

WEST HARTFORD SENIOR CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMISSION

Minutes from Meeting on December 16, 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: Trish Kiely

Guests: Robin Clare, Evelyn Mantilla, Joe Kolczynski,

The meeting was called to order at 10:05AM by SCAC Chair Noreen Bachteler.

The meeting minutes from the November 18, 2025 meeting were approved as written.

Chairs Report

Noreen Bachteler reported that she received an email from the WH Asst. Clerk that Joseph Viola will be appointed by the Town Council to the SCAC on 12/17/2025 and he will finish the vacancy of Eileen Rau through 12/31/2027. She also was notified by the Asst. Town Clerk that Mary Silverberg was reappointed to the SCAC for the new 3 years term through 12/31/2028. Noreen had follow-up with Brian Pudlik, Senior Planner, with the Town's Planning and Zoning Division, who reported that they will be bringing the plan for the Senior Housing Survey to the Town's Community Planning and Economic Development Subcommittee on 12/17/2025 and are looking to launch the survey before the end of December if given the approval. Noreen submitted a "Save the Date" to WHSC Director Becky Sears for the new Winter Senior Bulletin on the Energy Forum with Eversource that will be taking place as part of the SCAC's 1/20/2026 Meeting in partnership with the Town's Social Services and the Sustainable West Hartford Commission. Noreen also sent an email on 12/15/2025 to Becky Sears, Helen Rubino-Turco and the Asst. Corporation Counsel requesting further clarification of the proposed SCAC member terms that were presented by Becky Sears at the 11/18/2025 SCAC Meeting. Noreen stated that on 12/15/2025 she also emailed to SCAC members the Statewide Inventory & Data Analysis of Commissions of Aging that was a project supported by the State of CT Aging & Disability Services for members to review. This included an invite by one of the project's contributors, Dr. Eric Rosenberg of East Hampton's COA, who is looking to form a statewide initiative called "COACT" (Commissions on Aging of CT) and they are planning a kickoff event in January 2026. Beth Rocco and Kevin Ryan stated they are interested in attending and being SCAC designees. Noreen stated that SCAC members will be discussing and voting on the 2026 SCAC Meeting Calendar following the regular reports. She noted that the SCAC Town Code stipulates that meetings be held quarter-annually. She encouraged any current SCAC members to consider the role of being a chair or co-chair as her SCAC term technically expires 12/31/2025 however she has been advised by Helen Rubino-Turco that she can continue on the SCAC until a new person is appointed.

Social Services

Keren Paquette reported that they continue to have a high volume of applicants for energy assistance and Social Services will assist residents with their applications and other issues if needed. A new free series of "Buried in Treasures" is starting up in January 2026 and the "Circle of Friends" had a holiday gathering in Town Hall with that group restarting in May 2026 for 6 weeks facilitated by a social worker. Those participants will then have the opportunity to merge into the Let's Be Friends Circle run by Kevin Ryan at the two senior centers. Mary Silverberg asked Keren about transportation resources for seniors to attend

these groups and if the Town could provide additional assistance (i.e. via Town that Cares, ITN) if needed. Keren indicated Dial-A-Ride is a resource. Keren mentioned that Social Service is looking to do a Transportation Forum in Fall 2026 inviting the different transportation services for WH seniors. SCAC members expressed support of a forum and possibly partner with Social Services on this event.

Seniors Job Bank

Robin Clare announced their new/theme initiative for 2026 is “Next Chapter Success” and they will be working on expanding resources for training both employees and employers (in-person and online) with funding received from a “Greater Together Community” grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. In 2025, the SJB had grown to 800 jobs and 1300 job seekers, both #'s had doubled from 3 years ago with 40 new volunteer jobs posted. SJB will be setting up the Doran Learning Platform in honor of Jim Doran who was one of the key persons in resurrecting the SJB in 2013.

Transportation

Evelyn Mantilla reported that ITN Central CT is involved in fundraising activities including doing the “Giving Tuesday” campaign for the first time. She has also been meeting with other providers of transportation across the state to learn their services and possibly collaborate with them.

Senior Centers

WHSC Director Becky Sears reported that the Winter Senior Bulletin went live with registration yesterday. The Hanukkah luncheon was held last week and the Christmas Party is on 12/18/2025. The New Year’s Eve Party is on 12/31/2025 with a 13- piece band. Becky will be meeting again with the Town Clerk’s Office and Assistant Corporation Counsel to review the proposed SCAC member terms.

SCAC Subcommittees’ Updates

- a.) Revised SCAC Code:** Noreen Bachteler reported that the proposed changes to the SCAC Code/Ordinance is set to be heard at the 12/17/2025 Town Council Hearing.
- b.) Older Adults Housing:** Beth Rocco and Kevin Ryan reported that they have not yet visited “The Elle at North Main” under development by Trout Brook Realty Advisors. Kevin also reported that Lewis Brown of Honeycomb Real Estate Partners who did The Camelot on Farmington Avenue has submitted a proposal for 54 “affordable rate” condominium units on vacant property on Newington Road and Brook Street in the Elmwood section. Kevin is planning to attend an informational meeting being held tomorrow at 6:30PM at the Elmwood Community Center.
- c.) Communications:** Trish Kiely not present. Noreen reported that Trish will be contacting WHCI and Social Services to coordinate publicity for the 1/20/2026 Energy Forum. Kevin Ryan stated he would like to hear on 1/20/2026 from the Sustainable West Hartford Commission on CT solar incentives.
- d.) Programs:** Noreen Bachteler stated that she will look to schedule a Subcommittee’s meeting before the next SCAC meeting to discuss ideas/topics for future 2026 presentations.

New Business

SCAC Chair Noreen Bachteler led a discussion on the 2026 SCAC Meeting dates and passed out two proposals to members. One in keeping with the 10 monthly meetings (excluding July and August) and a second one modifying to 5 alternating monthly meetings. Noreen proposed not holding a May SCAC meeting as the SCAC has been participating in Senior Day which will be on 5/13/2026. In the non-meeting months, members would have the opportunity to meet in their subcommittees. Following a good exchange of pros and cons, the group voted to approve the following 2026/27 SCAC Meeting dates: 1/20/2026, 3/17/2026, 4/21/2026, 6/16/2026, 9/15/2026, 10/20/2026, 11/17/2026 and 1/19/2027.

Public Comment – None

The next meeting will take place on January 20, 2026. The meeting was adjourned at 11:57AM. Respectfully submitted, Noreen Bachteler, Chair