

TOWN OF FAIRFIELD
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
Thursday, December 16, 2010 at 4:30 p.m.
2nd Floor Conference Room
Independence Hall
Fairfield, CT

DRAFT MINUTES

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: William Varga, Chairman; Phil Stein, Vice-chair; Jennifer Hochberg, Secretary; Doug DeFauw, Board of Health Liaison; Terry Medlin; Elizabeth O'Connell, Joan Swanson, Al Vosburgh

COMMISSIONER ABSENT; Elizabeth O'Connell

ALSO PRESENT: Claire Grace, Director of Human & Social Services

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman William Varga called the meeting to order at 4:32 pm.

MINUTES: The minutes of the November 17, 2010 meeting were approved as presented.

GUEST SPEAKER: There was none at this meeting.

FAIRFIELD SENIOR SERVICES-Claire Grace

Ms. Grace said there would be a blood drive at the Center on Friday, December 17 from 1:30 to 6:15 p.m. She made a special request for O negative type blood donors.

Mr. DeFauw said that instead of a Medicare bus from the state arriving at the Center, seniors could have their questions and concerns addressed by personnel using the computer room capabilities. He said participants have until December 31, 2010 to make changes in their plans.

Ms. Grace said the Social Services Department had 'adopted' over 60 families that were in need this holiday season. Some community groups which then agreed to supply requested needs were the Unquowa School, New & Far, and many town departments. She said that overall there was a great response.

Ms. Grace said the Elderberries performed to acclaim at the Senior Center Christmas party on Wednesday.

Rich White and Ed McCourt are working on a 5-year plan for renovations at the Senior Center. Lynn Felner, an interior designer has agreed to contribute her services as advisor on design and color. Ms. Grace said the Center had received a donation of some paintings and that the colors in them would serve as the guidelines for future colors in walls, floors and furniture.

Ms. Grace said that Tom Talamini, newsletter editor, asked for assistance. Ron Atwater has volunteered to be the new editor. Mr. DeFauw asked if it could be made available on a wider basis. Ms. Grace said it could be put on the town web site.

BOARD OF HEALTH LIAISON; Doug DeFauw

Mr. DeFauw said 1900 flu shots had been given and that the department had 300 left. Those would be made available at no cost to area doctors.

A question was raised as to the presence of bedbugs in Fairfield and the identification and treatment of sites that might be affected. Mr. DeFauw said there is one known apartment building in town that has been identified as infested. He mentioned the difficulty of obtaining access to the units and treating them.

Mr. DeFauw said overcrowding in some off-campus student housing has been identified and that the Board of Health is working on the problem.

RTM LIAISON: Jennifer Hochberg

Ms. Hochberg said that a Senior Tax Relief amendment was approved at the November 22, 2010 meeting of the RTM. The changes will be effective in either March or April of 2011.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. DeFauw reported that Rich White said the toilet seat upgrade at the Senior Center should be completed this month. Ms. Grace said painting is being done now.

Mr. DeFauw said he had not received information on the housing waiting list from Ms. Gutierrez of the Fairfield Housing Authority. He said he had a question as to whether Fairfield residents had priority in the allotment of available units. Mr. Stein mentioned that at parish Court, a tenant acts as a liaison between the tenants and the Board and that this person is able to resolve some of the less sensitive problems that arise there.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Varga said the schedule of meetings for 2011 would be sent to Betsy Browne, Town Clerk. Ms. Hochberg said that at the next meeting each member would get a copy.

Mr. DeFauw said he had received a complaint that Roberts Rules of Order were not being strictly followed by the HSC: specifically, that the Guest Speaker was not identified in the public notice.

Mr. DeFauw said that going forward, the agenda would be available 3 days before the meeting in order to encourage public attendance and participation in the meetings. He said at the next meeting he would like to hear from each commissioner as to what their goals and specific areas of interest are, and what they are willing to do in the interim month to add to the HSC's work in progress. Ms. Hochberg suggested they submit names of potential speakers. She suggested a state legislator; Jim Himes or one of his assistants; Jerry Lombardo of the parks and Recreation Department; Mr. Atwater, the new editor of the newsletter. Ms. Hochberg suggested members attend the budget hearings. She said the Board of Finance would hold its first Saturday meeting in March. Mr. Medlin said he would like to find out what the seniors in Fairfield want for services. Ms. Grace said several surveys were done about 10 years ago.

Mr. DeFauw said he would like to make available an updated Directory of Services for seniors, including the availability of affordable housing. He suggests a subcommittee be formed to see what needs to be added. Ms. Grace will supply a copy of the existing document to the HSC.

Mr. DeFauw said the town web site has much useful information. Ms. Grace said she would speak to Jennifer in the Selectmen's office to see if an intern would be available to work on such a project. Mr. DeFauw said he would like to see samples of directories offered in other communities.

Mr. DeFauw asked if the Fire Department has a check list for smoke alarms and if there are methods the HSC can disseminate information to the seniors of the service offered by the department.

The meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, January 27, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,

Gretchen Goethner
Recording Secretary, Pro Tem