



Town of Fairfield

MINUTES

TOWN OF FAIRFIELD

HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

May 27, 2010

A meeting of the Human Services Commission was held on Thursday, May 27, 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; Doug DeFauw, Kathleen Howard, Elizabeth O'Connell, Joan Swanson and Albert Vosburgh.

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

GUEST SPEAKER: Richard White from the Department of Public Works, Town of Fairfield, spoke with the Commission regarding improvements to the Senior Center, which includes raising the toilets in the restrooms and bringing two main restrooms up to true ADA accessibility, improving the lighting in the cafeteria, upgrading the fire alarm system, replacement of one of the two boilers, and repair to the roof. Funding was approved by the RTM on May 24, 2010, for the boiler and the fire alarm system. However, repairs to the roof will have to wait a while - a budget request will be made in early 2011 to the Board of Finance.

It should be noted that Commissioner Doug DeFauw wrote a letter to the Board of Finance regarding the improvements to the Senior Center. Tom Flynn, Chief Operating Officer, replied to Mr. DeFauw and stated that the Board will look into the situation. Mr. DeFauw expressed concerns that Seniors' needs are not being recognized, and suggested that Seniors should be more involved with speaking up for the Senior Center. Mr. DeFauw felt that an article outlining the improvements to be made to the Senior Center should be in the Center's newsletter. Mr. DeFauw also suggested that a notice of Town meetings should be included in the Senior Center's newsletter. Mr. DeFauw further recommended carpooling to RTM and Board of Finance meetings.

Mr. DeFauw also expressed the fact that if *any* changes are to be made, then the Human Services Commission needs to make its presence known at Budget Hearings, noting that all interested Seniors should be present as well.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Joan Swanson moved to accept the minutes of the March 25, 2010, meeting as presented; Elizabeth O'Connell seconded the motion. The motion *passed* unanimously.

FAIRFIELD SENIOR SERVICES: Claire Grace, Director of the Fairfield Senior Center, was unable to attend this meeting; however, she did send to all Commission members a copy of the Fairfield Senior Center Statistical Report for the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2009-2010 (Jan. 1 - March 31, 2010). It was noted in her report, that the Senior Center assisted 299 Seniors with income tax forms, and 150 individuals with fuel assistance. Four new Elderhostel courses (one day-courses) were offered. A Defensive Driving course was offered to 146 participants, and Continuing Education offered various programs, including language, crafts, and bridge. Of particular note - The Census Bureau recruited, tested, and trained individuals for the 2010 Census at the Senior Center.

BOARD OF HEALTH LIAISON: Commissioner Doug DeFauw reported that the vendors' fee for local farmers markets this season was changed - each vendor will be charged \$150; the original charge was to be \$450 due to inspections, but vendors vocalized their concerns regarding the high vendor charge. The three farmer's markets in Fairfield are located in Greenfield Hills, the Brick Walk, and at the Fairfield Theater Company (FTC). Also, mosquito spraying has already started, but there will be less spraying this summer due to its budget being cut.

OLD BUSINESS: There was no old business to discuss at this time.

NEW BUSINESS: Commissioner DeFauw mentioned that Steve Grathwohl, Chairman of the Affordable Housing Commission, has asked for more support of the Human Services Commission, at Town Planning & Zoning meetings. One important factor regarding this is the "**density bonus**" clause, which was enacted twenty years ago by the town with no income limits attached. Mr. DeFauw explained: **If a developer was building 50 all-age related unit housing, the developer would be granted a bonus of 25 additional units above the zoning rule.** Mr. DeFauw further explained that Steve Grathwohl would like to change the zoning density bonus clause by bringing common sense and logic to the clause, and the way to accomplish this would be to add an income limit to the housing unit. Using the example of *Stoneridge*, Mr. DeFauw noted that it was granted a Density Bonus – further noting that not many seniors in Fairfield could afford a unit costing \$500,000 - \$750,000 as many seniors are on a fixed-income.

Chairman Bill Varga reported that he received a letter from the League of Women Voters regarding the following violations of this Commission: (1) the Town Charter states that the Human Services Commission should be holding meetings **ten** times a year (not five); and (2) Joseph Gall, who is presently on the RTM, is also a Commissioner with the Human Services Commission – Mr. Gall must, therefore, resign from this Commission and a replacement must to be found.

Commissioner DeFauw stated that to promote increased visibility, and to have an impact on matters affecting town Seniors, it was important for the Human Services Commission to meet more than five times a year. Mr. DeFauw made the following motion:

MOTION: Mr. DeFauw moved to have the Human Services Commission hold ten monthly meetings per year. Joan Swanson and Elizabeth O'Connell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Varga noted that Claire Grace would be notified of this change. The Commission plans to meet next on June 24, 2010 and will reserve a conference room for the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Chairman Varga to adjourn the meeting; Elizabeth O'Connell seconded the motion. The motion *passed* unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 5:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer A. Hochberg,
Secretary, Human Services Commission, Town of Fairfield
(Substituting for Constance Wadi, Recording Secretary)