

TOWN of WEST HARTFORD
SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
January 20, 2026 at 10:00AM
Bishops Corner Senior Center, 15 Starkel Road, West Hartford, CT 06117

Members Present: Noreen Bachteler, Patricia Kiely, Beth Rocco, Kevin Ryan, Kaye Straw,
Joe Viola
Staff Present: Rebecca Sears, Keren Paquette
Absent: Rosemary Cleary, Mary Reilly, Mary Silverberg, Robin Clare, Evelyn Mantilla
Guests: Liz Buczynski, Asst. Director, Town of West Hartford Social Services
Catherine Diviney, Energy Specialist, Town of West Hartford
Eversource Community Partnership & Engagement Staff

The meeting was called to order at 10:07AM by SCAC Chair Noreen Bachteler.
The meeting minutes from the December 16, 2025 meeting were approved as written.

Chair's Report

Noreen Bachteler reported that she received a 12/19/2025 email from WHSC Director Rebecca Sears regarding her meeting with WH Asst. Corporation Counsel and WH Deputy Town Clerk on the new changes to SCAC member's terms. With the passage of the revised SCAC Ordinance at the 12/17/2025 WH Town Council Meeting, the new 3 year term for SCAC members will be going forward and the terms for current SCAC members will not be altered. Other minor changes in updating language in the SCAC Code to "older adults" were approved. Noreen has requested a copy of the new SCAC Ordinance and will forward to SCAC members. Noreen welcomed new SCAC member, Joe Viola, who was present at the meeting and he will be serving the vacancy left by Eileen Rau through 12/31/2027. She also announced that Mary Silverberg was reapproved for a new 3 year term through 12/31/2028, Noreen reported that a joint meeting of the SCAC Program and Communications Subcommittees was held on 1/14/2026 at the Bishops Corner Library conference room and she will be forwarding the minutes from that meeting. Six SCAC members attended and an agenda was submitted in advance to the Town Clerk's Office. (Refer to the notes under Subcommittees' Updates section.) For the future, Noreen advised that she clarified with the Deputy Town Clerk that an agenda is not required when meetings are held with less than a quorum (6) of SCAC Members.

Noreen reported that she was in contact on 1/15/2026 with WH Senior Planner Brian Pudlik and he advised that they plan to do a press release and launch the Senior Housing Survey on 1/20/2026. The survey can be taken online at the Town's website or paper copies will be made available at the Senior Centers and the Town Libraries.

Noreen stated that she forwarded the information on 1/17/2026 to SCAC members of the notification received from the Town Clerk's Office on the yearly FOIA training, "How to Conduct a Public Meeting". All newly appointed members and reappointed members to Town Boards and Commissions and all members who are responsible for preparing the agenda and minutes are required to attend one of the sessions offered. These sessions will be held in person at WH Town Hall on Thursday, 1/22/2026 @ 7:00PM or Wednesday, 1/28/2026 @ 7:00PM. Noreen encourage both required and non-required SCAC members to attend one of the sessions if possible.

West Hartford Social Services

Keren Paquette reported that energy assistance applications continue to be taken by their office with the help of the CRT team. Social Services will launch a new session of “Circle of Friends”, a seniors support group meant to deal with isolation, in March 2026. There was a short discussion about getting rides for seniors who don’t drive but want to attend programs like this one and Keren said she can help residents to know their transportation options. Keren reported that “The Elle on North Main”, new apartments in the former synagogue building, will be opening a pre-application wait list for project-based income eligible families. There will be fourteen 2-bedroom units and one 3-bedroom unit in the program. 80% of the units in this building are designated as affordable. The window to get on the wait list is short – Feb. 2-6, 2026. On 2/4/2026, Social Services staff will be available in Town Hall to help people to apply for this building.

Seniors Job Bank

Robin Clare from SJB was absent from the meeting.

Transportation

Evelyn Mantilla from ITN Central Connecticut was absent from the meeting.

Senior Centers

Rebecca Sears reported that the Seniors Housing Survey link was included in this morning’s Senior Centers Happening This Week email distribution. They also have hard copies of the survey in both Senior Centers. Rebecca is working with Social Services to put together a Transportation Forum in 2026 (date TBD)) where she will gather all entities who have transportation options in West Hartford. “Senior Day” will take place from 9:30AM – 12:30PM on May 13 at the Elmwood Senior Center and is co-sponsored with Senator Slap and the WH-Blomfield Health District. Rebecca and Adrienne Billings-Smith have been working on the Age Friendly Community application and a Letter of Intent has already been submitted to AARP. They met with USJ students to help with survey data collection and data analysis.

Subcommittees’ Updates

- a. **Revised SCAC Code:** Noreen Bachteler reported that with the passage of the new SCAC Code, this SCAC Subcommittee will be closed and no member objections noted.
- b. **Older Adults Housing:** Kevin Ryan and Beth Rocco reported that they look to be touring The Elle on North Main in February. Beth had no update on the former UConn property in terms of whether plans for the Assisted Living building will go forward. Kevin met with the developer of The Camelot property, Louis Brown of Honeycomb, who is now putting together a proposal to build new condos on Newington Road south of the Stop & Shop plaza. The proposal is for 56 condos and the first floor condos would be reserved for seniors. There was talk of some subsidized mortgages for these homes. Honeycomb has already hosted an open meeting with the community to help with the neighborhood’s questions on this proposed project. Beth stated that she participated in the COACT Zoom call on 1/16/2026 with people from multiple CT towns about senior housing and she wants to do more follow up with this group. Kevin also participated in the COACT Zoom call.
- c. **Communications:** Trish Kiely reported on the 1/14/2026 Subcommittees’ meeting and she will serve as the liaison with Town Public Relations (Renee McCue), WeHa.com., West Hartford News, WHCI (Jen Evans) and do publicity of SCAC programs with WHSC, Social Services and Town libraries. Kaye Straw was present at the 1/14/2026 meeting and will assist with Communications. Trish requested WHSC Director help in doing the flyers and 3/4 weeks prior to program needed to do publicity work.
- d. **Programs:** Noreen Bachteler, Rory Cleary, Mary Silverberg and Joe Viola participated in the 1/14/2026 Subcommittees’ meeting. Noreen reported that possible presentations discussed were on adult learning opportunities; health & wellness services; caregiver benefits; New ECC update; Transportation resources (with WHSC & Social Services) and a 2026 Legislative wrap-up on senior issues. A Program lead person needs to obtain and coordinate info. for Communications/publicity.

11:00AM - Let's Talk Energy Presentation by Eversource

Liz Buczynski, Assistant Director, of West Hartford Social Services and Catherine Diviney, Energy Specialist, for the Town of West Hartford/Staff Liaison for Sustainable West Hartford Commission opened the presentation and introduced Lissette Andino, Director of Equity and Environmental Justice at Eversource. Ms. Andino and representatives of the Eversource Community Partnership and Engagement team provided an informative one hour presentation on understanding your electric bill, various discounts and flexible payment plans, and energy efficiency programs available through Eversource. CRT's Energy Director also was in attendance and Mayor Cantor gave closing remarks. Following the presentation, attendees were able to pick up various handouts and speak to the Eversource reps about specific bill issues. A full viewing of the 1/20/2026 presentation can be found at: **<https://whci.online/tours/senior-citizens-advisory-commission/>**

The next Commission meeting will take place on March 17, 2026.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Noreen Bachteler, Chair

Ann T. Visgilio, Recording Secretary