

November 12, 2024

Commission for Senior Services

Regular Meeting Minutes, October 21, 2024

Attendance: Claudia Coplen, Diana (Wendy) Kleros, Merle Spiegel

Staff: Elaine Daignault, Wendy Petty, Kristen Witt

Commission Co-Chair Claudia Coplen called the meeting to order at 10:10 am, and the minutes from the September 16th meeting were approved with one small correction. There were no public comments on non-agenda items.

- Elaine Daignault, Human Services Director, reported that Human Services is working to obtain assistance with utilities for people just above state income levels of need. The Gillespie Center renovation is on budget and on time and is likely to open in mid-December. Elaine also reported that a Conference on Disability – co-sponsored by Human Services, the Commission on People with Disabilities, and the Connecticut Bureau of Rehabilitation Services – will be held at the Westport Library the following day, October 22.
- Wendy Petty, Senior Center Director, reported that the Center's team is finally complete. Volunteers will staff the desk on days when Stacey Curran is not working (Mondays and Thursdays). Joe Anastasi is working out well. The Club 203 bingo event hosted at the Center was most successful.
- Kristen Witt, LCSW Municipal Agent for Seniors/Senior Social Worker, said the upcoming flu clinics are offered by the Aspetuck Health District at WCSA and at their facility on Bayberry. AHD will also offer limited at-home vaccinations this year and will work with DHS to do outreach with homebound residents. AHD accepts limited insurances requiring review before scheduling at-home visits. She added that AHD previously had homebound nursing services prior to the Covid pandemic, at which time the Town contracted with Waveny Home Care and Hospice to offer this important service. AHD is exploring ways to bring this service back, but in the meantime, DHS is pleased with Waveny's offerings and continues to partner with AHD for resident programs and services. She mentioned that Mark Cooper of the Aspetuck District is retiring, and a search is under way

for his replacement. Kristen also said that the online Westport Journal will be doing a story on caregivers at the Senior Center.

- Elaine reported on the Affordable Housing Subcommittee meeting on October 16th, 2024. First Selectman Jennifer Tooker announced plans to utilize the buildings at Baron's South for affordable housing, noting that repurposing existing buildings is preferable to new builds, which add additional density to limited land resources. Elaine also noted that 122 Wilton Road recently opened as part of Homes with Hope Affordable Housing portfolio with 18n affordable units. It was greeted with town enthusiasm. Elaine added that there will be a public hearing on transportation planning to address the needs of people with intellectual or developmental issues. She sent the notice via email. The Town is also undergoing an ADA assessment of Town buildings in partnership with CCM (CT Conference of Municipalities). Wendy Petty observed that bathrooms at WCSA may need updating to accommodate people with disabilities, she will monitor opportunities to update bathrooms with automatic doors and flushers when appropriate.

Commissioner reports:

- There were no in-person Commissioner reports. Sarah Adair, Tree Board, was unable to attend the meeting but sent a report that 64 saplings (and Tree Board pencils) had been given away on October 5 at a celebration at Jesup Green. Tree information signs are being prepared for a number of parks in town, and they will provide scans so that people can read about the various trees online. Sarah added that a teen awareness group is coming to the Senior Center on October 25 to help clear the tulip garden of zinnias in preparation for planting tulips.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 am. The next meeting will be held on November 18, 2024.

Respectfully submitted, Merle Spiegel