

WEST HARTFORD SENIOR CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMISSION

Minutes from Meeting on May 21, 2024

Members Present: Noreen Bachteler, Kevin Ryan, Mary Reilly, Eileen Rau, Kaye Straw, Beth Rocco, Mary Silverberg, Patricia Kiely
Staff Present: Kevin Farmer, Robin Clare, Keren Paquette, Monique Dixon
Absent: Rosemary Cleary
Guests: Dr. Sean Jeffery and 2 students from UConn School of Pharmacy for "Medication Safety in Older Adults" Presentation

The meeting was called to order at 10:00AM by Co-Chair Noreen Bachteler. The meeting minutes from the April 16, 2024 meeting were approved as written.

Chair's Report

Noreen reported that a new member to the Commission, Patricia (Trish) Kiely, was appointed at the May 14th West Hartford Town Council meeting. Trish was in attendance and the Commission members all introduced themselves. Trish will be finishing the term of Anne Massucco (expiring 12/31/2027). Noreen reminded everyone that at 11:00AM, the "Medication Safety in Older Adults" presentation will take place so our meeting and reports will conclude before then.

Noreen thanked the Commission members for their participation in the very successful May 15th Senior Day held at the Elmwood Senior Center. The SCAC had 7 of the 8 Commission members helped man the table from 9:00AM to 12:30PM and the SCAC banner was displayed on stage above the table.

West Hartford Social Services

Keren & Monique reported that Dial-a-Ride applications are now being accepted for the new fiscal year that begins on July 1st. There will be a fee increase from \$50 to \$65 for this year which has not had an increase for 10 years. Scholarships can be requested from Social Services in cases of financial hardship. The Energy Assistance program is concluding at the end of this month. The Rental Rebate program is still accepting applications until October 1st.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month and there will be several activities around town and please see their website for details.

The Drug Takeback Day on April 27th was a huge success and over 300 pounds of drugs were collected and 21 people participated in the NARCAN training offered.

A Veterans Fair was held at West Hartford Town Hall on May 11th linking vets with resources available to them. A top inquiry for many attendees was around housing issues.

Keren reported that a Tenants Rights session will be held tonight at the Elmwood Community Center being presented by Greater Hartford Legal Aid from 5:30PM to 7:00PM.

Seniors Job Bank

Robin Clare reported that currently there are 850 active job seekers. The Job Bank has seen an uptick in business jobs being available, but still needs more jobs overall for this larger group of job seekers. The organization is applying for some grant money in order to do more advertising. Last week, they had its first in-person board meeting since the start of Covid. Robin relayed the great news that the Seniors Job Bank recently received the 2024 West Hartford Chamber of Commerce Legacy Award.

Transportation

Kevin Farmer from ITN Central Connecticut reported that their organization is celebrating its 15th Anniversary, 10 years of which Kevin has been part of the team. As stated in the past few meetings, Kevin will be leaving ITN at the end of June and his successor will be named shortly. Kevin was pleased to report that the organization has strengthened its relationship with the communities they serve, their finances of the organization have stabilized and they have never raised their rates in their 15 years of existence. In addition to their own ride services, he says they often counsel people about other transportation resources available in the area.

Senior Centers

In Becky Sears' absence, Deidre Horan reported that last week's Senior Day at the Elmwood Senior Center was a great success with 45 vendors, 6 screeners from the West Hartford & Bloomfield Health District and more than 350 attendees. A PSA screening was newly offered this year. The new Seniors Bulletin has been published. Some of the new programs include a Writer's Workshop, a Vision Board Workshop, and a new Drop-In Art Space. June 18th will be the first of the Gazebo Concert Series held at the Elmwood Community Center. Several Juneteenth week celebrations are planned; the annual Senior Picnic is July 11th. As of July 1, 2024, the \$15 fee to join the WHSC will be waived for town residents. The non-resident membership fee will remain at \$40 per year.

Follow-Up: Town's Community Block Grant Fund

Beth Rocco reported that the town has a budget for housing rehabilitation called the Community Block Grant Fund available for lower income residents' homes that need repairs. The group is particularly sensitive to seniors. There are income guidelines and 2 tiers of reimbursement – part grant and part loan. Common repairs include: new roofs, ramps, and doors. The fund has a cohort of contractors they use to do the work. Luan Ceka administers the program and has an office in West Hartford Town Hall. Beth suggested that he would be a good speaker at a future SCAC meeting.

Follow-Up: New Elmwood Community Center/Senior Center

Per Beth and Noreen, \$3 million from the Town's ARPA funds was recently approved unanimously by the West Hartford Town Council to pay GWWO Architects for their architectural design services for the New Elmwood Community Center/Senior Center/Library project.

New Business: Survey from April Senior Housing Forum

Kevin Ryan reported that the April 16th "Should I Stay or Should I Go: Navigating Housing Options As We Age" forum had a full room and over 50% of attendees filled out the survey. Here's a quick review of the important data presented that day: W.H. has 63,000 residents; 16,600 of them are over 65 (27%); Owner occupied homes = 17,600; of those 4600 are owned by seniors (26%); and of those senior owner occupied single family houses, 49% are single occupants. Kevin will forward the Survey Highlights to Noreen so she can send out to SCAC members with the minutes.

Public Comment - None

Medication Safety in Older Adults Presentation

Presentation by Dr. Sean Jeffery and Students from UConn School of Pharmacy on Over the Counter(OTC) Medications, Medication Adherence and Medication Maintenance with Older Adults.

***A viewing of this presentation can be found on whci.online/tours/senior-citizens-advisory-commission/**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday June 18, 2024. The meeting was adjourned at 12:05PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann T. Visgilio, Recording Secretary