

WEST HARTFORD SENIOR CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMISSION

Minutes from Meeting on April 16, 2024

Members Present: Noreen Bachteler, Eileen Rau, Beth Rocco, Kevin Ryan, Mary Silverberg, Kaye Straw
Members Absent: Rosemary Cleary, Anne Massucco, Mary Reilly
Staff Present: Rebecca Sears, Kevin Farmer, Robin Clare, Keren Paquette, Monique Dixon
Guests: Panelists: Kristen Gorski, Town of West Hartford Economic Development Coordinator, Heather Zoeller, Advisory Director, One Point Partners and Mark Garilli, CEO, West Hartford Fellowship Housing Development Corp.
Approximately 90 members of the public in attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 10:01AM by SCAC Co-Chair Noreen Bachteler. Noreen introduced and thanked SCAC Members, Kevin Ryan and Beth Rocco, for their work in organizing this morning's program and panel presentation on **"Should I Stay or Should I Go? Navigating Housing Options As We Age"**. Kevin then introduced the three panelists and each took a turn in presenting their slides with information on the topic from their work perspective. Slides were shown with local demographics of the aging population of the town of West Hartford. The panelists also took an informal poll (by show of hands) of how old everyone was in the room, how long they've lived in West Hartford, and how many people are looking to downsize from their single family home into something smaller and more age-appropriate and what the major reasons are for doing so (financial, health, mobility, etc). The discussion centered on the housing stock in West Hartford being very single family-oriented and multiple floored, how little land exists in town to build new housing, and that what is being built is almost all rentals (few condos), none being designated exclusively for seniors with age appropriate features.

The presentations and question session from the audience went from 10:00AM until 11:30AM. Attendees were asked to complete a survey that was made available to them and these results will be reviewed at the next SCAC meeting. The slides are going to be made available through the West Hartford Senior Center and the full presentation was recorded by West Hartford Community Interactive and can be found at www.whci.online/tours/senior-citizens-advisory-commission/

Once the presentation concluded, the Commission members continued the monthly SCAC meeting. The minutes from the March 19, 2024 meeting were reviewed and approved as written.

Chairs Report

Co- Chair Bachteler reported that the planned March 26th program on Medication Safety In Older Adults with Geriatric Pharmacist, Dr. Sean Jeffery, from UConn School of Pharmacy, had to be postponed and a new date is being worked on between SCAC and WHSC Director Becky Sears. For the upcoming May 15 Senior Day, Noreen will be emailing Commission Members to request their participation in staffing the SCAC Table being held from 9:30AM - 12:30PM at the Elmwood Senior Center. State Senator Derek will be in attendance for this event. She also reported that Anne Massucco has submitted her letter of resignation from the Commission which is expected to come before the Town Council in May which will bring about an opening on the SCAC. There was some discussion by the Co-Chair and SCAC Members about the content of today's presentation on senior housing issues being made available or presented to the Human & Community Services Committee and/or Town Council at a future date.

Transportation

Kevin Farmer reported that there are about 20 candidates for his Director position at ITN Central CT that he will be vacating in June. He stated that most of these candidates were sourced from the Seniors Job Bank.

West Hartford Social Services

Keren Paquette reported that the Renters Rebate program is open for applications (April 1 to October 1). Applications are being taken at housing sites and in their office. After reporting last month that CRT had their budgets cut and were thus going to be reducing the number of days of the lunch program at the Elmwood Senior Center and Federation Square, CRT was able to secure some new funding and after a short interruption, they have reinstated their lunch programs back to 5 days at the two West Hartford locations.

Seniors Job Bank

Robin Clare reported that they will soon see the results of their first bi-annual survey. They had a high rate of survey returns – 30%. The SJB currently has over 800 job seekers. Their non-profit organization is participating in the “Birdies for Charity” fundraiser that is part of the Travelers Championship and will receive an extra 15% on donations made by June 23rd.

Senior Centers

Becky Sears reported that the May 15 Senior Day is “sold out” with 50 vendor tables. Some health screenings that will be available – Narcan training, blood pressure checks, prostate screenings. Last year there were 350 attendees. Other upcoming senior center events include a Ladies Tea and a Cinco de Mayo celebration.

New Business/Public Comment

Noreen reported that the May meeting content/guest speaker is still TBD and the June meeting is typically a legislative wrap-up. As this is a short legislative session, Noreen will look at contacting our West Hartford delegation of legislators to see who can participate at the SCAC June meeting and update the group on any newly passed CT legislation that affects seniors. Beth Rocco also brought up the Community Development Block Grant/Housing Rehabilitation Program that is administered by the Town of West Hartford and announced two upcoming meetings coming up this month to find out more information about the program/guidelines and how it can benefit some West Hartford senior homeowners. She suggested having the CDBG Administrator possibly present at a future SCAC meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 21, 2024.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann T. Visgilio, Recording Secretary