

WEST HARTFORD SENIOR CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMISSION

MINUTES

September 21, 2021

Members Present: Amy Silverman, Rebecca Hajosy, Robert Kennedy, Noreen Bachteler, Rosemary Cleary, Mary Reilly, Linda Hanson
Absent: Ellen Phillips
Staff Present: Lisa Hanse, Mark Blanchard, Keren Paquette
Guests: Sheila Diamond, Gail Crockett, Kevin Farmer

Chairperson Amy Lynn Silverman called the meeting to order at 10:00AM.
June 15, 2021 meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Chairperson Amy Silverman welcomed guest Marc Blanchard from Leisure Services. Marc thanked Lisa Hanse for filling in for Gina Marino after her retirement. Lisa quickly got many of the senior programs back to in-person over the summer. Marc also announced that Gina's replacement has been hired – Rebecca Sears who will start next week. Becky is coming from LCB Senior Living in Avon and will be overseeing programs at both Senior Centers with Lisa's help.

Chairperson's Report

Amy Silverman reported that the Commission is still down one person, a Republican position. Please spread the word and any recommendations will be considered. Amy reminded the group of the e-mail she recently forwarded from the Town Clerk's office with a training "refresher" course on the requirements of conducting a public meeting in person and remotely. There will be 2 sessions. Amy and Ann Visgilio, Recording Secretary, must attend, everyone else is optional. Amy then announced that she will be moving to Bloomfield at the end of December and thus will no longer be able to chair this Commission as she will no longer be a West Hartford resident. The Commission will now need 2 new members. Amy asked if anyone wants to step up as the next Chairperson.

Presentation by Rebecca Hajosy of Hajosy Law

Rebecca Hajosy of Hajosy Law LLC, an Elder Law, Estate Planning, Probate and Special Needs law firm, did a presentation for the Commission focusing on end of life and legal issues. Rebecca discussed the differences between Power of Attorney & Health Care Directive, Living Will, DNR order, and a MOLST document – all are part of the end-of-life preparation you can make for yourself or for your relatives. Rebecca discussed Hospice, Nursing Homes and Assisted Living facilities and how they all work with Medicare and Medicaid. She works with people who want to set up plans for their remains – who gets “custody” of the remains and that you can set up specific plans for your body, your funeral service, write your own obituary, and pre-plan and pre-pay for your funeral to take the burden off your family. Rebecca helps people set up plans for their assets, beneficiaries on accounts, and ways to avoid probate. She discussed the option to donate your body to Yale or UConn for medical research and Pauper Burials for a person with no living relatives or money after doing a Lost Heir Search. Rebecca suggested that our Senior Centers should do more on educating about the legal issues surrounding deaths in the family. Rebecca left copies of several handouts for the group: What to Do When Someone Passes; Putting Your House in Order; Transferring a Car Upon Death, Medicaid Title 19, and Funeral Trusts & Contracts.

West Hartford Social Services

Keren Paquette reported that Samantha Ennis has been hired as a new Social Worker to work with the Police Department. The three main areas the police social worker will address are: mental health, substance abuse, and landlord/tenant issues. The town food pantry is continuing with 3 days a week and curbside pickup only. Dial-a-Ride is operating fully using town and CDC Covid guidelines. They have added more stops at Assisted Living facilities. The Medical Escort program is starting up again. CRT energy assistance is taking applications for the winter season. The electric shut-off moratorium ended on Sept. 15 so please refer anyone to their office for help. There is no longer an asset test for energy

assistance, only income. There will be a new water assistance program starting soon, stay tuned for more info on this. Renters Rebate program ends Sept. 30 and the moratorium on evictions has ended making this a tough time for housing. UNITE CT can help with rent and electricity and Social Services has been helping people apply although the application process is harder than anticipated. So far 83 households in West Hartford have been helped by this program. Please tell anyone they can check the Social Services FaceBook page for information on all these programs.

Seniors Job Bank

Sheila Diamond reported that they are seeing that the worker shortage is real. They are getting lots of business requests for workers and not enough workers to fill the jobs. The organization raised \$20,000 in a financial campaign in June. The office will be getting a cloud-based computer system soon and they plan to have a booth at the Park Road Parade.

Transportation

Kevin Farmer reported that ITN Central Connecticut is an independent transportation network with 20 volunteer drivers that serve 15 towns giving rides to mostly age 60+ riders. The ride volume now is at about 60% of pre-pandemic levels. Drivers and riders both are required to wear face coverings. The annual appeal which happens once a year is coming up. There is a fee of \$40 per member, but low-income riders pay nothing. ITN has an e-mailed newsletter 3-4 times a year but is open to other ways to publicize their service.

Senior Centers

Lisa Hanse reported that the new Fall/Winter Bulletin has been published. The past summer was very successful with the outdoor sports programs: fishing golf, lawn bowling, and pickle ball. The five-concert gazebo series also was well-attended. Both Senior Centers are now open 5 days a week for in-person and virtual and hybrid programs. There will be flu shot clinics at both Centers and visits from the Town Manager and Fire Departments this fall. The staff added 6 part-time staffers over the summer and the volunteer program will be resuming soon.

New Business

Nothing reported

Agenda for Future Meetings

Ideas for future guests/presentations: Presentation by the new “A Connecticut Party” in West Hartford; Public Works information on upcoming snow removal season; Police Department on recent car-jackings and more visible panhandling around town; someone from the Housing Authority

The meeting adjourned at 12:01PM. Next meeting scheduled for Oct. 19, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann T. Visgilio, Recording Secretary