

## WEST HARTFORD SENIOR CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMISSION

Minutes from Meeting on November 18, 2025

Members Present: Noreen Bachteler, Rosemary Cleary, Patricia Kiely, Mary Reilly, Beth Rocco, Kevin Ryan, Mary Silverberg, Kaye Straw  
Staff Present: Monique Dixon, Keren Paquette, Rebecca Sears  
Absent: Robin Clare, Evelyn Mantilla  
Guests: Judy Brown, Joe Kolezynski  
Brian Pudlik, Senior Planner, West Hartford Planning & Zoning Department

The meeting was called to order at 10:01AM by SCAC Chair Noreen Bachteler.  
The meeting minutes from the October 21, 2025 meeting were approved as written.

### ***Chair's Report***

-Noreen Bachteler stated she was pleased to report that the proposed changes in SCAC member terms and updated language to this Commission's Town Code were heard by the Town Council on 11/12/2025 and now set for a Public Hearing no later than 30 days from that meeting which will then be brought for a vote by the Town Council to finalize those changes. She announced that per last week's discussion with WHSC Director Becky Sears, the presentation on the New ECC was agreed to be postponed from this morning's SCAC meeting as planning and financing for the project are being reviewed. The SCAC will be notified by Becky when the updated information becomes available so that her presentation can be scheduled for a future SCAC meeting. Noreen was in follow-up contact with Town Planner Todd Dumais and Senior Planner Brian Pudlik of West Hartford Planning & Zoning Department. She reported that Brian Pudlik will be joining today's meeting at 10:45AM to discuss the status of the Senior Housing Survey and to gather SCAC feedback. Since the September 16<sup>th</sup> presentation by Dr. Don Poland, they have worked on a draft Senior Housing Survey and roll-out plans which will need to be presented to the Town's Human and Community Services Subcommittee in going forward to the Town Council. West Hartford Social Services contacted Noreen on a possible collaboration with their office and the Sustainable West Hartford Commission on an Energy Forum with Eversource. Noreen suggested the January 20, 2026 SCAC meeting for this forum from 11:00AM to noon and will be asking Trish Kiely to contact WHCI for recording of this presentation. Publicity will be done by all co-sponsors. Noreen stated that she will forward to SCAC members a comprehensive report received by her yesterday done by the State's Aging and Disability Services Bureau with the CT Commission on Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity which includes a statewide inventory of age-focused/ advocacy groups. A statewide Council on Aging group is looking to be formed by East Hampton's COA Chair, Dr. Eric Rosenberg (retired geriatrician), and this initiative may be of interest to the SCAC. Noreen stated that she has been in contact with all current SCAC members on volunteering to serve as the chair or co-chairs when her term ends 12/31/2025 and no one has responded favorably to date. She cited the importance and duties of a SCAC chair/co-chairs and that the formation of SCAC subcommittees has been helpful in delegating the workload. Noreen is questioning whether the SCAC reducing the number of monthly meetings maybe from 10 to 5 may make it more doable for a new chair/co-chair. The SCAC Town Code stipulates that meetings be held quarter-annually (1x every 3 months). She felt that this issue needs to be further discussed at the December 16th meeting when voting on the SCAC's 2026 Meeting calendar is done.

### ***West Hartford Social Service***

Keren Paquette reported that CRT's Energy Assistance program is up and running but staffing at CRT has been cut way back so there are limited appointments to apply for the program with a CRT staffer. You can apply online, via mail, and West Hartford Social Services can help. The Town Food Pantry is seeing record numbers of people and also higher amounts of food being donated. Monetary donations are much appreciated and checks can be made to The Town That Cares. The question was asked about one

qualifying to use the town's food pantry and Keren said there is an income limit and proof of residence needed to be on the list. Sardilli Produce with Liberty Bank and CT Foodshare are donating turkeys which will be distributed on Nov. 24 at a time and place TBD. Also, the Goff Family Foundation is having a Turkey Giveaway on Nov. 23 and Keren passed out flyers with registration info. for this event.

### ***Seniors Job Bank***

No report. Robin Clare was absent from the meeting

### ***Transportation***

No report. Evelyn Mantilla from ITN Central Connecticut was absent from the meeting.

### ***Senior Centers***

WHSC Director Becky Sears reported that the senior centers are currently running a food drive. She along with Adrienne Billings-Smith presented on the "Age-Friendly Community Initiative" to the Human and Community Services Subcommittee on November 17th and it was well-received. Next steps will be a presentation to the Town Council and developing an Age-Friendly Community survey. Becky will be partnering with the University of Saint Joseph and having 15 USJ interns assisting in the data collection and analysis process. The WHSC Thanksgiving celebration is at the ESC on Nov. 21 and has 88 people registered. Becky and staff are currently working on the next Senior Bulletin, now being published three times a year rather than four times.

### ***Brian Pudlik, Senior Planner, West Hartford Planning & Zoning Department***

Brian reviewed the draft of the Senior Housing Survey that the Town is planning to distribute to gather data. They used an AARP survey as a base for developing this survey and then edited it for West Hartford's needs. Various Commission members gave feedback to Brian with ideas for clarifying some of the questions and changing the order of questions with demographics up front as well as using a darker, larger font. As the survey is several pages, a save progress feature was suggested. Given that the group discussed there will also be a survey coming out as part of the new Age-Friendly Initiative, Brian agreed to be in contact with Becky Sears to avoid confusion. There was also discussion around the best ways to reach seniors and how to distribute the survey. It was felt that the SCAC with the Senior Centers and Social Services all need to be involved in the launch of this survey. It is slated to be launched after Town approval in late December. Consultant Dr. Don Poland will combine and study the data, to be followed by some focus groups for a month, then the senior housing plan will be developed.

### ***Sub-Committees Updates***

- **SCAC Programs:** Energy Forum on January 20, 2026. SCAC at May 13, 2026 WH Senior Day. Consider other ideas from June 2025 SCAC Meeting.
- **Communications:** Contact Renee McCue, We-Ha, WH News & WHCI on publicizing programs.
- **Revised SCAC Code:** SCAC Liaison Becky Sears met with Helen Rubino-Turco to propose a new staggered term schedule as the terms transition from five years to three years starting in 2026. Becky discussed a chart outlining each Commission member's proposed new term based on the expiration of their current term. The Commission voted to adopt this proposal of phasing in the new three-year terms.
- **Older Adults Housing:** Kevin Ryan and Beth Rocco reported they will be touring The Elle at 1244 North Main Street, West Hartford which will be managed by the West Hartford Housing Authority. The pre-application process recently began for 39 affordable rate units of the 49 units and goes through January 5, 2026.

The next meeting will take place on December 16, 2025.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:04PM

Respectfully submitted, Ann T. Visgilio, Recording Secretary