



Town of Fairfield

HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

MINUTES

NOVEMBER 21, 2013

A meeting of the Human Services Commission was held on Thursday, November 21, 2013, at 4:00 p.m. in the Conference Room of the Fairfield Senior Center.

PRESENT: Commissioners: Selma Cohen, Chairman; Linda DeLorenzo, Vice Chairman; Marc Andre, Bruce Carter, Nancy Legare, Kevin Lennon, Joan Swanson, and Alida Ward

ALSO PRESENT: Teresa Giegengack, Director of Human and Social Services, Kristen Witt, Senior Services social worker.

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Selma Cohen at 4:00 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES -

Chairman Selma Cohen asked for a motion to approve the minutes July 24, 2013.

Commissioner Bruce Carter moved for approval of the minutes of the July 24, 2013, meeting as presented. Commissioner Kevin Lennon seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Chairman Selma Cohen asked for a motion to approve the minutes for October 24, 2013.

Commissioner Joan Swanson moved for approval of the minutes of the October 24, 2013, meeting with the following changes on page 3, under the heading 'Nominating Committee':

Correct the spelling of Commissioner Kevin Lennon's name to read as follows:

'Commissioner Kevin Lennon'

Commissioner Nancy Legare seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.**

2. GUEST SPEAKERS: Ms. Carol Martin and Peggy Ford/Fairfield Housing Authority.

Ms. Carol Martin, Executive Director of the Fairfield Housing Authority, discussed the shortage of affordable housing situation in the Town of Fairfield. Ms. Martin said some of the problems within the Town could be addressed by creating more affordable housing units. A copy of the proposed Redevelopment Plan for Pine Tree Apartments was distributed among the Commissioners. Pine Tree Apartments presently consists of ten buildings and has 38 units which are quite small and are not handicap accessible. The proposed plan for Pine Tree includes a total of 50 units with the new apartment buildings built on the present site, and will include one or two bedroom units that would meet the needs of the disabled.

Ms. Martin noted that while there are not enough affordable rental units in the Town of Fairfield, Sullivan-McKinley and Parish Court also have waiting lists of up to more than two years.

Commissioner Nancy Legare asked about the present tenants while the building is in progress. Ms. Martin said the tenants would be relocated. Commissioner Marc Andre questioned how the apartments would meet the needs of seniors and the disabled. Commissioner Kevin Lennon asked about the waiting list.

Ms. Martin noted that the 'Section 8' apartments at Pine Tree and Trefoil are available for persons who are 62 years or older, or disabled, and must meet income guidelines. For those eligible, the monthly rent is 30% of the adjusted gross income.

Ms. Martin said the Town's Planning & Zoning Commission was aware of the shortage of affordable housing units in the Town. Ms. Martin said the Fairfield Housing Authority wants to do more planning for more such units. Ms. Martin said she was asking for support of this Commission for the proposed redevelopment of the Pine Tree Apartments and for future plans. She said the support is needed at public hearings and asked the Commissioners to please come to the meetings.

Ms. Peggy Ford said she manages the Residential Services for the Fairfield Housing Authority. Ms. Ford said that it includes general case management and assistance, and referrals for counseling. Ms. Ford said she works with the Fairfield Social Services, Senior Center transportation services, and nutrition program. Staff social worker, Kristen Witt, also attended and noted the wonderful community partnership with the Housing Authority to help seniors.

After discussion, the Commission agreed to support the efforts of the Fairfield Housing Authority to create more affordable housing in the Town.

3. NEW BUSINESS -

Nominating Committee/Commission Officer Slate

The Nominating Committee met recently and decided on the following nominations:

Secretary: Marc Andre; Vice Chair: Bruce Carter; Chair: Selma Cohen

The Commission will vote on the nominations at the December 19th meeting.

4. OLD BUSINESS -

DHS Budget FY 14/15:

Ms. Terry Giegengack distributed a draft of the Budget Projection for the 2014-2015 General Fund Budget. This Schedule, prepared by the Department of Human and Social Services, was the non-salary portion of the proposed budget. Ms. Giegengack explained that this draft was presented for information only and that she expected to have the salary portion for the next meeting. The Commission will vote on the Budget at the December 21st meeting.

Community Focus Group:

Commissioner Linda DeLorenzo reported that the Community Focus Group for people with disabilities has had several meetings. Topics discussed included social and financial support, chemical sensitivity, handicap parking, Bridgeport Regional Services, adult daycare and community services. Ms. DeLorenzo said there is a need for more publicity, more forums and outreach programs for the town's seniors and people with disabilities.

5. DEPARTMENT UPDATE -

Heating Assistance:

Ms. Giegengack reported that the Human and Social Services is busy helping residents apply for heating assistance. Last year 198 Fairfield households applied for energy assistance.

Holiday Thanksgiving Programs:

Ms. Giegengack reported that the Senior Center has a new partnership with Goodwill Industries in Bridgeport to obtain holiday turkeys and food gifts for client families in need. The senior center participants are also expanding their collection of donated food items to include the Operation Hope food pantry in addition to the Bridgeport Salvation Army food pantry that the seniors have supported for several years.

Ms. Giegengack also reported that the Social Services has received many generous offers to adopt a family for Christmas and Hanukah– and there are at least 200 families in need that work with the staff social workers. Commission member, Nancy Legare, is volunteering to help as a Holiday Volunteer Coordinator.

MEMBERS OF PUBLIC:

Ms. Helen D'Avanzo briefly discussed public accessibility for the handicapped. She also thanked Ms. Giegengack for her efforts on behalf of the disabled, adding that she has seen many positive changes. She also thanked the Commission for all their hard work

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

CONSTANCE M. WADI
Recording Secretary

N.B. The next meeting of the Human Services Commission will be held on Thursday, December 19, 2013, in the meeting room of the Fairfield Senior Center at 4:00 p.m.

Minutes are subject to review, correction, and approval by the Human Services Commission.