

**Westport Commission on People with Disabilities  
Minutes of Meeting  
Thursday, November 21, 2019 - TOWN HALL 309**

**Attendance:** Jim Ross, Tom Holleman, Stacie Curran, Marina Derman, Doug Rifkin, & Diane Johnson,  
Present from Human Services: Elaine Daignault & Michelle Bottone.  
(Guests: First Selectman-James Marpe, Westport Police Officers - Sam Arciola & Al D'Amura, Department of Public Works-Pete Ratkiewich, Tom Terrant, Dick Lowenstein.)

8:35am - Call to order.

Review of October Minutes: Jim Ross reviews - Makes motion, Tom 1st- Doug - 2nd, All in favor, Approved.

UPDATE: Elaine D.

Human Services – Seasonal programs are underway including the Energy Assistance Program and donation funded programs like Holiday Giving and Westport Warm Up. Westport Together - newly re-branded Positive Youth Development Program has officially launched, bringing together youth serving community service agencies to collaborate in bringing progressive programs and supports to children and families. Please follow them on Facebook, Instagram and joining the mailing list at

[www.westporttogether.org](http://www.westporttogether.org)

Senior Center – is bustling with activities since the renovation.

Youth Services – Town has hired a new program assistant and developing an enhanced Student Outreach Counselor Program through community mental health agencies contracts including two new counselors at SHS.

Transportation/Pedestrian Safety: Diane J –

Discussion of pedestrian safety following a recent accident fatality highlighted on [www.06880.com](http://www.06880.com) CPD wanted to provide a forum for residents to make suggestions for pedestrian safety. Suggestions included: Cameras (legal barriers in CT), overview of improvements in progress and opportunity for public input.

- Jim & Doug - From a visually impaired perspective: Bright lights, and contrast are so helpful
- We have distracted drivers and speeders.
- Dick Lowenstein: Greens Farms Rd., RTM rep. interested in helping to work on problem (James Agah - wrote letter specifically regarding Greens Farms Road - letter attached) put forth lots of suggestions. Dick would like to see the Commission & Residents take action, put forth work groups to do something.

Town of Westport, Pete Ratkiewich Public Works Director:

- \*Improving speed limits/signage on Greens Farms Rd. will now be posted with 30MPH signs - not 35, and Westway 25MPH. (If nothing is posted, the default is 55MPH) - speed is controlled by the State not each town;  
(Maybe in future - we could have APP that beep, like Portugal, warning excessive speed)
- \* Coffee An to Daybreak (sidewalk grant).
- \* Elvira's to G.F. RD. (grant - in works) - concrete over asphalt.
- \* Short section - Hyde to Maple Ave, N - to serve Long Lots School.
- \* Myrtle Avenue sidewalk project
- \* Scanning project was done this year of our sidewalks – improvements are needed

#### Problem areas:

- Cost - Capital appropriations/private property, easements
- Community planning efforts – require improved right-of-ways.
- Ordinances that speak to Commercial usage, not residential
- Plowing our roads take 8-10 hours; to clear our sidewalk takes 4-10 days.
- We have 125 miles of Road in Westport - only 23 have sidewalk.
- Primary areas of concern:
  - Schools
  - Downtown & Saugatuck
  - Recreational Areas

Lighting: All street lights are being replaced with LED, then will work on making them uniform, and balance of lighting.

#### Crosswalks & Pedestrian Signals: (with input from residents like Tom Tarrant)

- Working to get audible controls on all of downtown crosswalks with signals
- Areas: Main street, Parker Harding, Patagonia - working to make Downtown consistent, Myrtle Avenue, Route 33
- Dick L - we have a few four-way pedestrian stops, with no crosswalks.
- Discussion - (of different intersections around town)

#### Bike Lanes:

- An RTM member, Peter Gold, has been suggesting shared roadway use for bikers, and is working on creating new bike route, taking back roads across town vs. the Post Road
- Jim Ross: ADA requirement – ramp improvements. Pete recognizes this - and is working, wherever he can to make Town more compliant. For every 10 miles of road, he is to do ramps. State is also two years behind in their compliance - we are picking away at it. (State may do a ramp, then it is on the Town to maintain it.)
- First Selectman Jim Marpe - spoke in appreciation of the Commission raising awareness and conversation of ADA issues
- Officer Arciola & D'Amura added - they are available to hear resident concerns and assist where needed
- Jim R - Thanks all - and we are reminded there are 61,000,000 people with Disabilities here. Largest Minority.

Next meeting agenda:

Employment discussion with the DMA and Chamber of Commerce.

Planning for a second regional municipal meeting

Agenda planning for 2020

Dick L. suggested future advocacy and awareness for curbside voting

Motion to Adjourn: 9:55am - Marina 1st, Stacie 2nd - All in favor.