

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