

WEST HARTFORD SENIOR CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMISSION

Minutes from Meeting on September 16, 2025

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

Staff Present: Robin Clare, Keren Paquette, Rebecca Sears

Absent: Evelyn Mantilla

Guests: Dr. Don Poland (Guest Speaker), Todd Dumais, Town Planner, Town of West Hartford, Brian Pudlik, Senior Planner, Town of West Hartford, Kristen Gorski, Economic Development Coordinator, Town of West Hartford

The meeting was called to order at 10:05AM by SCAC Co-Chair Noreen Bachteler.
The meeting minutes from the June 17, 2025 meeting were approved as written.

Chairs Report

Co-Chair Noreen Bachteler welcomed back the Commission after the summer break. She advised per her earlier 9/12/2025 email to the group that Eileen Rau had submitted her SCAC resignation as of 8/19/2025 and it was heard at the 9/12/2025 Town Council meeting. Noreen had sent an email to Eileen thanking her for her dedicated SCAC service since her appointment in January 2023 especially in her public relations work on behalf of SCAC events. As her term ran through 12/31/2027, the Town Clerk and Mayor will be reviewing applications for her vacancy. Since Eileen had served as the SCAC Co-Chair, Noreen is seeking a replacement from the current group of SCAC members. If anyone is interested in doing so, Noreen explained that it would be for the duration of one's term (not Eileen's term). Given that Noreen's second SCAC term ends on 12/31/2025, she feels that a Co-Chair coming on board now before that date would be very helpful with the transition. She stated that SCAC Member Trish Kiely will now be taking over Communications for the SCAC and Mary Silverberg has joined the SCAC Program Sub-Committee. Noreen announced the presentations included for future Commission meetings as follows: October 21 will be on Medicare Open Enrollment issues with HHC Medicare Educator; November 18 will be on updates on the New Elmwood Community Center with WHSC Director, and December 16 will be an end-of-year wrap-up and discussion/finalization of 2026 SCAC meeting dates.

SCAC Member Beth Rocco asked about the proposed change in SCAC Member terms from 5 to 3 years as has been recommended by the SCAC. Noreen said that the change has not been made effective yet and she will be contacting WH Leisure & Social Services Director Helen Rubino-Turco for an update.

Social Services

Keren Paquette reported that the Farmers Market Coupon program is still running. There will be no extensions on the Renter's Rebate Program ending September 30th. The Energy Assistance program run by the Community Renewal Team (CRT) started September 1st. Applicants can call CRT to schedule an appointment and apparently there were phone problems early on, but they have been resolved. One can also apply online, via email or submit a mail-in application. Keren announced three events coming up and had flyers available for the group:

- Steps to Safety: A Fire and Falls Prevention Program on Sept. 25 (at ECC) & Sept. 30 (at WHSC) in partnerships with WH Social Services, WHFD/OEM and WH/Bloomfield Health Department
- CT Veterans Stand Down 2025 on Sept. 19 at CT DVA in Rocky Hill
- West Hartford Police Department Annual Citizen's Academy from Sept. 24 – Nov. 12

Seniors Job Bank

Robin Clare reported that the Seniors Job Bank now has over 1200 paid and non-paid mature workers registered. They currently have 600 jobs and are targeting 800 job postings by the end of the year. Funding is coming from West Hartford, Avon, Bloomfield, and Newington to run the “Essential Skills for Mature Workers” program. These are 3-day workshops that will be held at their respective town library. The Job Bank runs its annual financial campaign in November & December.

Transportation

Evelyn Mantilla was not in attendance and notified SCAC Co-Chair Bachteler via email on 9/12/2025 that ITN Central Connecticut recently received a grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving that will help strengthen and expand their operations.

Senior Centers

Rebecca Sears reported that a new Seniors Lunch program will start this week with lunch from 12-12:30 being offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Elmwood Senior Center (ESC) and on Wednesdays at the Bishops Corner Senior Center (BCSC). Prince Tech’s Rising Star Café will be providing the meals at ESC and Effie’s Restaurant will be doing so at the BCSC. You must sign up by the prior Friday and pay in advance with a suggested donation of \$5 for senior center members and residents and \$8.00 for out-of-town persons. No cash will be taken at the door. The Fall Senior Bulletin is out and is for a 4-month period instead of a 3-month period moving forward. Registrations for programs are already filling up.

New Business/Public Comment

None

Guest Presentation

Dr. Don Poland, PhD, AICP, Goman & York Property Advisers, LLC, East Hartford, CT

Brian Pudlik, Town of West Hartford Senior Planner, introduced Dr. Don Poland, Geographer, Planner and Community Strategist who has been recently contracted as a consultant to develop a Senior Housing Study Plan with the Town of West Hartford to be based on a housing market study of existing conditions in West Hartford. Dr. Poland previously was involved in drafting the Town’s Affordable Housing Plan and he will be updating relevant housing data and characteristics focusing on senior housing needs in order to make policy recommendations to the Town officials. He discussed involving members of the West Hartford senior community in this process and will look for the SCAC’s assistance. Dr. Poland showed several slides with national, state and local data indicating both the growth of older households and the rising cost of different types of senior housing options. His preliminary analysis of the West Hartford housing market finds the existing housing stock (71% single family homes) does not match up with the needs of its aging households and that West Hartford has an older population and households with more income than all three of the comparators: the Capital Region, the State, and the Nation. Dr. Poland took several questions from the group and his full presentation given at the September 16th SCAC Meeting can be found at: <https://youtu.be/Hp8Q8VCtDtc>

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50AM

Respectfully submitted,
Ann T. Visgilio, Recording Secretary