

**Westport Commission on People with Disabilities
Minutes of Meeting
Thursday February 18th, 2021 - 9:00am-10:30am
ZOOM MEETING MINUTES**

Attendance: Jim Ross - Chair, Marina Derman, Stacie Curran, Doug Rivkin, Diane Johnson, Tom Holleman, Joe Anastasi. Present from Human Services: Elaine Daignault, and Michelle Bottone
Audience who choose to identify: Sal Liccione, Tom Tarrant, and Deirdre from Human Services

Jim Ross -recap minutes: Joe A 1st, Tom H. 2nd - all in favor.

Elaine D. - Human Services recap - Things status que: serving couple hundred meals a week. Covid registration improving, more options available, Westport/Weston Bd of Health are a separate contracted agent, not a Town department. They are now permitted to use their system to help others, Human services will be trained on their service to assist in fielding calls and helping people navigate. Addition, work being done on providing transportation to vaccination sites for those who otherwise would not have access to vaccine.

We have capability to set up a mass-clinic in the SHS field house, if/when time comes that Town can obtain enough vaccinations. Three (3) town health districts work together: Westport, Weston, & Easton - and days get rotated for vaccinations.

VANS access# (877)918-2241 or Dial #221

Toquet Hall - being painted while closed (no planned re-opening)

Senior Center - presently used as vaccination clinic site and now, providing Tax filing assistance. Out of Town guests may access that help as well - appointments booked up.

Energy assistance - ongoing, many funds, donations, etc., to help people in need, if one avenue closed, they help open door for aid.

Announcement - Michelle Bottone is moving on, leaving the Department after 4 years of service. She has worked especially closely with the disability population. We Thank Michelle for all of her care and support and so closely working with disabled population. Many thanks to Michelle.

Town will be looking for someone, w/clinical experience, to replace Michelle's position. Michelle wants to add - contact your utility company directly first, and see if energy assistance can be made available there as first resort.

New categories/members for sub-meetings:

Housing & Transportation - Tom, Diane & Elaine

Employment, Education & Transition: - Joe, Stacie, Marina, Diane, & Jim

Physical/Mental - Jim, Doug & Tom

Community Connections -Joe, Doug & Stacie

State & Federal Issues - Marina & Michelle B

(ad hoc - others)

Discussion -

Elaine will get clarification on necessary notice, etc., if greater than three members have meeting - and Elaine will amend and re-send chart

Stacie C.- talked about Transition position for a full-time person to be added to BOE budget to create a Transition program in Westport. Elaine asked to be kept up on notices of these meeting to inform greater public who may not otherwise follow all meetings.

Updates on sub-committees:

Transportation & Housing:

Diane J. - Transportation -(WILL SEND NOTES D)

Housing - Diane - attended four-day conference - "Tipping Point" presentation for affordable housing. Can get more notes from Diane.

P & Z - is focused on smart ways to provide affordable housing in Town.

Elaine - Danielle Dobin Smith - Charing the committee, looking for Town to create flexibility for legalized apartments, etc., - create more affordable "stock".

Working with housing authority, and letter writing to try and purchase a piece of the salt/supply property, Post Road East, next to Walgreens, maybe some progress, but slow.

Moratorium points: We get an administrative percentage - and have been able to earmark that money to hire an affordable housing administrator - Ms. Crystal Brown will be tasked with keeping inventory on where we have housing available.

(Fairfield - just passed less restrictive accessory dwelling statues)

Diane - suggests avoid using the word "Character" when speaking of Town - for it suggested meaning implies one wishes things remain less diverse.

Marina - Suggests taking a look at FAVAR, further north - housing development for young adults, now signing leases - Diane & Tom may inquire further.

Employment: Joe A. - reports meetings were underway with DMA, setting up "Employment is for Everyone" - meetings put on hold due to Covid and will get back on track. Jim R - will forward upcoming meeting info from Library - transition speaker

Elaine D - will re-share the Day-Program meeting coming up Feb 24th 6-8pm

Mental Health & Wellness: - will schedule for next month

Communication/Community Integration - will schedule next month

Public comment:

Sal L. RTM member-sharing sidewalks are being considered for Maple Ave & Clapboard

(Elaine - it makes sense to sign ourselves up for meeting announcements)

Doug R - Thank you Diane J for the book Being Heumann, by Judith Heumann.

Meeting adjourned S-1st, D-2nd.