

## Human Services Commission

### Executive Session

### Minutes

Tuesday, November 12th 2019 at 9AM

### TOWN HALL ROOM 201

*Present: Bob Galan, Lee Bollert, Claudia Coplan*

*Absent: Beth Bass, Ken Bernard, Peter Powell*

*Staff: Susan Stefenson, Kristen Witt, Elaine Daignault*

*Guests: Annie Spencer (Commission on Senior Services)*

9:00 AM Approval of Minutes from October 8th, 2019 - Minutes Approved

9:05 AM Human Services Commission Goals, Objectives and Roles

### **HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION**

The Westport Human Services Commission provides a public forum for the study and discussion of our community's human service needs and to advocate appropriate change.

The Commission serves to advise and consult the First Selectman and the Department of Human Services on issues pertaining to human services in Westport.

- The HSC Commission covers all aspects of DHS services including Senior Services, Youth Services, All Ages/Social Services
  
- The following topics have been identified as focus areas for 2020
  - Affordable Housing
    - P & Z has a subcommittee exploring affordable housing and there may be other programs, opportunities and discussions pertinent to DHS programs/services.
    - Elaine will forward the videos from previous forums held by Open Communities Alliance (<https://www.ctoca.org>)
    - Bob Galan and Claudia Coplan have agreed to attend P & Z and/or other meetings as needed and report at future Commission meetings
  
  - Mental Health & Substance Abuse

- Mental Health and substance abuse are growing issues in Human Services adding more complex approaches to assisting residents to stabilize financial, housing and food insecurity
- DHS is facilitating a new work group called the Westport Prevention Coalition with Positive Directions, our Local Prevention Council to address substance abuse and mental health across the age span. Meetings will be announced soon. This group is launching a community readiness survey in January
- Lee Bollert has agreed to attend and represent the HSC
- Transportation
  - Is another obstacle for many of our vulnerable residents who require assistance in accessing community resources, employment, etc
  - Discussion of additional/affordable resources for residents outside of the Coastal Link and commuter buses to help link those that won't qualify for senior/disabled Door to Door Service and live too far off of the post road for the public bus services.
  - The Commission would like to invite Westport Transit Directors Mary Fox and Patsy Cimerosa to a future meeting to get an update on funding and routes.
- Annual Budget
  - The Town budget process will begin in Dec/Jan requiring DHS to begin formulating an assessment of priorities, productivity and risks in FY 20-21.
  - The commissions to host a public joint meeting of commissions for a presentation on preliminary DHS budget request in Jan 2020
- Miscellaneous
  - Future speakers/topics include an update on the Dept of Housing Grant data, Homes with Hope, WCSA, and finding new ways for commission members to meaningfully participate in advising and advocating for DHS and Westport residents.

10:15 AM    Adjournment