

WEST HARTFORD SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMISSION
Minutes from Special Meeting on Tuesday, December 10, 2024
BISHOPS CORNER SENIOR CENTER (Card Room)
15 Starkel Road, West Hartford, CT

Members Present: Noreen Bachteler, Rosemary Cleary, Patricia Kiely, Eileen Rau, Beth Rocco,
Kevin Ryan, Mary Silverberg, Kaye Straw

Members Absent: Mary Reilly

Staff Present: Helen Rubino-Turco, Director of West Hartford Leisure & Social Services
and West Hartford Assistant Corporation Counsel Cynthia Lauture

The meeting was called to order at 10:10AM by Co-Chair Noreen Bachteler. Noreen stated that only the items listed on the December 10th Special Meeting Agenda are allowed to be discussed at the Special Meeting per FOIA regulations.

1. Review Changes & Recommendations of SCAC Draft Ordinance

Helen reported that she and the Town Manager with the Corporation Counsel's Office had reviewed the proposed changes to the SCAC Code that had been submitted by the SCAC in 2023. Attorney Lauture explained to the group that Code and Ordinance are the same and must be voted on by the Town Council. In terms of the SCAC's request, they are in agreement with the change of SCAC appointment terms from five years to three years to be consistent with other commissions. Helen explained that the terms would be staggered among the current nine members into three buckets and that all members would have the opportunity to renew at that expiration date for a new three year term. They are in agreement with changing the language references in the code from "elderly" or "retired" to "older adults" except in the title of the Commission. It is recommended that the name of the Commission remain the same as "Senior Citizen" is a defined term in state and federal statutes. Helen stated that they are recommending that a specific age be omitted from the code as the definition of "older adult" is a fluid one. She stated that in West Hartford, a person can join the senior center at age 55, however, federal and state laws may define older adults as 60 years and older. Per Helen, the SCAC is advisory and not an active implementer of programs. In giving an example, Helen mentioned the local non-profit group, Bike West Hartford, was formed to do programs and are independent from the Pedestrian & Bicycle Commission although they do have a representative report at that Commission's meetings. She stated that WHSC Director Rebecca Sears is her oversight contact for the SCAC. In the discussion with members, Attorney Lauture clarified that the SCAC is allowed to submit letters to certain parties (i.e. West Hartford Legislative Delegation) relating to the SCAC's mission if the issue has properly come before the SCAC and voted on to do so. On the matter of the SCAC having Sub-Committees, Attorney Lauture stated they can be short-term or ongoing and composed of no more than four members. Helen indicated that she will put together a revision of the proposed SCAC Code with these recommendations and send the corrected document to SCAC Co-Chairs for review at the SCAC's next meeting. Following this discussion, Helen and Attorney Lauture excused themselves from the Special SCAC Meeting.

2. Discussion of 2025 SCAC Mission/Calendar and Possible Formation of SCAC Sub-Committees

There was a brief discussion on forming possible new SCAC sub-committees on communications, transportation and continuing with housing. Pedestrian/road safety for older adults in town was cited as a pressing topic to be considered. Due to lack of time, it was agreed by members to hold further discussion for the January 2025 meeting and not schedule an outside speaker.

The next SCAC Meeting will be held on December 17, 2024 at Bishops Corner Senior Center with guest speaker, Maureen McIntyre, of North Central Area Agency on Aging (NCAAA).

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05PM.

Respectfully submitted: Noreen Bachteler, Co-Chair