

WEST HARTFORD SENIOR CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMISSION

Minutes from Meeting on March 19, 2024

Members Present: Noreen Bachteler, Rosemary Cleary, Eileen Rau, Mary Reilly, Beth Rocco, Kevin Ryan, Mary Silverberg, Kaye Straw
Staff Present: Rebecca Sears, Kevin Farmer, Robin Clare, Lisa Mahoney, Helen Rubino-Turco, Keren Paquette, Monique Dixon
Absent: Anne Massucco
Guests: Kathleen Titsworth, CT Department of Banking and Community members

The meeting was called to order at 10:03AM by Co-Chair Noreen Bachteler. Due to the number of community members at the meeting, Noreen asked the Commission members to introduce themselves to the group. The minutes of the February 20, 2024 meeting were approved with one change – in the Senior Transportation section, Kevin Farmer/ITN reported that the West Hartford Rotary Club meeting listed as on February 25th will be on March 25th.

Chairs' Report

Noreen reported that close to 70 community members attended the February 20th Elder Justice Forum with Attorney General Tong and the information was well-received. She stated that on next Tuesday, March 26 @ 10AM, there will be a presentation by Dr. Sean Jeffery of UConn School of Pharmacy on Medication Safety In Older Adults. Dr. Jeffery is a Geriatric Pharmacist and this is a joint presentation of this Commission and the West Hartford Senior Centers. There will be student pharmacists also attending who can do individual medication reviews for a limited number of attendees by signing up in advance.

West Hartford Social Services

Helen Rubino-Turco, Director of WH Social and Leisure Services, reported that Mayor Cantor's "State of the Town" address was held last night (3/18/24) at the Mandell Jewish Community Center. She stated of interest to this group: 1.) Announcement was made that GWWO Architects based in Baltimore with a West Hartford office has been awarded the contract for the New Elmwood Community Center with a projected begin date of April 1st. 2.) Helen then discussed two Town Budget items that impact seniors being proposed are: A.) An increase in annual membership fees for Dial-A-Ride which currently services about 250 residents from \$50 to \$65 per year. The last Dial-a-Ride increase was in 2014 and the proposed new amount is comparable with per communities. B.) The other item being proposed is for the elimination of Senior Center's annual membership fee (currently \$15) for Town residents starting in the new budget year which is 7/01/2024. There would continue to be membership fees for non-residents and the fitness center. The Town will be having two public hearings on the proposed Town Budget before the budget adoption deadline of April 26, 2024.

Keren Paquette reported that CRT Energy Assistance has received additional funds for deliverable fuel. Operation Fuel closed its application process on March 15 due to overwhelming demand. The Town Food Pantry has a new part-time person working and donations continue to be low this time of year.

Applications are now being taken for property tax discounts for seniors and veterans. The Renters Rebate program will re-open on April 1 and runs through September – this program helps those 65 and over or disabled with income guidelines. CRT, the organization that manages Meals on Wheels and the Community Meals program, has had their budget cut so will be cutting back on services. The CT State Unit's Plan on Aging Survey is complete and Keren will notify the group when they post their findings.

Seniors Job Bank

Robin Clare reported that 775 people are now in their registry to work. They need more jobs to match people with and reminded the group that this is a free service. The SJB was created in 1974 and serves 29 towns in the Greater Hartford area for those adults age 50 and over.

Transportation

Kevin Farmer reported that ITN Central Connecticut is still looking for volunteer drivers and reminded everyone that their service is 24/7 and for any reason. Rides for eye care appointments are free and there is a \$40 annual fee for individuals and \$65 for family membership plus a \$3 pick-up charge and \$1.50 per mile. They generally do rides within a 30-mile radius and they vet each driver with criminal background checks, in-person interviews, and personal recommendations. This year is ITN's 15th anniversary. Kevin will be leaving his Director position as of June 30 and they are looking for a replacement Director

Senior Centers

Becky Sears reported that she puts both the Seniors Job Bank and ITN ads/info in every edition of the Seniors Bulletin. A new program is scheduled for June 1 at Town Hall – a Pride Prom for older adults in the LGBT community. The new 18-passenger Senior Center van is scheduled to be delivered mid-July and Becky is looking to put together some trips for members. In collaboration with the Senior Job Bank, the Senior Center will be offering an Information Technology course for seniors who are looking to re-enter the job market. There will be an arts event on April 25 from 6pm-8pm at the Bishops Corner Senior Center as part of the 10 Ways Art Influences Your Life series – hosted by UConn Health's Art Curator.

New Business/Public Comment

Noreen reported that the April 16 meeting of this Commission will be having a panel presentation on housing options for seniors. SCAC members Kevin Ryan and Beth Rocco have been working on this program with Mark Garilli of West Hartford Fellowship Housing. The SCAC will be doing publicity as done for the recent fraud/scams' programs to reach a large audience of older adults.

11:00AM Presentation from the CT Department of Banking: Financial Fraud and Banking Scams

Presenter – Kathleen Titsworth – Outreach Coordinator, CT Department of Banking

The Department of Banking is the CT State Agency that regulates State-Chartered/Community Banks, Credit Unions, Student Loan and Mortgage Servicers, Money Transmitters, Check Cashers, and Investment Professionals.

Kathleen laid out the following common scams that are currently targeting older adults:

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| 1. Government Imposter Scam | 6. Online Shopping Scams |
| 2. Romance Scams | 7. Grandparent Scam |
| 3. Cryptocurrency Scams | 8. Tech Support Scam |
| 4. Investment Scams | 9. You've Won a Sweepstakes Scam |
| 5. Charity Scams | |

Her tips to protect Yourself: Do not click on unsolicited pop-ups or links; Do not contact the phone number provided; Do not download software; Do not allow anyone to take control of your computer. Ms. Titsworth provided various resources to the group. Learn more at www.CT.gov/DOB and www.facebook.com/ctdob. A complete viewing of Ms. Titsworth's presentation can be found on the West Hartford Community Interactive website at <https://whci.online>.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday April 16, 2024.
The meeting was adjourned at 12:06PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann T. Visgilio, Recording Secretary