donation. They are soon launching a Tech Education series for seniors who are looking to re-enter the workforce and have secured an instructor. It is planned to be a six week class at the Elmwood Senior Center computer lab with dates to be determined. Becky is working with the West Hartford Arts Commission to bring art and artists to the Bishops Corner Senior Center.

Transportation

Kevin Farmer reported that in 2023, ITN got back to the ride levels of 2019 and they will be celebrating their 15th anniversary in 2024. Kevin will be speaking in the coming weeks to the Knights of Columbus and Rotary Club to try to promote interest particularly for drivers. They are currently at 50% of their fundraising goal for this year's annual appeal. As previously announced, Kevin will be leaving ITN in the coming months. Following up on the background check discussion from the Seniors Job Bank, Kevin reported that ITN has background checks conducted on their drivers and absorb that cost.

New ECC Advisory Committee Report

Due to the absences of both Beth Rocco and Rory Cleary, Co-Chair Bachteler read an email that had been sent from Helen Rubino Turco on 1/29/2024 re: architectural services for the new ECC project. Helen advised that a recommendation has been made to the Town Manager but we await a signed contract.

Chair's Report

Noreen has submitted the 2024-25 Calendar of SCAC Meetings to the Town Clerk's office.

She reminded attendees of the email received from the West Hartford Corporation Counsel on the Freedom of Information virtual training being offered to all Town Boards and Commissions on Jan. 31 and Feb 15 at 6:30pm. All SCAC members are being encouraged to attend one of the sessions if possible as the presentations will not be recorded per the received email.

Noreen referenced the group to the emails received from the CT State Unit on Aging who are rolling out their "Community Conversations" at various senior centers around the state. SCAC members are encouraged to attend a nearby session (Windsor and Rocky Hill) if possible. A virtual session will be held on 3/11/24. See the email for the registration info. for either the in-person or virtual sessions.

CT Attorney General Tong will be presenting an Elder Justice Forum from 10:00am to 11:00am at the Feb. 20 SCAC meeting. Members are being asked to come 15 minutes early and a good turnout is expected. Noreen is looking into get name badges made for SCAC members and WH Community Interactive is being contacted by Becky Sears to record the presentation. Mayor Cantor and Helen Rubino-Turco have been invited. Publicizing will begin once the flier is received from the AG's Office. For the SCAC's March 19th meeting, Co-Chair Eileen Rau has reached out to the Outreach Coordinator for the CT Banking Department to present on financial fraud & scams targeting seniors.

Noreen announced that she and Co-Chair Rau participated in a virtual planning session with Becky Sears on January 29th with Dr. Sean Jeffery, Geriatric Pharmacist, to co-sponsor a program with the WHSC on medication safety in older adults. This program will be held on March 26th from 10:00am to noon at the Bishops Corner Senior Center. Dr. Jeffery is a professor with UConn School of Pharmacy and with HHC Integrated Care Partners. Following his talk, Dr. Jeffery will be arranging for some of his UConn Pharmacy students to be on site for individual medication reviews and prior sign-up will be required.

Noreen also made contact with WH Councilor Deb Polun, the new chair of the Human and Community Services Committee, to invite her to a future SCAC meeting. Ms. Polun has a work background in community health care policy and with the former CT Commission on Aging.

New Business/Public Comment

Noreen asked if there were any other ideas for speakers for 2024-25 SCAC Meetings or other new business. Mary Reilly corrected the SCAC Calendar meeting date for January 2025 to 1/21/2025 and Noreen will notify the Town Clerk's Office. A member of the public (JS) suggested the SCAC contact the WHPD about a possible medication drop-box for the March 26th program and Noreen will follow-up. Kevin Ryan discussed the Age Friendly Community Initiative and passed out a handout summarizing the 8 domains and the SCAC actions to date on this initiative with various Town officials and other parties in regards to age-appropriate housing (ie. for older adults). Kevin proposed that reporting of the information shared at the monthly meetings be done in the context of the 8 domains as that would be helpful to identify how the Town is participating in those areas. He expressed the SCAC being pro-active rather than reactive. Kevin agreed to be the chair in organizing a senior housing forum for the April 16th SCAC meeting. Eileen Rau also discussed the idea of SCAC doing some type of newsletter with the highlights of the monthly meetings.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday February 20, 2024.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:07PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann T. Visgilio, Recording Secretary