

# **Westport Commission on People with Disabilities Minutes of Regular Meeting Thursday October 18, 2018 - Town Hall - Rm. 201**

**Attendance:** Tom Holleman, Marina Derman, LuAnn Giunta, Stacie Curran

Absent Jim Ross, Evan Levinson, Diane Johnson.

Present from Human Services: Michele Bottone & Elaine Daignault

## **8:40am - Tom - called to order**

September minutes - Vote for Approval - 1st/Tom 2nd/Marina - All in favor.

## **What's Up/Newsorthy:**

"Crumbs Together" - Grand opening - Nov. 1st at 11:00am, Beth Israel, King Street. Invitation was sent to members of the board. They are accepting new applicants to participate as bakers.

## **Town Department of Human Services (DHS) Updates:**

### **Transportation -**

- Norwalk has successfully created a microbus app, which provides on-demand rides. (See article attached) - Britt Liotta, Transit Director in Norwalk is quoted.
- The Town of Westport continues to research new options for more flexible transportation in Westport like the shopping bus loop previously proposed. Elder house has been contacted regarding a potential partnership, more info will be provided shortly
- Westport Transit Directors, Marty Fox and Patsy Cimarosa are collaborators and manage the current system in town. Elaine will ask our Westport Transit Directors to be guest speakers in December.
- Main-To-Train Study is another avenue to follow. CPD members are encouraged to follow/join meetings. Diane Johnson is heading the Transportation Committee of CPD.

## **Compo Beach Improvements:**

- On Nov. 13th the proposed restrooms will go before RTM. This is the last stop after the Board of Finance Approval on Oct. 3rd for the appropriation.
- The Commission on People with Disabilities represented the disability community very effectively at the BOF meeting. There was also a large group of residents who opposed the request. Many of those against the new ADA restrooms identified themselves as pickleball enthusiasts.
  - Opposition cited concerns over the size, cost, location and necessity
- Parks and Recreation provided a time line of all of the public meetings & discussions held to solicit public input since 2013. The opposition only recently

lent their voice at the very tail end of the approval process. (see attached timeline)

- *CPD members are encouraged to both send personal letters and invite friends and constituents to voice their opinions on the proposed ADA bathrooms at South Beach Compo.*

**Public Comment:** Doug Rifkin, a resident with a visual impairment, often walks to meetings at Town Hall but noted that on the evening of Oct. 16<sup>th</sup> when the RTM considered the ADA walkway, he was unable to manage the dark sidewalks and roadways between Main Street and Town Hall. He suggested that the Town consider adding needed streetlights in order to link Town Hall to Main Street. This suggestion will be shared with our Public Works Department.

**Emergency Preparedness, Elaine Daignault reports:**

- Volunteer Registry – the registry has had a few amendments in order to respond to community concerns over liability language and updates to form are in place.
- Elaine is constructing a blurb for Parks & Rec to include in the eblast from the Police Dept about Nixle updates that will be used in cases of emergency. This is in place of the Code Red system previously used.
- Stacie will ask Dr. Manerino from WPS and Elaine will ask Coleen Palmer about distributing information about the registry and emergency evacuation application to Westport School families.
- The Town's move from Code Red - to Nixle – provides a new resource for DHS who has a list of over 150 persons that they call in times of emergency. A new distribution list through Nixle will allow for a much more efficient system of outreach to at-risk residents.

**Seasonal Programs, Michelle Bottone Reports:**

- The State Energy Assistance Program has begun for the winter. This program assists income-qualified residents to access financial assistance that keeps their household's warm. The Dept. of Human Services (DHS), is unique in that we have 3 trained staff members who assist Westport residents in applying for this benefit. Many other municipalities do not offer this assistance but instead send applicants to Bridgeport or Norwalk to complete the application. This is also an opportunity for DHS to get to know residents with financial need and allows us to assess for other possible supports that they could benefit from.

**Committee Reports:**

**Transition Program (18-21), Stacie Curran reports:**

Wilton's School District has held transition meetings headed by Melissa Barrett for the past 3 years – the program in Wilton has been met with great success. Stacie and Evan met with Ms. Barrett to see if Wilton would be interested in a partnership with Westport, Stacie, et al brought this opportunity to the attention of the Director of Pupil Services, in Westport. There will be a future meeting with Westport & Wilton to discuss possible options for a collaboration on transition programs.

### **C.A.P.E: ( Creating Awareness thru Purposeful Employment)**

- CAPE is a working group of professionals, and advocates, researching business models to utilize in Westport for a new venture to employ people with disabilities
- CAPE has invited a select group of Westport dignitaries to share its vision of a theater like the Prospector in Westport -
- **On Nov 1st, C.A.P.E. is hosting two tours at Prospector Theatre, in Ridgefield, at either 1pm & 7pm.**
- Stacie – All CPD members should have received an invitation. Please RSVP ASAP.
- Marina: was recently interviewed by Josh Kovner of the Hartford Curran who is doing a story on families starting businesses to employ loved ones with special needs. ,

**Federal/State** - (Jim Ross - absent - next month will present)

**Education/Personal Development** - (Evan - absent - will present next month)

For November meeting - Judge Lisa Wexler will be our Guest Speaker

For December meeting - We will have Transportation presentation

### **Marina: Spoke about the “Changing Expectations” event - Lower Fairfield County,**

Families for Families recently had a meeting in Westport for families affected by Development Disabilities. The event was well attended with 35-40 attendees.

- This new group was created by a recent Policies and Procedures graduate, Shannon.
- Marina presented, as did Winn Everts, and others.
- There will be 4 events a year; get on the mailing list, there will be a closed social media network for communication between families.
- email: [arclowerfairfield@gmail.com](mailto:arclowerfairfield@gmail.com) to request access
- Next meeting will be on topic of Housing - followed by Benefits presentation.

**Adjourned:** 9:50, Marina, all in favor.

# WHEELS 2U

GET A RIDE IN MINUTES WE PICK YOU UP

WHEELS2UNORWALK.COM

- 1 DOWNLOAD THE MICROTRANSIT APP
- 2 REQUEST A PICKUP
- 3 GET GOING



## What is "WHEELS2U"?

Wheels2U is a new on-demand shuttle service in Norwalk that provides a unique and convenient alternative mode of transportation. By using an app, riders can request a pickup and drop off location. The shuttle drivers also have an app in each shuttle to provide navigation, live traffic conditions and real-time pick-up and drop-off information.

## Where does it run?

There isn't a specific route like a traditional bus. A specific transit travel zone has been designated. The Wheels2U service is intended to improve the connection between South Norwalk, Maritime Aquarium, The Sono Collection, Wall Street area, and other attractions. See the map for specific geographic boundaries.

## How much does it cost?

During the pilot period, the cost of a ride will be subsidized by the City of Norwalk. Although there is no cost to the rider, you will still need to reserve your trip through the app.

## Can I pay cash?

The drivers are unable to accept cash. You must have a smartphone to reserve a trip through the app.

## Can I get a monthly pass?

Not at this time.

## What is the app called?

Download the **Microtransit app**



from the Apple App Store or Google Play.



## What does the app do?

You can reserve a trip in the app and then see your estimated drop off time. The app will show you exactly where the closest shuttle is to your location, the estimated time of pickup, and, in the future, the ability to purchase a ride.

## When does it run?

Thursday: 5pm - midnight  
 Friday: 5pm - midnight  
 Saturday: 5pm - midnight  
 Sunday: 12noon - 9pm

## Who operates the service?



The Norwalk Transit District operates the shuttles using licensed and insured drivers. The software used to operate the system is produced by Transloc, a subsidiary of the Ford Motor Co.

## What is Microtransit?

**Microtransit** is a term that describes an on-demand transportation system that allows for flexible routing and scheduling of shuttle buses. It is a new idea in the transportation industry.



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