

**Farmington Human Relations Commission**  
**February 6, 2017 Minutes**

Commission Members Present: Toni Berlandy, Ruth Grobe, Donna Mambrino, Christine Mergenthaler, Zalman Nakhimovsky

Town of Farmington: Dan Aparo and guest, Officer Jeff Murphy  
Amy Suffredini  
Laurie Mucciacciaro

State of Connecticut: None

Meeting called to order at 6:35pm by Ruth Grobe.

Welcome new member, Toni Berlandy. She has been married 30 years and has three grown children. She has lived in Farmington for years and works at Eversource. She is currently on the Eversource planning committee for the Special Olympics.

**Minutes:** Upon motion duly made by Christine Mergenthaler and seconded by Donna Mambrino the minutes of August 1, 2016 were accepted as written on a vote of 4-0-1.

**Update from Town Council:**

Amy Suffredini reported that the Gateway Commission has a master plan that will be going to TPZ. The land on Rt. 4 by the old Parson's dealership is private land but there is a review board if a builder is interested in building in the area. The Town will be guiding potential building in the area. All new construction will be required to follow universal design guidelines and accessibility guidelines. There is a grant that will pay for the sidewalks and etc. to be built wide enough to be accessible.

There will be some discussion about the 5 corners at the intersection of Route 6 and Birdseye Road in Farmington. The town is looking to improve the area. This is a new topic on the agenda. There is no need for a Human Relations Commission representative at this time.

A Committee has been meeting to explore options with regard to renovations at Farmington High School. The town is looking to make the project more cost effective than the options presented to date. At this point there isn't a need to have a Human Relations Commission member at the meetings regarding the high school. When it is appropriate for a representative to be there, Amy will let us know. Chris Mergenthaler recounted a bad experience when she attended a concert at the High School and was told that the only accessible restroom was in a janitor's closet; the janitor had to stand watch at the door until she was finished. Commission members agreed that this was an unacceptable situation, and Amy will contact the Chair of the Committee about the problem.

**Update from the Police Department:**

Please see the reports for Dunkin Donuts and McDonald's

### **Update from Community Services:**

In January, FCS made some renovations at the Staples House. All of the offices were painted and new carpeting was installed throughout the building.

We have two interns- Ashley Mills from the UCONN School of Social Work as well as Madison Smith from Central Connecticut State University.

Redetermination is coming up for Maple Village rent amounts and the Food Pantry. The Renter Rebate program will begin on April 1<sup>st</sup>. The Section VIII waitlist will be opening soon. At this time we do not have a date in place.

Nancy will be attending a conference this summer. The topic is Advancing Inclusion: Turning Us and Them into We: A Community Approach. Deborah Plummer will be leading the sessions. She is the Chief Diversity Officer at UMASS Medical School.

Last year Nancy looked at, impacted and consulted on 19 projects and their ADA compliance.

### **Accessibility Issues**

#### **Check in with Department of Public Works**

Ruth is interested in finding out who took Matt Blume's position at the Town Hall. Amy will see if anyone has been hired and report back to the Commission.

#### **Gateway Planning Process**

Please see Amy's report under Update from Town Council

#### **Problems with automatic doors at McDonalds**

On August 2<sup>nd</sup> Dan Aparo talked to McDonald's management about the doors. He explained to management that if there is an issue with children playing with the accessible door to call the Police Department. The PD can send over an officer to talk to the children delicately and explain to them why they shouldn't be playing with the doors. Ruth will check in with the New Horizons resident that originally mentioned the issue to see if they have had the issue since August.

#### **Problems with plowed snow at Dunkin Donuts**

The plowing company has been pushing snow into the curb cut where the ramp is so that it is not accessible. Dan will talk to the manager at Dunkin Donuts to resolve the issue. He will report back to the Commission.

#### **Fireman's Summer Carnival Issues**

A number of residents from New Horizons complained about the accessibility of the picnic tables at carnival. Ruth will contact Rich Higley, Chief at Tunxis Hose Fire Department, regarding the issue to see if something can be done to remedy the situation. There is also a problem with the sidewalk black top

being very uneven where it meets the grass. One NH resident suggested marking the grass with colored paint so that a path can be seen more clearly. At a previous meeting Matt Blume stated that the area where the carnival is may be slated for improvement by Centerplan,, thereby putting remediation on hold.

**Update on Citizens Coalition For Equal Access (CC=A) activities**

CC=A is working with UCONN Health to provide accessible health care that guarantees equality to everyone, especially those with disabilities. An Access and Accommodations Task Force is being developed. More information will be provided in the future as things progress.

When Amy announced that there will be an open house at the Farmington Valley Muslim Center from 1-3pm on 2/11/17, Chris pointed out that transportation is an issue for people with disabilities. CT Transit stops running buses at 5pm and Dial-A-Ride ends at 4-4:30pm and doesn't run on the weekends. The Freedom Ride program through Greater Hartford Transit may be an option. This issue will be brought up at the next meeting for further exploration of resources.

Ray Elling has not been feeling well. Chris sent around a card for everyone to sign.

**Meeting Schedule in 2017**

April 19, 2017

June 19, 2017

September 18, 2017

November 15, 2017 (At New Horizons)

Some meetings may be cancelled if there is nothing on the agenda.

Upon motion duly made by Christine Mergenthaler and seconded by Donna Mambrino the meeting was adjourned at 7:40pm on a vote of 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,  
Laurie Mucciacciaro, LCSW