



Town of Fairfield

MINUTES

TOWN OF FAIRFIELD

HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

June 24, 2010

A meeting of the Human Services Commission was held on Thursday, June 24, 2010, at 4:30 pm in the First Floor Conference Room in the Sullivan Independence Hall in Fairfield.

PRESENT: William Varga, Chairman; Phil Stein, Vice Chairman; Jennifer Hochberg, Secretary; and Doug DeFauw, Liaison to the Board of Health.

MEMBER OF PUBLIC: Helen D'Avanzo

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Chairman William Varga at 4:30 pm.

Due to the severe weather, many of the Commissioners were unable to attend this meeting; we therefore do not have a quorum and will be unable to vote on any of the issues discussed at this meeting.

GUEST SPEAKER: Mark S. Barnhart, Director/Office of Community & Economic Development

Mr. Barnhart stated he met recently with Stephen P. Grathwohl regarding residential development in the Town of Fairfield. Mr. Grathwohl is a principal in a property development company located in Fairfield County. Included in their conversation was the issue of the "density bonus" clause, Section 10.6.9, of the Fairfield zoning regulations. Mr. Grathwohl had planned on speaking at this meeting regarding this issue but was to do so and has said he would like to address this Commission at a later date. Mr. Barnhart explained that this clause, which has been on the books for the past twenty years, provides a bonus for contractors for building elderly/senior housing – but which is not necessarily **affordable** housing, noting that senior affordable housing in is less than ten percent in Fairfield. Mr. Barnhart further explained that there is no incentive for contractors to build "affordable housing". Mr. Barnhart discussed this issue at length and answered the Commissioners many questions. Mr. Barnhart feels this clause should be eliminated from the zoning regulations and has asked this Commissions support.

The Commissioners present expressed strong support for the elimination of Section 10.6.9 of the zoning regulations. A vote on this matter was tabled to the next meeting in September.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The approval of the minutes of the May 27th meeting was tabled to the next meeting in September.

FAIRFIELD SENIOR SERVICES:

Claire Grace, Director of the Fairfield Senior Center, was unable to attend this meeting. However, Ms. Grace did provide this Commission with a copy of the Fairfield Senior Center Statistical Report of the Fiscal Year 2009-2010 (Jan. 1 - March 31, 2010).

BOARD OF HEALTH LIAISON:

Commissioner Doug DeFauw reported there was nothing new to report at this time.

OLD BUSINESS:

The Commission briefly discussed the proposed visit to Parish Court and has decided to table the matter until the September meeting. There was no other old business to discuss at this time.

NEW BUSINESS:

Commissioner Doug DeFauw stated that he sent an e-mail to the publisher of the Senior Times in an effort to get mention of the Human Services Commission in the monthly newsletter. Mr. DeFauw explained that the Commission needs more exposure so that the town residents would know just what the Commission does. He has not yet received a reply. Mr. DeFauw spoke with Claire Grace about this matter and she indicated that an article regarding the Commission would appear in the July issue of the Senior Times.

Mr. DeFauw also suggested that the Commission hold a meeting at the Senior Center to discuss issues important to Seniors and could answer questions. Mr. DeFauw noted that Seniors over the age of 60 years represent 23.6% of the Town's population.

Mr. DeFauw mentioned that the Town has scheduled repair to the roof at the Senior Center for sometime next year. However, Mr. DeFauw expressed concern that the funds for the Town's new girl's softball team might be taken away from repairs scheduled for the Senior Center or from the walking trails behind the Senior Center. Mr. DeFauw referred to an article in the June 3rd Fairfield Minuteman regarding the girls softball team.

Commissioner Jennifer Hochberg advised that funding in the amount of \$350,000 has already been approved by the Finance Committee and that the RTM will be voting on a softball field. Ms. Hochberg noted that the RTM was meeting on Monday and indicated she may attend.

Helen D'Avanzo, a member of the public, spoke in favor of the girls softball team, Ms. D'Avanzo said it should not come down to '*Seniors v. Girls*', and said the Town should not take away the Seniors Walking Trails to pay for the girls softball. Ms. D'Avanzo suggested that members of the Human Services Commission attend all finance meetings and talk about the issues the Commission supports and which are important to the Town Seniors. Ms. D'Avanzo said it was imperative that the Commission be an advocate for important issues and should also send letters to the various committees.

Commissioner DeFauw stated Richard White advised that some repairs have been made to the Senior Center, including new lighting, and that he was waiting for partitions and toilets. Mr. White indicated he was preparing a Five-year plan which will include repairs to the roof at the Senior Center for next year. Mr. White said he will make his plan available to the Commission for review, but stressed the importance of the Seniors being involved or the plan will not pass. He said it was up to the Commission to get the Seniors involved in support of matters important to the Seniors.

Mr. DeFauw discussed his frustration with the scheduling of the RTM Subcommittee meetings, indicating he sent an e-mail to find out the when the next meeting would be but has not yet had a reply.

The Commission has scheduled the following matters for discussion at the September meeting:

1. Approval of minutes of May's meeting;
2. Elimination of Section 10.6.9 ("density bonus" clause) of the zoning regulations;
3. The Human Services Commission meeting at the Fairfield Senior Center (meeting will have to be sometime between the 12 noon and 3 pm);
4. Liaison to the RTM and Finance Committee;
5. Review news items for publication in the Senior Times;
6. Review new items for publication in the local papers;
7. Visit to Parish Court; and
8. Review policy of attachments to be mailed out with the minutes.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further items for discuss, the meeting adjourned at 5:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Constance Wadi, Recording Secretary