

**Westport Commission on People with Disabilities**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**Thursday June 15th, 2023- 9:00am**  
**IN PERSON - MEETING MINUTES**

**Attendance:** Sharuna Mahesh, Jim Ross - Chair, Doug Rivkin, Joe Anastasi, Stacie Curran. Phone: Diane Johnson.  
Guests: RTM-Harris Falk, Sal Liccione  
Human Services: Elaine Daignault, Kristen Witt, Kaila Morgan.

9:05am – Chair Jim Ross - Call to Order.  
Motion to approve Minutes - Sharuna 1st, Doug 2nd - All in favor

Affordable Housing – Continues to be a hot topic in Town with various local and state initiatives statewide. Legislators are debating Fair Share and Live Work Ride proposals that will have a lasting effect on local control of development. Outcomes won't be known until late June.

CPD looking to host guest speakers on housing and other hot topics this fall. (Elaine suggested Town Affordable Housing Administrator Crystal Brown and P & Z Deputy Director Michelle Perillie)

Fair Housing - Discussion

- Fair Housing rules mandate that the leasees and landlords/developers with deed restricted opportunities provide an Affordable Housing Plan to the Town. They must also spell out their efforts to properly post and inform candidates of available units.
- The Human Services Department helps to fund an Affordable Housing Administrator in the P & Z Department to coordinate and inform the Town of housing opportunities and to help ensure equal access, free from discrimination. To that end, Human Services is grateful to receive notice of opportunities and actively reaches out to clients and others on various distribution lists to inform and provide application assistance.
- It's a competitive process requiring the candidate to complete applications quickly while also providing necessary documentation to verify income eligibility.
- See this CT Judicial Branch link for more information on Fair Housing and Landlord/Tenant Law

Fair Rent Commissions – a new State Law mandates that any community over 25,000, needs to adopt an ordinance that create a Fair Rent Commission. Westport's RTM is currently developing an ordinance for consideration/vote this summer. The First Selectwoman's Office will make appointments once the ordinance is passed.

Discussion of Affordable Developments under consideration by the Town

- Will ask P & Z for an update on any new 8-30G applications since the moratorium expired and project already approved or under construction.
- Other ideas include zoning changes that would allow Cluster housing on Town Properties (Ex., Homes for Hope, The Linxweiller Building)

Commissioners are encouraged to attend the P & Z's Affordable Housing Subcommittee Meetings which are posted on the Town site. Elaine will try to forward notices when appropriate.

Human Services Department Update: (Kristen & Kaila)

- 220 Households received application assistance for the CT Energy Assistance Program through Human Services. Town Human Services staff provide local application assistance to residents and works with our regions "CAP" Agency "Alliance for Community Empowerment" who processes the state applications. They are located in Bridgeport.
  - Helped to realize \$134,000 State Funded Energy Assistance and supplemented with \$11,000 locally donated funds for those slightly above state guidelines or those vulnerable residents who required additional assistance after CEAP.
  - It's important to note that utility costs have increased this season, yet it was a relatively mild winter. Depending on future seasons, the combination of these local and state programs will continue to be paramount for income eligible residents.
- Briefly discussed the number of Senior and Disabled residents. DHS does have some statistics but many residents may not identify themselves as elderly or disabled and some may not have a financial need to these numbers do not provide a direct reflection of actual individuals fitting these categories.
- Elaine D., reports that the Sr. Center, Camperships, Grants, School supports, Gillespie Center renovations, Homelessness diversion Grant (\$1.2M up \$400,000) are on track thanks to donations and staff efforts.
- Grant Writing falls on individual departments within the Town. HS writes their own grants. It's the Selectwoman's office decision as to whether or not the Town establishes a position to develop grants.

CLUB203:

- Finishing first year of events tonight - Variety of Social events offered, Locations all around Town through the year. Tremendous thanks and appreciation for Elaine D., and Selectwoman's office.
- Doug R., appreciated to Open Space events, as did his son - need to move around.

E4E:

- 10 Postings
- 15 people did Job Seeker: Have MOCA, Michaels, Westport Bookshop, Nomade, Ffld Hunt Club, Black Bear Wine, Lululemon
- Kaila: Helps with Resumes, Interview Skills.

- Tarin: Is the new, part-time employee at Library to assist with job placement skills, resumes, etc., \_ maybe will get Tarrin in as guest speaker.
- Posting of Link - Added to Chamber of Commerce??, Downtown Association, Time to ask INDEED if we can add their postings to E4E, with a line/permission/waiver piece.
- CPD must continue to advocate for more postings.

New Business:

- Jim R: Disability Rights CT - has a Survey out - looking for people to share priorities - Jim encouraging us to go on it.
  - New State Law: Supported Decision Making: Guardianship, Conservatorship, Power of Attorney - School districts to bear the burden of educating not he topic begging at age 13. This will fall on Boards of Education - they need to start informing families. (part of Transition)
  - Our Judge Wexler - maybe we invite her back to a meeting.
- June 28th - Ryan Baylis - new social worker begins at HS - has Masters of Social Work.
- Good news of Transit front - Monies were approved to maintain program and Sal - says new Transit director is being named.

Meeting Adjourned - 10:12am - Joe 1st - Sharuna - 2nd - All In.