

**Westport Commission on People with Disabilities  
Minutes of Meeting  
Thursday July 16th, 2020 - 9:00am-10:00am  
ZOOM MEETING MINUTES**

**Attendance:** Jim Ross, Marina Derman, Stacie Curran, Doug Rivkin, Tom Holleman, and Diane Johnson - **Absent:** Joe Anastasi.

Present from Human Services: Elaine Daignault - (reviewed remote instructions)  
9:05am - Call to order.

Public Guests: Tom Tarrant, Howard Lipper, Dick Lowenstein, Sal Liccione, Helen Garten. (people need not identify themselves on the line.)

Guest Speaker: Rick Redniss

**AGENDA**

**Item 1: APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Marina - 1st - Tom-2nd - All in favor

**Proposed P & Z Text Amendment #781 - Changes** - Rick Redniss

- Review History of this Text amendment that is intended to expand opportunities for housing for people with special needs.
- The most recent text broadens the scope to include more properties and added the word 'Autism' in definition of disabilities.
- Many items being considered in this item: Affordable housing, moratorium points, special needs housing. Regulations allow for group homes but you do not get the moratorium points with the mini-apartments/units.

Howard Lipper - Why is word Autism added in the definition?

A: State Statue was used, and it is not clear that it included people with Autism

Sal Liccione: wants to make sure transportation interests are considered as well.

P & Z Hearing on this item was moved to Sept 3rd, 2020.

Discussion of ADA definition

Commissioners would like the federal ADA definition to be used. Marina D and Jim R will work with Rick to ensure that the language is tightened up.

Rick mentioned that the P & Z approved Richmondville Rd. application to allow affordable housing off-site. (Nothing further filed yet, but in the works- concept is there and creates opportunity)

Helen G: Discussion of the 136 Riverside property – The Town is still behind this property, and another being looked at as well.

Jim R: Good the Town get moratorium points, but our focus is serving the disability population. We need supports for MANY - not only those who have independence and need some supports.

(Discussion)

Once Jim, Marina and Rick are able to consult on language, the Commission may choose to submit a letter to P & Z with their opinion. This would require an August meeting.

**Affordable Housing:** Elaine D reminded Commissioners that Danielle Dobin is the P & Z Chair and holds regular meetings on Affordable Housing that are open to public – Commissioners may want to attend so we are better educated on the parameters and challenges as it relates to people with disabilities.

**Housing & Emergency Preparedness:**

Elaine D – spoke about Covid 19 Impact – changing the way emergency preparedness and response is done. Group sheltering may be problematic with the virus so the Town's Emergency Management Team is planning for a new approach that includes having people shelter in place to avoid spread whenever possible.

DHS has several registries to support our most vulnerable residents including the CPD's Volunteer Registry for People with Disabilities, Emergency Registry and Hello, Neighbor.

**Employment Update:**

**Remarkable Theater:** Marina - spoke of the film clip on people with disabilities, working at local businesses, how this was prepared and shown prior to "Life Animated" film

\* Can we get this clip up on our Facebook Page?

\* Diane J - praising Marina, going above and beyond on this project

Sal Liccione: Church lane closure: Text amendment #783 - supporting restaurant owners, spending lots of money to open up and use the street for seating.

Sal - wants to make sure there is adequate access for people with disabilities.

2-hour parking limit

**Transportation:**

Elaine D: Announced that Westport Transit Directors Marty Fox & Patsy Cimarosa are working on improvements to Door-to-Door and Transit buses - looking to an 'On

Demand” system called Wheels to You which is a new uber-like app which schedules pick-ups for faster, more personalized service.

This program may well serve the Disability and senior population.

Public Comment:

Tom T: **Tuesday 21st - at 7:00pm** - it the Transportation meeting. He believe this App sounds like an improvement, but has been using the present system successful in excess of 20 years - will support this change if it is an improvement.

**Absentee Ballots/Voting:**

All residents (registered with a party) were mailed absentee ballot for August election. State of CT is thinking about same for ALL residents for November election.

**Accessory Housing:**

Accessory apartments: Town is looking to change the present laws and regulations that are antiquated - and no longer serving Town as well. This should provide a life for affordable housing.

**Transition in COVID-19:** Stacie Curran - Concern that due to Covid-19, Transition students to the Rise Program on SHU campus were just informed that they might not be invited onto the campus when session begins in the Fall. Stacie feels that this decision may be discriminatory and unconstitutional to limit access to one group.

Jim R: Agrees, and says if the CPD can write letters on behalf of the students with disabilities, we should consider doing so.

10:20 adjourned