

**Westport Commission on People with Disabilities
Minutes of Meeting
Thursday, November 15, 2018 - Town Hall - Rm. 201**

Attendance: Tom Holleman, Marina Derman, Stacie Curran, Jim Ross, Evan Levinson, Diane Johnson. Present from Human Services: Michele Bottone & Elaine Daignault
Absent: LuAnn Guinta

8:40am - Jim R. - called to order

Review Oct. minutes

Crumbs Together - Held Grand Opening Nov.1st - many of us attended

Transportation - Waiting for data from recent survey.

Emergency Volunteer registry - is up and running - Sped PTA - will send, as did Westport. School District.

Changing Expectations - Monday 11/19/19 will be doing similar presentation at Warde that they held at Toquet Hall.

Vote for Approval Oct Minutes- 1st/Diane, 2nd/Marina - All in favor.

NEWSWORTHY:

South Beach Restrooms, RTM approved (26-8) in favor at 1:35am

Diane - sent RTM a thank you

We all heard both sides, vetted the plans, and have to believe in the process

Jim: Accommodation - may equate to sacrifices, but that's what must be done to make Public spaces available to all, they may have been considered "sacred spaces" and it will cost more \$ - that needs to be recognized too.

GUEST SPEAKER:

Probate Judge Lisa Wexler - Parents are Guardians until Age 18, Maturity is complex, and so is letting go to achieve independence, need to respect Cultural differences, Independence means different things to different people. Parents of children with disabilities need a legal way to continue to be the people managing a person's needs: housing, medical, financial, etc.

Two types of Guardianship:

- Plenary (Full)
- Limited

Can apply for one to both

Petition the Law

DDS - has criterion - strict line in the sand - 69 or lower for ID.

Probate Judge - and the Law, have wiggle room - Judge has the task of looking at the individual's incapacities - Evidentiary Hearings.

DDS - brought in every time - person is entitled to OWN council, - because you are taking away 18 year olds Civil Rights.

\$\$ - fees are kept low, The State often pays, unless child has own \$; usually friendly, not contested, what are the transition plans?

(Discussion)

Judge Wexler - Encourages us to use the court as a resource, (ex. - concern with an agency) - ask for a hearing.

Every 3 years DDS does a check in and Guardians - check in every 3 years, should it be modified? (Discussion)

2 Types:

Guardian of the Estate

Guardian of the Person (Plenary)

Recent change in the Law - 1 form, consolidates having to do two steps, which also consolidates the scrutiny every 3 years.

If child has more than \$10,000.00 - then, separate deal - need to have conservator of the Estate.

(This would also be true if adult child comes into \$, inheritance, accident collection, etc.) - Probate court must approve any \$\$ that comes to a minor or a disabled person

Special Needs trust falls outside of the Probate court.

She also takes care of Conservatorship of the person (Same as Guardianship) in instances of Mental illness - maybe forcing medicines, etc., - There are 76 beds at Hall Brooke, on Long Lots road, only for Mental Illness. If a person is not able to take care of themselves, either due to dementia, mental issue, ALS, etc.,

We have supports for the young and the elderly - No supports in the middle.

(Discussions/Westport has its own hoarding task force)

Judge Wexler - deals with 2,700 matters a year in the probate court, 52% are conservatorship, guardianship, adoptions - this kind of matter.

There is a very low threshold for writing a will=Do you know what you are doing when you doing it?

George Mason - is the first school to have a program created for Downs Syndrome.

She sees two issues that really need changes in the Law:

1. that line in the sand of 69, with DDS
2. need some laws to protect the middle ages.

Thank you.

Department Reports:

Michelle B - Update from Town - they are just busy with Westport Warm-up fund

Transportation:

Committee Reports:

Dec.3rd - Town Hall, 7:00pm a meeting (Peter Gold talking with Jim R. on this issue)

How do we want to re-think /conceptually, the entire program, what are the options. Diane raised Door-to-door.

CAPE:

(Marina) Firmly in direction of a theatre that models Prospector work model, we held a vision launch, Nov 1st, two tours, approx. 30 people, to share the vision. We are working now to maintain the momentum, and energy and are in discussion with developers and others.

Evan - arranging meeting with Jessica Ireland, who opened the Norwalk City Hall Cafe, article in Norwalk Hour today. – it is being run by students in the 18-21 program.

Jim - something to think about -How do we get SPED out of the basements? Churches and beyond.

10:35 Meeting Adjourned (Marina, Jim)