

WEST HARTFORD SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMISSION
Tuesday, November 19, 2024 at 10:00 AM
BISHOPS CORNER SENIOR CENTER
15 Starkel Road, West Hartford, Connecticut

MEETING AGENDA

1. Call to Order
Co-Chair: Noreen Bachteler (Eileen Rau: Co-Chair)
Recording Secretary: Ann Visgilio
2. 10:05AM Presentation on "Services You May Need As You Age" Christine Huebner, AuD.
Hartford Healthcare
Andrea Giudice,
Hospital Bed Project
3. Review and approve minutes of October 15, 2024 Commission
4. Chairs' Report & Status of SCAC Town Code Bachteler/Rau
5. WH Social Services Report Paquette
6. Seniors Job Bank Clare
7. Transportation for Seniors Report Mantilla
8. Senior Centers Report Sears
9. New Business
Discussion of 2025 SCAC Calendar Dates & Items
And Possible Formation of SCAC Sub-Committees Commission
10. Public Comment Public
11. Next meeting-In Person at Bishops Corner Senior Center December 17, 2024
12. Adjournment

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WEST HARTFORD SENIOR CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMISSION

Minutes from Meeting on October 15, 2024

Members Present: Noreen Bachteler, Kevin Ryan, Mary Reilly, Eileen Rau, Kaye Straw,
Beth Rocco, Mary Silverberg, Rosemary Cleary
Staff Present: Robin Clare, Evelyn Mantilla, Rebecca Sears
Absent: Patricia Kiely, Keren Paquette, Monique Dixon
Guests: Susan Sloan, Joe Kolczynski
Melissa Marquis, MS, RN, West Hartford Office of Emergency Management

The meeting was called to order at 10:02AM by SCAC Co-Chair Noreen Bachteler. Noreen welcomed guest presenter, Melissa Marquis, MS, RN and reported that Robert McCue, Deputy Emergency Management Director, was ill today and unable to join Melissa. The presentation took place in the rear portion of the Bishops Corner Library due to the BCSC large room being unavailable and then was followed at 11:00AM by the SCAC monthly meeting.

Melissa Marquis, MS, RN announced that she is the newly named Medical Resiliency Coordinator for the West Hartford Office of Emergency Management as of July 1, 2024 which is housed in the West Hartford Fire Department. This is a part-time position while she also maintains being a public health nurse with the West Hartford/Bloomfield Health District. Melissa highlighted key information using various slides:

The Mission Statement of the new Medical Resiliency Office is: We aim to provide superior service and support to all Town residents, including those with any access and functional needs by educating on and modeling personal preparedness, sharing resources on managing emergencies, and information on where and when to shelter in place or evacuate as indicated. The program maintains a strong emphasis on personal preparedness throughout all aspects of the disaster lifecycle.

Melissa stated that the goals of the program are: Promote residents signing-up annually for the Special Needs Registry; Collaborate with town agencies and community organizations; Form an advisory group with reps from these organizations; and Expand the At-Risk Community Health Program (ARCH). Melissa took many questions from the group and will forward her slide presentation to the SCAC Co-Chair for distribution. SCAC Members suggested Melissa use WHCI TV and CRIS Radio. Her next presentation is taking place on October 16th from 3PM-5PM at the Noah Webster Main Library. She can be reached at melissa.marquis@westhartfordct.gov

Chairs Report

The minutes of the September 17, 2024 SCAC meeting were approved as written.

Noreen reported that the Daring Dialogue workshop sponsored by the CT Age Well Collaborative with the WHSC and the WH Office of Equity Advancement took place at the BCSC on October 1st. It was attended by several members of the SCAC, the Fire Dept, Police Dept, WH Social Services and other community members. The focus and activities of the workshop were on having participants gain increased awareness of any own biases on ageism and ableism. Follow-up is needed on action steps to be taken. Noreen, Kevin and Kaye attended the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Senior Centers bus on October 7th held at the Elmwood Senior Center. Mayor Cantor, Town Manager Ledwith, Leisure & Social Services Director Rubino-Turco, WHSC Director Sears and a representative from the CT DSS Unit on Aging attended the ceremony along with a few WH seniors taking the inaugural ride on the new bus. As SCAC Co-Chair, Noreen indicated her receipt of an email invite yesterday from Helen Rubino Turco to an Open House event on the "2025-2029 Consolidated Plan" to be held on 10/23/24 from 4:30PM – 6:30PM at the ECC. Noreen will forward the email to SCAC members to attend if possible to learn about

the consolidated planning process, discuss community needs, and provide input on which projects West Hartford should prioritize for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding.

Noreen also stated that on October 12th that she had emailed the consolidated survey data prepared by Kevin Ryan from the June 25th Housing Roundtable program to SCAC Members. The group then discussed whether this information could be sent on to the Town Clerk's Office for posting with the SCAC minutes. A motion was made and approved by the group for Noreen to attach this information to the October 15, 2024 SCAC Minutes.

West Hartford Social Services

No report this month as both Keren Paquette and Monique Dixon were not in attendance.

Seniors Job Bank

Robin Clare reported that on December 17th at 4:00PM there will be a 50th Anniversary Celebration for the Seniors Job Bank at West Hartford Town Hall. A new staff person, Rosemary Gunnings, will be joining them as their Jobs Outreach Coordinator and was a former real estate manager. The Job Bank launched their Volunteer Jobs Section in September so people can now register as a volunteer looking for a volunteer job. Fundraising is in full swing using their new tools for raising funds. "Still Vital" is a new senior-focused podcast initiative being done with WHSC Director Becky Sears and will be featured on 50 podcast platforms using grant monies they received.

Transportation

Evelyn Mantilla reported that there will be an event in November to celebrate Kevin Farmer's ITN retirement. ITN's priority right now is recruiting new volunteer drivers.

Senior Centers

Becky Sears reported that the new Senior Centers Bus will roll out on November 1st for Center-to-Center transportation and some group outings. Three drivers have been hired. Riders must be independent in order to ride the bus. The Entertainment Showcase held on October 8th was a big success with 100 area Senior Center Administrators in attendance and 40 bands/acts. This is a major fund-raiser for the WHSC. The CRT lunch program has been cut back to Tuesdays and Thursdays only at Federation Square (previously 5 days) due to budget cuts at CRT and the lunch program at the Elmwood Senior Center location was ended during the summer. Becky has been going to local restaurants to see if any of them would be interested in funding/running the program but no interest so far. The Senior Centers have added a clerk position to the Bishops Corner Senior Center since it has been so busy. They are also looking for a Facilities Supervisor to hire per diem. The Winter WHSC Bulletin is being worked on now.

New Business/Public Comment

Noreen asked the Commission members to think about participating in various sub-committees that this Commission could benefit from creating to support its mission. In addition to the existing Housing one, she mentioned possible sub-committees on Communications, Transportation, Health, Legislative, etc.

Next meeting will be Tuesday November 19, 2024. We will discuss calendar dates and items for the 2025 calendar year.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:08PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann T. Visgilio, Recording Secretary

Housing Issues As We Age

Navigating Housing Roundtable

June, 25, 2024

Survey Results from 55% of Attendees

1. Did today's presentation meet your expectation?

Yes ___ 65 %
No___ 0 %
Somewhat 35 %

2. Would you like additional programs focused on today's topics?

YES 86 %
NO 5 %
NA 10 %

3. How satisfied are you with older adult representation in town government?

Very Satisfied 22 %
Somewhat Satisfied 39 %
Somewhat Dissatisfied 17 %
Very Dissatisfied 8 %
No Answer 17 %

4. How useful would a dedicated Older Adult Town Advisory Service be to you?

Extremely Useful 35 %
Very Useful 43 %
Somewhat Useful 22 %
Not Useful 5 %
No Answer 9 %

5. Should Age-Appropriate features be designed for UCONN Prop vs. Assisted Living?

Yes 52 %
No 0 %
Don't Know 56 %

6. Would you be willing to volunteer in support of older adult initiatives?

Yes 52 %
No 30 %
No Answer 22 %

7. Which Age Friendly Community Domain should we explore after Housing?

Transportation 65 %
Communication & Information 65 %
Health Services 57 %
Social Inclusion 56 %
Social Participation 30 %
Outdoor Spaces 22 %
Civic Participation & Employment 13 %

8. Do you currently live in ? : (check below)

Private owned home 83 %
Apartment 9 %
No Answer 9 %

Survey Comments:

In session 1, one person monopolized most of speaker's time. Sessions exceeded my expectations.

Thanks for the program. It is an eye opener.

I am senior-focus realtor. I have lots of information plus a blog and newsletter.

Excellent Presentation. RE que 3. Unaware of current (*town*) representation

Explore Appropriate Senior housing for [current] Homeowners -not renters.

Why don't we have a [tax] circuit breaker like I did in MA in order to lower taxes

Recorder Comments

1. Elder Law Issues: Rebecca Hajosy, Esq.

- Life Estate Taxes
- Spouse of Veteran
- Protecting House if you need long term care
- 5 year plan. Turn house over to family but you must stay alive for 5 years and then reverts to children.
- Residential Home Care
- Congregate Housing – i.e. Tracy Manor, The Retreat
- Life Care Community – i.e. McCauley, Seabury & Duncaster. Want to protect the amount you put in initially.
- Use up assets and then go on Medicaid :Chatfield and Avery Heights may work with Medicaid
- 1 in 3 persons in nursing home goes on Medicaid.
- Home Care: \$37-\$43 per hour
- CT is the 2nd most expensive state re. cost of aging.
- Long Term Care Insurance will help conserve assets at home.
- Work is underway to rebalance Medicare and Medicaid funding allocation.

2. Home Modifications & Costs: Luan Ceka, MPA (Town of West Hartford Housing Rehabilitation Program)

- Community Development Block Grant Program for seniors to stay in their homes.
- State funds from HUD to meet National Objectives. WH allocated 320,000 for 2024.
- Recipient funds are 50% Free & 50 % Lien on Property with no interest.
- Eligible projects listed by HUD- Most of \$ in WH goes to housing.
- Examples: roofing, heating, plumbing, electrical, exterior step replacement included.
- Help based on income (Handout attached)
- 29 projects ongoing in WH this year- First come first served. 53 people applied in 2023.
- Awards are up to \$25,000.
- If house built before 1978, must do lead testing & town pays fee.
- CT Childrens' Healthy Homes takes care of lead issues.
- 5-year plan-wish list for town-wide plan. Town working without a consultant.
- Application takes 4-5 days to approve then architect visits & drafts specs and job estimate. Luan invites contractors to look at house & bid. Bids go to Luan and are opened with homeowner. Lowest bidder gets the job.
- You can use your own contractor but homeowner pays difference in price.
- Age requirement to apply is 65. If younger, a different program is available.
- Can apply annually.
- If income level is above the guidelines, residents can go to Luan for information on contractors.
- Max number of units is 3. Income is combined total of all tenants.
- Application normally processed in two weeks.

3. Fostering Social Connections: Gary Sekorski & Deb Bibbins (For All Ages)

- Connecticut Non-Profit
- Focus on Social Isolation - Loneliness
- Mentor program / Older/younger pairs ~ Tea @ Three
- Friendly Visitor Program expanding to West Hartford
- Partnering with St. Joseph University to establish a Good Life Center
- Social Connection Antidote for Social Isolation
- How to Make New Friends Program at WH Senior Center very promising
- Innovative programs need to be explored to combat social isolation.
- Example: Norway "The Slow Lane" Grocery Store cashier takes the time to chat with customers
- Older Adults need to be proactive! Many options: Volunteer; Follow a passion or a group that supports your interest.