

**Westport Commission on People with Disabilities
Minutes of Meeting
Thursday August 27th, 2020 - 9:00am-10:00am
ZOOM MEETING MINUTES**

Attendance: Marina Derman-will Chair, Stacie Curran, Doug Rivkin, Joe Anastasi
Absent: Jim Ross, Diane Johnson. (Tom H - later attendance)
Present from Human Services: Elaine Daignault - (reviewed remote instructions)

Guests/Audience Who choose to identify: Dick Lowenstein, Sal Liccione., Helen Garten.
(people need not identify themselves on the line.)

Guest Speaker: Rick Redniss

AGENDA

9:04am - Call to order by Marina Derman

APPROVAL OF MINUTES Joe— 1st - Doug-2nd - All in favor

Human Services update – Elaine Daignault

- DHS has applied for CARES Act funding from the Dept of Housing for Temporary rental/mortgage assistance - to help Westport residents facing job insecurity, unemployment, lost wages - due to Covid-19; application results are pending.
- Emergency Preparedness Response: The effects of Storm Isais were challenging on many levels but DHS reports that they were able to work efficiently with the Emergency Management Team including police, EMS, fire and the Health District to address resident calls for assistance.
- There are currently two Human Services registries available to residents:
 - The Emergency Registry is appropriate for vulnerable residents (mostly seniors and people with disabilities and/or qualifying medical issues) that are living alone, lack supports, and have established medical need. Applicants fill out an online form to receive call reassurance and welfare checks in times of emergency. DHS contacted these individuals before and after the storm, in some cases helping them to relocate and/or provide food or other necessities.
 - The Voluntary Registry for People with Disabilities is meant to alert police and other emergency workers of special needs within the home when they are called to a residence via 911. The purpose is to provide information that could help emergency workers understand the situation in advance of their arrival.
 - Elaine noted that the differentiation is important and that further clarification may be beneficial so residents understand the expectation of each registry. Although those registered with the Voluntary Registry are not usually contacted by DHS, staff members did outreach to registrants after the storm to check in. Further discussion on promoting the registries

and managing expectations may be warranted. Everyone was in the same boat during the storm. While many were understandably frustrated, those with legitimate medical needs requiring power and/or communication avenues were prioritized over those with available resources and natural supports.

- **Proposed P & Z Housing Text Amendment #781 - Changes** - Rick Redniss
Summary - Created Limited Language applying to Residence A & Town owned Buildings
 - CPD took issue of singling out “autism” and not other disabilities. At a previous meeting, they requested that the federal ADA definition be used. Marina and Jim worked with Rick to ensure that the amendment utilizes the broadest definition for disability.
 - Tentative P & Z hearing date is :Sept. 24th.
 - The underlined portion of the definition, is added, in an abundance of caution, to make certain as many are included as possible.
 - **“Special Need Individuals:** Persons that are blind, physically disabled, and/or have intellectual disabilities pursuant to Sections 1-1f and/or 1-1g, of the Connecticut General Statutes and/or persons with a disability/handicap pursuant to the Federal Fair Housing Act.”
 - Marina: “Handicap” word has fallen out of favor, but it is still used in Fair Housing Act, that is why it is included.
 - Jim Ross - in his absence wanted it read in: He votes in favor of this Amendment, doesn’t want any more limitations and votes in favor of the new text amendment language.
 - Dick L - Fills us in again on the history of his previous objection in regard to opening Town Land to availability.
 - A motion was made for the commission to consider supporting this amendment as reviewed in the form of a letter to the P & Z in favor of the text amendment. Vote: - All in Favor.
 - Elaine D. will draft a letter for review and edits, then send to CPD for final approval/signature
 - Helen G. - Appreciative of CPD support

Sal L.- Church Lane is to remain closed, let’s stay mindful, if it is hard on the disabled population.

Issues to be further addresses September Agenda -

The discussions in Hartford of Suspending IDEA for the term of COVID (Marina)
Special needs school issues - we need to get some perspective on how schools are handling issues, and let’s discuss Transition in the face of COVID.

Elaine D - maybe we can get a guest speaker

Adjourned 9:36am.