

## WEST HARTFORD SENIOR CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMISSION

Minutes from Meeting on November 15, 2022

Members Present: Rebecca Hajosy, Noreen Bachteler, Robert Kennedy, Mary Reilly, Beth Rocco, Linda Hanson, Kevin Ryan, Rosemary Cleary  
Staff Present: Keren Paquette, Rebecca Sears, Kevin Farmer  
Absent: Gail Crockett (Seniors Job Bank)  
Guests: Guest speaker for the meeting – Alberto Cortes from the West Hartford Town Council  
Other guests: Spero Makris, Sarah Schafer, Krystyna Lamorska

Chairperson Rebecca Hajosy called the meeting to order at 10:07AM  
The minutes of the October meeting were approved as written.

### ***Guest Presenter – Alberto Cortes, West Hartford Town Council***

Chairperson Noreen Bachteler introduced Alberto Cortes, first term Republican on the Town Council, to speak on Agenda Item #9. Alberto serves on the Human & Community Services Committee. Since Noreen has been working with a SCAC Subcommittee on updating/ rewriting our Commission's specific town code and mission statement, she asked Alberto to meet with us to review the suggested revisions to make sure they follow the Town Council's rules and are being in consistent format with other town Commissions.

Noreen and her Subcommittee, which includes Becky Sears, Gayle Crockett, Rosemary Cleary and Kevin Ryan, have worked on updating the 50-year-old "Boards and Commissions" code and description of our Commission to bring the terminology up to date, and have the language reflect what the Commission does today. Noreen passed out a document that detailed the suggested revisions and they were discussed as a group and several updates were made. Noreen will make the document reflect those changes and re-send out to the group before the December meeting where we will finalize those changes. There was a lot of discussion on how this Commission wants access to more data about our town's seniors and budgeting for programs for seniors.

### ***Chairperson's Report***

Rebecca Hajosy reported that Linda Guzzo who had served as the Director of the Seniors Job Bank since May, has left the position. It is unclear at this point who will step in as the Job Bank's liaison to this Commission moving forward.

### ***West Hartford Social Services***

Keren Paquette reported today, November 15, 2022, was the last day for extensions on the Renters Rebate program. Keren also reported that the Energy Assistance programs that currently exist are all overwhelmed with applications, so they've been advising applicants to be patient. This week the Thanksgiving and Holiday gift cards are being distributed through the Town Food Pantry. The town will be launching a monthly "Memory Café" for caregivers and their loved ones as way to be sociable without judgement of others who may not understand their condition.

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

No report this month.

### ***Transportation***

No report this month

### ***Senior Centers***

Becky Sears reported that Hartford HealthCare is interested in supporting the newly launching Memory Café (as described in the Social Services paragraph above). The Senior Centers will also be launching a multi-part “Healthy Brain” series in February which will include doing memory screenings. Hartford HealthCare is also interested in sponsoring this program. Becky reported that the Winter Bulletin will be available next Monday and that she has completed the paperwork to request funding from the Town Council for a new van.

### ***ECC Advisory Committee***

Beth Rocco reported that October 26 was the last public meeting on the Feasibility Study for the New Elmwood Community Center/Senior Center/Library. Some changes were made to the original plans drawn up by Tecton, and now those plans will be brought to the Town Council in mid-December, even though there still is no price tag on the project. There was discussion on what will happen to the existing ECC and Faxon Library and whether the town will be looking to sell these properties to offset some of the cost of the new building but no Town decisions in this matter have been made. Beth continues to push for the town to consider dedicated senior housing, not just affordable housing, and it was felt by some members that the current Elmwood Community Center could be ideal for this purpose given its centralized location and access to public transportation. A recent example is the impending sale of the West Hartford Inn building which Beth saw could have possibly been earmarked to be made into senior housing. Beth is hoping that by getting accurate data on the town’s senior numbers, over 55 and over 65, now and future trends, better cases can be made by this Commission to push for programs, housing, and funding. Chair Hajosy indicated that these senior housing issues and ideas will be continued at a future SCAC meeting in early 2023.

### ***New Business***

December will be the last meeting for Bob Kennedy and Linda Hanson as Commission members with each serving two terms. Rebecca Hajosy reported that one person has reached out about possibly joining the Commission. There will be two Democrat and one Republican position open. Any interested parties need to be in contact with Town Clerk Essie Labrot.

Our next meeting will be December 20 and we are hoping for a presentation from the Town’s Tax Assessment Office regarding tax abatements.

The meeting adjourned at 12:13PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ann T. Visgilio, Recording Secretary

