

Office of Social Services  
Telephone (203) 834-6238  
Fax (203) 563-0172



TOWN HALL  
238 Danbury Road  
Wilton, CT 06897

**Wilton Social Services Commission  
Regular Meeting  
Thursday, October 10, 2019 at 6:00 PM  
Senior Center Lounge at Comstock Community Center**

**Present:** Michael O'Connell, Sarah Heath, Genevieve Eason, Pam Kelley, Deborah List, Danielle Mancuso, Judy Zucker

**Guest:** Carol Martin

1. Welcome

Mike welcomed everyone.

2. Acceptance of the September 12, 2019 meeting minutes

The minutes were accepted as distributed.

3. Special Guest: Carol Martin, Executive Director, Westport Housing Authority and Fairfield Housing Authority

Affordable Housing

- Housing challenges include:
  - Lack of diversity in housing stock
  - Residents' needs change across the lifespan
  - Gifted young people who were raised and educated in CT cannot afford to stay
  - Older people are economically displaced when they can no longer afford their homes (taxes, maintenance, utilities) and affordable options are lacking
- In the effort to create housing options for all, cradle to grave, the two greatest barriers are:
  - Land cost and location
  - Zoning regulations

- Although the state cannot provide as much money for affordable housing, there is still plenty of funding available. Communities can use federal dollars. Financing is not the biggest challenge.
- Affordable housing should serve many tiers of income, not just homeless people or people below the poverty level.
  - Fixed income
  - People with disabilities
  - Single adults with children
  - First year teachers, fire fighters, social workers, etc.
- The need for affordable housing is more prevalent in Fairfield County than other parts of the state, because of the gap between the median income and the cost of housing.

#### Housing Authorities

- Housing Authorities are governed by state statute. They are set up by the CEO of a municipality. In Wilton, the Board of Selectmen would authorize the creation of a housing authority or authorize another housing authority to operate in Wilton.
- Without a Housing Authority, who will move the effort forward? A Housing Authority actively works to identify and develop sites for affordable housing. Communities that have successfully built a diverse stock of affordable housing have an entity driving the conversation.
- A Housing Authority raises money through the real estate it owns and operates (collecting rent) and through federal grants. Housing Authorities can do certain things like issue bonds and seek lending. Housing Authorities are not funded by the towns in which they operate.
- The mission of a Housing Authority is to improve residents' quality of life. In addition to providing housing, they provide services (supports and referrals) to residents.

#### 4. Director's report

Sarah reviewed the September 2019 report that was previously submitted to Commissioners.

#### 5. Adjourn, 7:20 PM

Next meeting – November 14, 2019

Respectfully submitted,

Genevieve Eason  
Secretary