

**Westport Commission on People with Disabilities**  
**Minutes of Regular Meeting**  
**Thursday January 16th, 2020 - TOWN HALL 309**

**Attendance:** Jim Ross, Tom Holleman, Stacie Curran, Doug Rifkin, & Diane Johnson, Marina Derman,  
DHS Staff: Michelle Bottone and Susan Stefenson  
Guests: Pippa Bell Ader, Sustainable Westport, Andrea Pecoriello, Sweet P Bakery, and Joe Anastasi, STAR  
8:35am - Call to order.

**Review of Minutes:**

Jim Ross - review minutes  
Motion to approve - Tom 1st, Doug 2nd - All in favor

**Guest Speaker:** Pippa Bell Ader - Presented on Zero Food Waste challenge, going to launch on anniversary of Earth Day. Brought in The Starter Kit - for purchase \$25.00 each.  
Can dump at the transfer station, 13.9% food insecurity in CT.  
Food Rescue US – App. based program where you can help.  
Partnering with public schools, discussed what the schools are doing.  
Once we get into a routine, the dumping will get cheaper in the one run (less waste).

**Update:** DHS, Susan Stefenson presented the DHS Budget - 5.5% increase in (\$1.4 million) - three divisions: Social, Youth, and Senior. Increase to cover few new hires, new software at Senior Center.  
Michelle - helping some get into the Partners & Policies class, so they can be better self-advocates. Dinner & Discussion - set for March. Looking into more assertive Tech for the Town Hall. Added Language line - to assist other with access.

**Guest Speaker:** Andrea Pecoriello - Sweet P. Bakery - 21 Lois Street, Norwalk CT  
How it started: She & husband, Bill - had vision to open a cafe' bakery, training & employing people with disabilities. They saw struggles in individuals with disabilities, through Circle of Friends, and friends, and while they first partnered with Crumbs together, their vision went in a different direction. They formed Sweet P. 501(c)(3).  
They rent space in Sugar & Olive. Have hired head bakers, a manager, and director with experience heading special education in Greenwich, and those coming with 20 years of experience, manager of Garelick & Herb.  
Classes ready to start in February - soft opening - schedule March 2. For more information, see syllabus and materials in purple handout.  
Eight to ten student baking in the mornings, then grow to afternoons.  
She is meeting with all area schools transition programs.  
They have dream/model to have wholesale operations in the future.  
Many areas for job skills: Packaging, delivery, with or without aid, and may consider peer assistance in summer. They have to have 15-18 year old program in afternoons, coming soon, after first class. Hope thru fundraising; will not have to charge fees forever.  
(Going to connect with Pepperridge Farm).

**Guest Speaker:** Joe Anastasi-from STAR (also works with partner Martha) working with Sweet P. He has small group to help with shopping and delivery of meals on wheels, etc. He has Birth-to-Three and 21 and Up - providing three levels of services:

- 12-15 Group Homes
- Activities, classes
- Job Development

He has 100 people now working in part-time jobs: Westport, Weston, and New Canaan  
Has met with DMA - has some local hires, business community is supportive, he assigns job coach and educates the employers' concern around disruption to business  
Certified B Corporation: Transparency, Inclusion mission - ex., Patagonia, Athleta, & Bigelow Tea.

Upcoming concern he sees: Increase in minimum wage - will pose some headwind from employers, may say they need to cut, etc. Joe will email us. Extensive list of benefits that comes with hiring one with a disability. After age 21, 85% unemployment with disability population. Transportation concerns, and job coaching (New Canaan has Get About) Discussion - There is Dial A Ride, and more using Uber & Lyft.

**Commission Update:** More info. on Regional meeting & dial in webinar - coming soon.

Jim R. – Is building a greater life for everybody. He submitted a paper on “How to Create a Commission in Your Own Town” - Council for Developmental Services, Cromwell, Apr.?

Tom H. - TEAM Westport (founded 2005) - It is a cultural and social organization about inclusion & diversity. Lots of crossover with PTA; Tom was asking about merging forces - concern is they do not always intersect.

Housing: Marina will get into more next time.

Current: ARC - Upcoming event - Thursday Jan 23 at Toquet Hall 6:30-8pm. Life Advocacy who will advocate for my loved one with I/DD when I am no longer able?

There are beginning stages of a partnership being created to do this.

Keep eyes open for the Sate lot near Walgreens for potential affordable housing

10:10 - Meeting Adjourned - Tom, Marina - All