

WEST HARTFORD SENIOR CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMISSION

MINUTES

January 16, 2018

Members Present: Noreen Bachteler, Rosemary Cleary, Ray Guenter, Linda Hanson, Robert Kennedy, Ellen Phillips, Donna Sterling, Philip Walker
Town Council: Shari Cantor
Staff Present: Gina Marino, Keren Paquette
Guests: Kevin Farmer, Matt Hart, Mary Reilly, Helen Rubino-Turco,

Chairman Philip Walker called the meeting to order at 10:00AM.

The Minutes of the December 18, 2017 meeting were approved unanimously.

Chairman's Report

Phil Walker welcomed Town Manager Matt Hart. He announced that Ruth Kurien has completed her last term on the Commission. Interested persons should contact Essie Labrot. Phil is working on the Commission's Annual Report.

Town Manager Matt Hart

Most recently the Town Manager in Mansfield where he spent 17 years, Matt is now 6 months into the job. He has 5 foci: 1. Meeting with various town groups each week. 2. The state's budget and its effects on the town grants and the shift in state aid to the cities. This has resulted in a reduction of about 7million. The Town Council had planned for this, but future state aid remains uncertain. Ongoing concerns include pension liabilities, and reducing debt and expenditures. 3. Communications – with residents, through the website, the Facebook page and the Everbridge notification system. 4. Community development such as amended zoning in the town center, a possible new approach to the development of the UConn property. 4. Public Safety – the Police Chief has retired, evaluating the take-over of the paramedic service by the fire department. 5. The Park System. He spoke about encouraging the legislature to look at reducing the reliance on property tax in the state's tax structure; if grants from the state continue to fall, core services need to be analyzed and prioritized; the effect of the school budget on the town; the effect of rental housing; new initiatives such as regionalizing services perhaps in animal control, shooting ranges, etc.

Town Council

Shari Cantor said the Martin Luther King Jr. day event was very received. Her State of the Town address is Jan. 26th. The state's Financial Stability and Economic Development Commission which focuses on business owners and looks at acute problems facing CT especially in greater Hartford, is taking public comment. Shari is preparing a letter of comment.

West Hartford Social Services

Keren Paquette reported that the end of the year was especially busy. There are presentations on the cuts in Medicare Savings scheduled at the senior centers. There have been cuts in Energy Assistance. The Safe Home Task Force is meeting. Because there been no appointments for the social workers during their first six months at the senior centers, the program is being re-evaluated.

Transportation

Kevin Farmer noted that the annual appeal has reached 80% of its goal. The grant from the West Hartford Rotary to help fund low income riders is being coordinated with Social Services. The volunteer contingent is growing. On Jan. 23rd there is a talk on stroke awareness at Town Hall.

Seniors Job Bank

No report

Senior Centers

The new revised bulletin has been published. Reports are attached.

New Business

There is a vacancy on the Commission. It was noted that that the Commission lacks diversity in ethnicity and age.

The next meeting of the Commission is scheduled for Tuesday, February 20 at 10:00am.

The meeting adjourned at 11:33AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Lynn Silverman
Volunteer Recording Secretary