

Westport Commission on People with Disabilities
Minutes of Meeting
Thursday March 16th 2023- 9:00am
ZOOM MEETING MINUTES
Submitted by Stacie Curran

Attendance: Joe Anastasi, Diane Johnson, Doug Rivkin, Tom Holleman, Stacie Curran
From Human Services: Elaine Daignault, From Senior Services: Wendy Petty

Absent: Jim Ross, Sharuna Mahesh

Guests Identified: Jane Tarsy, Sal Liccione, Harris Falk,

Guest Speaker: Lori Cochran-Dougall - Westport Farmer's Market

Call to Order: 9:10am

Joe Anastasi to Chair: Motion to approve Minutes - February: Doug R-1st, Stacie C.-2nd.

Human Services Report - Elaine D

- Energy assistance will end in May, it's been a very busy year with residents seeking financial assistance for home heating and electric bills.
- The Town is in Budget Season – Human Services has gone through informal workshops. Next presentations are through Selectwoman's office to BOF for vote, then RTM for ratification.
- Human Services staffs four commissions: The Human Services Commission, Commission on People with Disabilities, The Westport Youth Commission, and the Commission for Senior Services. The HSC has been on hiatus since COVID and will reconvene with several new members. Diane J will from CPD has been co-appointed to HSC as overlay/merging commission work across all areas.

Guest Speaker: - Lori Cochran-Dougall, Executive Director of the Farmer's Market, resident & mom

- 18th year running Wspt. Farmers Market
- The Mission of the Market to support Farmers & Agriculture and enhance access to fresh foods
- Passionate advocate for farmers and the value added to our community.
- Hopes to continue to build community in an environment where guests slow down, talk with others
- Lori & Elaine briefly discussed access to state Farmer's Market Coupons. Westport gets a small allotment for seniors and individuals with disabilities who meet income criteria. The Westport Farmer's Market does not currently accept the state program coupon – Elaine hopes to work with Lori to figure out how/why Westport can't accept WIC/SNAP/Coupons per the Dept of Agriculture.
 - Patty Schulman - putting pressure on them now to get accepted at Wspt. Farmer's market
- Lori is vision is to be community-focused and to give back as much as possible. Examples include-
 - Education: "Get Growing" - focus on kids, art, fruits, veggies,
 - Partnerships with Homes for Hope
 - Additional programing: Senior Center programing, bundles for those food insecure, working with SHS Chef Gans, - keeping in mind importance of paying the Farmers & the Farmers give back - Food Rescue - gets all of the extra.
 - Gillespie Center Partnership, Sunrise Rotary Partnership, Shehan Center, - working with 8 girls this year, hoping to do a boys group next year - Cooking with chefs, all farmed food.
 - Another program: Homes For The Brave - stock their kitchen, bought new oven

- 14-woman beds in Bpt - getting them real plates, teaching them to cook with Chefs, making meals social, share stories.
- Overview of Farmer's Market location on Imperial Ave
 - Serve 3,000 people a week.
 - They have no running water, no access to restrooms, w/out Remarkable port-a-potties. Not ideal for sanitary food handling.
 - Lack of accessible ADA spots and electrical outlets for charging wheelchairs etc,
 - DPIC - is another meeting where some plans/discussions taking place for Imperial Lot Improvements
 - Meeting in April - with First Selectwoman to review Downtown Plan and Implementation Committee "DPIC" and future plans for location.
 - Discussion of Remarkable Theater –great partners, loves having the big screen here - enjoys working with Doug T. additionally tremendous support working with the Library, not as much Community support from Levitt - Levitt wants to charge Farmers Mkt \$500 a day to use the restrooms.
 - Discussion - Agenda Item to be added: Accessibility/Library & Levitt

Comments/Questions:

Stacie Q: In addition to Restrooms - any other accessibility issues for Farmer's market

A: Lori more handicap spots, near charging locations/for wheelchairs

Harris Falk: (RTM, Health & Human Services Committee) Levitt is Licensed by the Town. Says that the parking areas currently being addressed by Town include:

Parker Harding, Jessup, Imperial, Police Station - Being considered as a Community Center

May 11th – Westport Farmer's Market re-opens for the season.

Committee Reports:

E4E: JoeA.

- Elaine and Selectwoman Tooker met with Downtown Association and Chamber of Commerce to request true partnership and support for E4E to include a prominent spot on their websites and communication with members to encourage employment opportunities. Both parties were agreeable.
- Joe got Job postings from: LuLu Lemon & Nomade'
- New Push: Spring Into Employment - with Selectman's office support too
- Stacie & Joe - will meet Dave Fleet Feet to get another post

Motion to adjourn: 10:10am - Doug-1st, Stacie-2nd