

Human Services Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 18, 2014

Attendance:

Commission- Lynn Goldberg, Chairwoman; Yvonne Senturia; Robert Galan; and Bob Fatherley
Staff: Barbara Butler, Director and Sarah Heath, Assistant Director
Guest: Melissa Kane, Chair, Downtown Planning Committee

New Business:

The meeting opened by welcoming Melissa Kane, Chairman of the Downtown Planning Committee. She described the inclusive process that the Downtown Planning Committee has used to receive possible for input from Westport. The process included workshops, a charrette and a survey where an impressive 3,200 responses were returned. After sifting through the town input, she said the committee recognized three core values for the town plan which are retaining a small town character, maintaining an awareness of the river and preserving the unique aspects of Westport. The committee is waiting for a draft proposal from the firm with which it is working and will present this draft in an Open House on 12/17 where public comment will once again be solicited.

The Town Planning committee has been trying to look at everything from perspectives of both sustainability and economic feasibility. They began by looking at what Westport's downtown really is today and used feedback from their citizen interactions to try and improve it. The HSC was impressed with the process the Committee has used and thorough thoughtfulness it has shown.

Old Business:

Yvonne reported that the developer is interested in continuing with the Baron's South Proposal. The elements of the proposal are once again under review by the Baron's South Committee and First Selectman's office, and will hopefully be presented to the P and Z in a preliminary form for discussion before becoming an agenda item. Barbara reported that she is setting up a meeting with the First Selectman to advance the idea of a Commission on Disabilities which Jim Ross presented to us several meetings earlier.

Department Report:

All good. The Hales Court After -School Program is running on Mondays under the guidance of Darcy Hicks. They hope to continue it from January until May in 2016. The Child First Early Childhood Program has proven challenging in terms of coordinating pre-schools, Mid Fairfield Child Guidance and the Human Service Department, but is happening. The 18th Mental Health Breakfast was a success with very full attendance, an excellent topic (teen anxiety) and many good interactions among school teachers, guidance counsellors and private organizations. The Holiday Programs are in full swing with DHS trying to distribute approximately \$100 per client for over 400 individuals or 100 families. Several organizations are working to provide hot meals on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years to shut-ins while the Women's Club is mailing gift certificates to another segment of DHS clients.

The minutes were approved with Bob Galan making a motion to approve and Yvonne Senturia seconding. The meeting adjourned at 10:10.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn Goldberg
Chair