

Westport Commission on People with Disabilities
Minutes of Meeting
Thursday September 20, 2018 - Town Hall - Rm. 201

(Draft)

ATTENDANCE: Chairman - Jim Ross, Evan Levinson, Stacie Curran, Tom Holleman, Marina Derman. Absent: LuAnn Giunta, Diane Johnson. Present from Human Services: Michele Bottone

8:35am - Jim Ross - CALL TO ORDER

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

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- David Browne - Comments about the police registry.
 - Concerns about the restrictive language, wondering if we are setting a different standard, need to make language clearer, what are the legal standards afforded to the country, etc.,
 - He has connected well with Elaine D. & Eileen Flug, Asst. Town Attorney with whom he shared his concerns - the language is currently being reviewed.
 - Mr. Brown noted that he has taken steps at home to ensure the safety of his 11 yr old son who is on the autism spectrum including emblems at home and an RFID bracelet

Discussion of intended response of a First Responder based on the knowledge of having an individual with special needs on their radar.

- Kelly Schutte - Suggestion: an ID/registration # for individuals wishing to register with the Town in order to provide necessary info to first responders in an event of emergency. Mrs. Schutte has information available for her son at all times by keeping info in their car/s and with every caretaker
 - *Need to add Kelly Schutte to our CPD email list.

Jen Fava: Parks & Rec Dept. - Reporting on progress of new ADA accessible walkway & bathrooms on South Beach. (These projects have gone out to bid separately)

- Part 1- Pedestrian Walkway: includes new accessible picnic tables & grills, guard railing, handicap parking up for Board of Finance approvals on Oct 2nd but maybe bumped to Oct 16th if agenda too long
- Part 2: Restrooms: include three ADA accessible bathrooms, a shower and foot sprayer, a water fountain/bottle filler and a storage room for supplies. The bathroom proposal has been amended several times based on community input, has passed all town boards and commissions up to this point pending the Board of Finance, and RTM approvals. Recently a group of residents who identify themselves as Pickleball enthusiasts have expressed opposition to the proposed restrooms citing the cost, location and lack of necessity as reasons for opposing the project. Jen reviewed the costs of the building and site work, which must meet various codes and guidelines

including dry –proofing the structure per DEEP guidelines, which is a factor in the cost in addition to bringing necessary utilities like plumbing and electric to the location.

- On Oct 2nd Parks and Recreation will go before the Board of Finance requesting funding for the project and if it passes, the final stop will be the RTM meeting on November 13th. Jen Fava has come before the CPD on several occasions to inform us of the progress of the project and seek input from this commission. These last two stops are essential in order to begin work on the project in time for next summer.

(Discussion)

- Jim R: Kudos to Jen, in her service, transparency, thoughtfulness, thoroughness, and presentations. The Master Plan of the Townspeople want the bathrooms, we are sensitive to inclusion, yet respectful of all opinions, majority sees value in having the bathrooms, and we continue to see the importance of moving this forward.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Marina Derman announced

Lower Fairfield County, Families for Families, in Partnership with ARC, Winn Everts & Marina and approx. 10 other families - have formed a new alliance - offering quarterly meetings, open to the public, with guest speakers and opportunities to share information and gather information - for those caring for adult/children with I/DD, currently seeking or receiving services through DDS.

First event - OCTOBER 16th - 7-8:30pm, in Westport, at Toquet Hall.

- Walter Glomb & Marina Derman will be presenting.

Marina will get us the link to circulate, and it will be blasted thru STAR & ARC, etc.

(See Handout)

HUMAN SERVICES UPDATE, Michele Bottone:

- Westport was awarded the Homelessness Grant \$\$
- Senior Center - scheduled ribbon cutting January 19th
- Energy Assistance program begins Oct. 1st
 - (Audience) - Pippa Bell Alder: added - same individuals are eligible for a free home energy assessment. If interested, connect with Human Services - they will put you in touch.
- Tuesday Spot 25th - National Voter Registration Day at the YMCA. (9am-7:30pm) - spells out what voting options are available for people with Disabilities.
- Volunteer Registry - 14 have come in (7 were unknown members) -

Discussion, Tom H - playing devil's advocate - The police are Union. What limits their liability and how will training be added to their contract?

CPD members agree that having something in place is better than the tragedies we have seen without it. Marina: 'Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good'

Jim R: Adding, State grants available for walkways - maybe application can be made for Senior Center or the beach) - Jim will f/u with Elaine.

NEW BUSINESS –

Jim R: **the Straw Ban** proposal currently under review with the RTM may be problematic for those seniors and people with disabilities who require this form of assistive technology on a daily basis.

Marina - Damage to oceans, or ecological systems, problems for wildlife, there is a balance - reusable/metal /paper biodegradable. It should be noted that there are options and the disability community should advocate for the balance of options and not deprived of an essential tool.

Tom H; **Team Triumph** - Update - Have held 10 events, grown to 8 chair for their “captains”, have 30 athletes participating in races.

Jim R - Check out video of Sammy Laskin, and Olivia Ross will be competing this Saturday.

Jim R: **ADA Coalition of Connecticut** - (see handout) –

There is an ADA Training series, (Tom & Jim had attended one)

In addition - Jim has proposed creating a **regional committee community dialog** - across (bordering) Towns, to discuss issues. Ffld just formed their own Commission on People with Disabilities.

Evan: Raising the issue around **Transition in the 18-21 year age range** - ongoing at Norwalk NCC. (Evan, could you fill in a line here)

Stacie - Discussion around Transition changes at our High School and the frustration going on in our own district - New Transition coordinator and new Director of Pupil services for Special Ed - and no progress is being made. What can be done, what can the Commission do to aid and act as the liaison between the school district and the Community?

Before next meeting - Action Item: Evan will connect with Elaine and discuss potential next steps

Stacie will try to get into Wilton HS and see the great inroads they are making around Transition.

Adjourned - 10:30am