

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

Attendance: Diane Johnson (Chair for meeting) Marina Derman, Stacie Curran, Doug Rivkin, Tom Holleman, Joe Anastasi. Present from Human Services: Elaine Daignault, and Deirdre Eckholt. Absent - Jim Ross.

Audience who choose to identify: Sal Liccione, Tom Tarrant

Diane J **-motion to approve Feb 2021 minutes:** Marina-1st, Tom H. 2nd - all in favor.

Elaine D. - Human Services recap:

Elaine has begun a monthly DHS update via email:

1. Letter went out to Gov. Lamont's Vaccination Committee re: vaccinations for people with disabilities
2. DHS is part of the Town's COVID command team and receives info from the Health District which she will share and advocate when appropriate.
3. Food Insecurity: 70-80 people a week getting food boxes and meals. Anyone in need can call 341-1050, adults with disability may qualify for home delivery.
4. Town Hall - open with appointment only, no problems conducting regular business
5. Toquet & Sr. Center - remain closed - doing virtual programs, partnership tonight, w/Library for Melissa Bernstein's new book Lifelines. Follow Westport Together, DHS and the Center for Senior Activities for info on upcoming programs.
6. Energy assistance has been extended - DHS can help residents apply by appointment.
7. Camper-ship program – open for income qualified financial assistance. Contact DHS for details.
8. Unite CT- Temporary assistance/rental monies available for need. (3pm forum today), 2nd round of THRAP (temporary housing assistance program) may help residents. Go to state website for details or contact DHS for more information.
9. DHS has a job opening for a full-time social worker/disability advocate (Michelle's previous position)
10. Volunteer opportunities - Elaine will forward, and Commission spots to be filled (submit letter of Intent to Elaine and Selectman's office, email or call (203)341-1165)
11. Robust coalition on substance abuse, student survey out now - "womb to tomb"
12. Hello Neighbor - active program, can help with food assistance too (203)341-5037.
13. P & Z - considering modification to allow more bus shelters in town
Sal - (Discussion happening today at noon)
14. With 24-48hr notice, Westport Transit's Door to Door Service can assist transportation to vaccine appt. Contact DHS for details (203)341-1050

COMMISSION UPDATES:

- Transportation: - Door-to-Door - new Pay system, RMPAY - Town hall can help one with access if problems setting up pay.
- Housing: 136 Riverside, back on discussion, Rick Redness, working on 5 individual apartments, 41 Richmondville, another location.
- ARB (architectural Review Board) meeting to discuss 23rd March. will email & post FB
- Employment: Group cautious not to violate FOI acts, shared Michele Vitulich idea of designing a logo/sticker to brand in Employment/storefront windows they are Inclusive Employers. Logo design: Employment is for Everyone. All liked the idea, works well for presentations to Rotaries, DMA, as discussed while back with Jim Ross & Sharuna.
 - Discussion: Deidre: Sticker makes it easier to find employment, Elaine: maybe consider an employment fair down the road, it creates value to Business Partners with Employment is for Everyone.
 - Joe A - connected with Jessica Isaacs - of DMA - they are fully on board , and will give us space on their website.
 - Other helpful sites: American Job Centers. workplace.org, (can help with grants), Career resources.org, maybe Jen Tooker can be a help to open doors - Elaine will reach out.
 - Watch for new document - Employment Is For Everyone
 - Matt Mandel - Chamber of Commerce is on board
 - Diane J - RT made a film of working members - maybe can be used in elevator pitch.
 - Update on RT- Marina Opening around Apr. 9th, excited, lots to do. RT inclusive Model - if you know people looking, send our way.
 - Workplace Wednesday: Chapel Haven features a person in their work every Wed.
 - Elaine D. _ maybe we set up future meeting, call more organizations, swap idea, see who is doing what.
 - RT- Schedule - 4 night/week Apr & May. Summer months have to share with Levitt, Sept & Oct, return for 4 nights/week. Looking for volunteers and other help when sent outreach message.
- Health & Wellness: Doug R. will share summary sheet for what is helpful for him, visual impaired.
- Communication:
 - (Discussion)
 - Maybe each group needs its own social media.
 - Community Engagement - maybe we can bring groups together, find a place for social connections, (maybe Toquet)
 - Email will be sent again-webinar Mar. 30 Social connections - Stacie & Elaine attending
- Emergency Preparedness:
- Apr. Autism awareness Month -
 - Foti K. reached out about what WPD can do - Police getting a car wrapped Blue, autism month.

- (Discussion)
- many individual groups with areas of focus
- (Temple Grandin Film - could we get her as a speaker)
- We will use April as a launchpad to join: Car, Volunteer registry, photo opportunity, working with disability population.
- Fed & State advocacy:
 - Marina - Many new Bills now - She will email list.
 - Elaine talked with Town Attorney - to see how we could more quickly do letters support/ without all the red tape. See if a better way to respond to issues.
 - Discussion on Bill Senate process
 - Sal - It's Budget Season - speak up for your interests.
- Diane - Meeting Adjourned - Stacie 1st, Joe 2nd - All in favor - 10:20am Adjourned