

# Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

**Commission Chairmen Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, January 15, 2015**  
**Colchester Town Hall – 7:00PM**  
**Meeting Room 1**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** First Selectman Stan Soby, Selectman Rosemary Coyle, Selectman Denise Mizla, Selectman Bill Curran, and Selectman Kurt Frantzen

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**1. Call to Order**

Selectman S. Soby called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**2. Commission Updates – Commission Chairs**

Christopher Bourque reported that the **Agriculture Commission** worked well with Planning & Zoning in finalizing the POCD. The commission is now putting together educational seminars. In February they will be doing a presentation on CSA, locally grown vegetables. Currently working with the Economic Development commission on a food processing hub with United Way to develop a plan. S. Soby commended Chris and the commission on all their hard work helping the Planning & Zoning form the regulations.

Stan Soby reported that the **Blight Commission** has not been meeting. His office is working on collecting information from other towns through CCMC, to see their overall plan and how they conduct enforcement.

Don Kennedy reported that the **Board of Education** has completed their strategic focus groups. The budget will be presented on Jan. 27<sup>th</sup>. Bacon has an Interim Principal, with hopes to hire a replacement in the spring. WJMS has hired an Interim Asst. Principal with hopes to fill the position soon. JJIS received an Arts & Education grant.

Rob Tarlov reported that the **Board of Finance** is working with Lockton Health Insurance on a new funding plan and to create a reserve to protect our exposure. Two budget sub-committees on communication before and after the budget has been formed. The budget survey is live and will be up for three weeks. Results will be posted in Feb. Met with town department heads to see long term plans for budget. Budget workshops will start in March, with public forums and hearings following.

Stan Soby stated that the **Chatham Board of Health** is still working on better communication and the town is busy with helping with that.

Gary Siddell reported that **Charter Review Commission** has completed going through the current charter section by section for review. They are looking for clarity gaps and then will focus on input from department heads. The commission plans to have a final product by the end of April for review. The commissions driving principle is the greatest impact of efficiency.

Gary Siddell reported that the **Commission on Aging** has completed their annual report (attached) and now will be working on strategic thinking for the commission. Completed a fundraiser that raised \$492. The next event in April will be a nutritionist speaking on special dietary needs for seniors, along with the social impact to seniors. Working on

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completing the commission bylaws. Created two sub-committees on physical requirements for the senior center and community outreach to connect with seniors. Working on obtaining grant funding for a software program called My Senior Center. The commission will create a blueprint on what needs the seniors have in relation to what the senior center should look like.

Stan Soby reported on the **Colchester Hayward Fire Department** officer re-election is complete. Chief Cox and Stan met with a consultant for the Fire Department Strategic Plan.

Rosemary Coyle reported that the **Open Space Advisory Committee** determined that the Gavire parcel that backs up to the state forest is not useable land. The committee recommended to the conservation commission that the town accept fee-in-lieu.

Stan Soby reported that the **Police Commission** received a significant amount of police officer applications. Many of these applicants have committed to the agility test.

Stephen Coyle reported on the **Sewer and Water Commission** (report attached)

Stan Soby reported that the **Zoning Board of Appeals** full board review granted an extension on the signage issue public hearing.

Merja Lehetinen reported on **Cable Advisory**, Norwich Advisory Board has granted the library with a kitty of money for a widescreen tv at the entryway to use for public announcements. A letter of request needs to be received by the Library Director. Guidance counselors need to be the representative to apply for the Comcast scholarship. Cable advisory regional council asked if the cable advisory would support legislation to tax internet customers for public access programming, although internet users are not able to receive public access programming. Stan Soby stated that taxation without representation would not be supported by the town. The transition from AT&T to Frontier has not been successful. Advised to watch cable bills in relation to an increase in late fees.

#### **WRITTEN REPORTS RECEIVED FROM THE FOLLOWING (attached):**

John Malsbenden regarding **Board of Assessment Appeals**  
Thomas Tyler regarding **Building Committee**  
Gary Siddell regarding **Commission on Aging** annual report  
Kim Russo regarding **Fair Rent Commission**  
Joe Mathieu regarding **Planning & Zoning Commission**  
Stephen Coyle regarding **Sewer & Water Commission**

#### **NO REPORT RECEIVED FROM THE FOLLOWING:**

Falk Von Plachecki regarding **Conservation Commission**  
Mary Ellen Mahoney regarding **Cragin Board of Trustees**  
James Ford regarding **Economic Development Commission**  
Daniel Henderson regarding **Ethics Commission**  
Avis Hull regarding **Friends of Cragin Library**  
Ellen Sharon regarding **Historic District Commission**  
Janet LaBella regarding **Housing Authority**  
Chris Ferrante regarding **Parks & Recreation Commission**  
Brenden Healy regarding **Police Retirement Board**  
Rosemary Coyle regarding **Senior Center Negotiating Committee**  
Gina Ebbeling regarding **Youth Services Advisory Board**

**3. Adjourn**

R. Coyle moved to adjourn the Commission Chair Meeting at 7:43 p.m., seconded by Denise Mizla. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted,

Tricia Dean  
Clerk

**Tricia Dean**

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**From:** John Malsbenden <malsbenden@sbcglobal.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 14, 2015 11:14 AM  
**To:** Tricia Dean  
**Subject:** Re: Commission Chair Meeting Reminder for 1/15/2015

Tricia,

The Board of Assessment Appeals had its last meeting in September. Its next meeting will be in either March or April when the new Grand List is finished. At that time the Board will hear all appeals on property assessment.

John F. Malsbenden  
Chair

On Wednesday, January 14, 2015 10:14 AM, Tricia Dean <[tdean@colchesterct.gov](mailto:tdean@colchesterct.gov)> wrote:

Good Morning,

Attached is the Commission Chairmen Meeting Agenda for Thursday, 1/15 meeting at 7pm. If you will not be able to attend, please send me an update to be included at the meeting by tomorrow, Thursday at 4pm.

Thank you,

**Tricia Dean**

Executive Assistant to the First Selectman

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## **WJJMS Building Committee Chairman's Report**

January 14, 2015

- Continued work with Tecton (architect) on developing three building options, costs, pros/cons, etc.
- Prepared for and participated in 12/10/14, Tri-Board meeting "check-in".
- Received briefing from NESDEC to better understand enrollment projections.
- Continued use of Facebook and Twitter accounts to assist with public communication.

### Future:

- Select one option to move forward with (1/22/15 Building Committee meeting).
- Present selected option to BOS, BOF and BOE at 2/5/15 Tri-board meeting.
- Seek guidance from BOS & BOF on referendum date.
- Continue to work on communicating project information.

## Colchester Commission on Aging

### Annual Report 2014

#### Introduction:

The needs for senior services are growing and will continue to grow over the next 2 decades. This backdrop is guiding the priorities and focus of the Commission on Aging. It is our hope that early awareness will assist in planning for the future, and that this report will serve as a vehicle to begin the discussion.

#### Objective:

The Commission on Aging has incorporated the requirement to produce an annual report as part of its bylaws. The goal is to promote more effective long and short term planning to address the needs of Colchester's senior population, and communicate the opinions and advice of the Commission with greater clarity. The Annual Report is produced along with a budget request for the coming fiscal year in conjunction with the budget plan submitted by our Director of Senior Services, Patty Watts.

#### Mission:

The purpose of the Commission shall be to review and analyze the needs and conditions of the elderly and aging in relation to housing, nutrition, employment, economic welfare, health, recreation, social services, transportation and other matters and problems of concern to the elderly. The Commission shall also plan, coordinate, develop and implement programs to meet the needs and to improve the conditions of the elderly and aging within the Town of Colchester and shall provide coordination and linkage of such plans and programs among existing services. The Commission shall act as an advocate for the elderly and aging and shall make recommendations from time to time to the Board of Selectmen.

#### 2014 Accomplishments:

- The Commission revised the Colchester Commission on Aging organizing ordinance in an effort to better align with how the Commission operates, and to remove obsolete requirements for membership in an effort to promote greater community activism. This was adopted by the Board of Selectmen, and achieved Town Meeting approval.
- The Commission has completed revisions to the operating Bylaws as part of the ongoing effort to align our operating principles with our actual operation and with the ordinance. This is currently before the Board of Selectmen for approval.
- The Commission completed the Senior Resource Guide for Colchester's senior population. This is currently available on the for the Commission's and the Senior Center's website. It has been printed, with copies distributed to many locations convenient to Colchester senior residents.

- The Commission has formed a sub-committee that is working with Patty Watts, the Director of Senior Services, to develop a Senior Center Policy & Procedure manual. The writing and implementation of this manual is a joint goal for both the Commission and our Senior Center Director.
- The Commission has recognized the need for a working budget to support our objectives. In keeping with past funding strategies, the COA raised funds through various fundraising programs. This year we raised \$492, with a current balance of \$142 after expenses. The Commission members also recognized that we will benefit by having a small town budget to cover planned operating expenses. The COA currently does not have a town funded budget and we are currently sharing a budget line with the Senior Center, but it is not an ideal method for managing funds. The proposed 2014-2015 COA budget is appended to this document.
- The Commission co-sponsored our first program of the year which focused on Elder Law, and is in the planning stage for a second program intended to meet the needs of Colchester Seniors. We have also created a plan that incorporates two events annually with the intent that it will complement the efforts of AARP, thus creating an education opportunity quarterly.
- The Commission has worked more closely with the Director of Senior Services to be an advocate for the Senior Center. Our goal is to attract new members to the Senior Center which acts as the hub for safety-net, health and wellness, and social services for Colchester seniors. We assist in distributing the Senior Center Newsletter, and posting events that brings people into the hub and creates awareness.
- In order to be effective advocates for Colchester Seniors, the Commission needs to increase visibility, be recognized by town residents, and focus on ways to achieve these goals. We have taken a first step by committing to getting information into the news at least quarterly, and have set a goal to increase that in 2015.
- The Commission has been focused on advocacy for a new Senior Center. This has taken a back seat to other more pressing initiatives, but will ramp up in 2015. Our goal is to insure that the need for investment in a new Senior Center is not lost and remains a planning priority for the town. The Commission has adopted a goal to help flesh out physical requirements for a facility that reflects a shared vision for the next 25 years. This is being considered in collaboration with the Director of Senior Services.

Issues:

- The Commission is focused on obtaining a small operating budget for 2014-2015 to support the Commission's goal to become a more effective resource and advocate for Colchester Seniors. Though the amount is small in relative terms, it will serve our goals to be an active partner on behalf of Colchester Seniors.
- The Commission currently has two member vacancies, and one alternate vacancy. We are anxious to attract new members who have the desire to contribute to the Commission's agenda.
- The Commission is working with Patty Watts to advocate for "My Senior Center" software implementation in 2015. As both the number of programs and attendance continue to expand at the Senior Center, we are concerned that the lack of available administrative time will limit the Center's ability to deliver services. We also see a growing need for more and better data to track a rapidly growing need for service.

Long Term Planning:

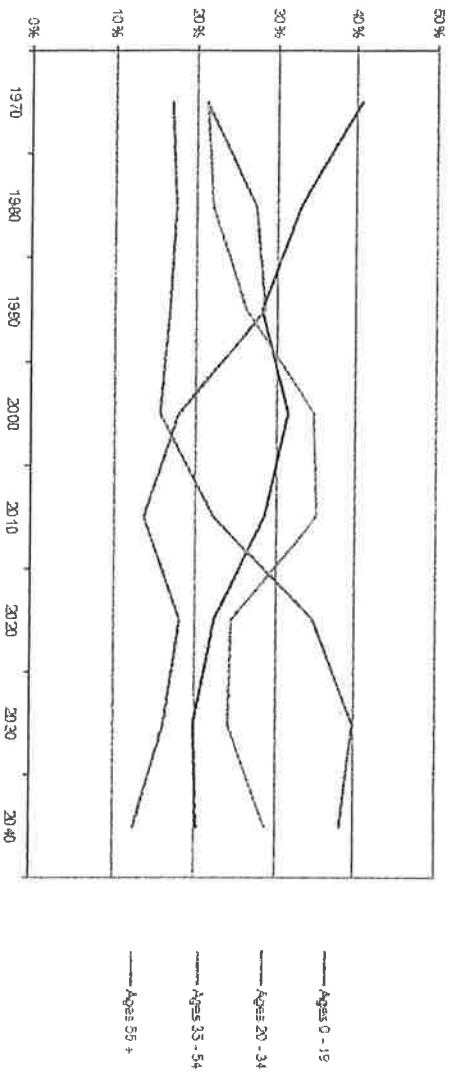
The Commission's long term planning takes a three-pronged strategic approach. These are our focused strategies:

- Awareness, education, and advocacy for the needs of a growing senior population
- Support, planning, and advocacy for a new Senior Center, critical as the hub for a growing population
- Economic Development links to business and services for the rapidly growing demographic segment

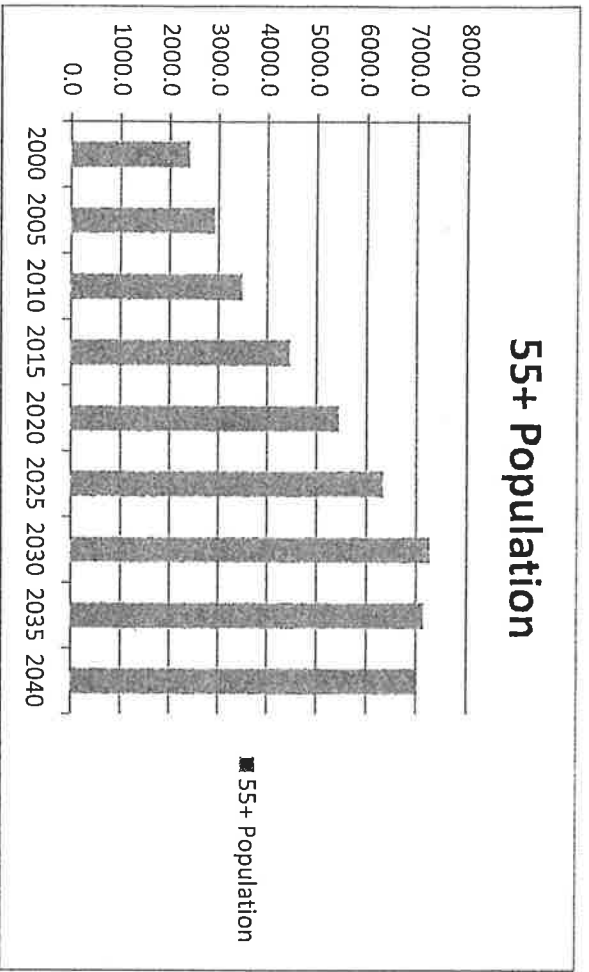
All of these strategies are based on the recognition that the senior population in Colchester is projected to grow rapidly, that our service utilization is growing rapidly, and that our current Senior Center facility is not adequate to keep pace with the growth.

Growth

Our Senior Population is expected to reach about 40% of Colchester's population by 2030, with state projections peaking in 2035. This translates into having over 7,000 seniors in Colchester in need of services. It also means a dramatic shift in the demographic profile for those voting, and a louder voice for funding from a finite town budget.







Current demand supports this rapid growth, and is an indicator that we must recognize this trend now.

	2013	2014	% Change
Attendance/Participation	12,158	12,928	+6.3%
Number of Program Sessions	1,309	1,832	+40.0%
Meals on Site	2,458	2,588	+5.3%
Medical Transportation	2,215	2,516	+13.6%
Non-Medical Transportation	9,007	10,203	+13.3%
Information & Referrals	3,971	5,065	+27.5%

Strategic Steps:

1. Awareness, education, and advocacy for the needs of a growing senior population
  - a. Create awareness within the various town Boards, and among the citizens of Colchester.
  - b. The Commission will continue our efforts for mass media publication, and use River East "Letters to the Editor" as a vehicle
  - c. We will take up discussion of having a "Facebook" page in 2015 as a way to extend our reach
2. Support, planning, and advocacy for a new Senior Center, critical as the hub for a growing population
  - a. Support the acquisition of the existing Senior Center building as a way to stabilize our immediate future.
  - b. Insure that the acquisition is part of a larger plan that is well communicated to the residents of Colchester
  - c. Advocate for support to address the most critical barriers in the existing building for the short term, parking being one of the most critical.
  - d. Work to better define the physical requirements for a new Senior Center that can be a foundation of basic needs. The Commission views this as a collaborative effort with the Director of Senior Services.
  - e. The Commission is open to exploring any combination of public and private collaboration to meet our planning needs.
3. Economic Development linkages to business and services for the rapidly growing demographic segment
  - a. The Commission plans to present to the Economic Development Commission in early 2015. The goal is to make them aware of the changing demographics and the potential we see for new businesses that support our senior population.
  - b. The Commission will continue to partner with the Connecticut Commission on Aging to seek opportunities for development that may have a more broad regional impact.
  - c. The Commission will continue to communicate with our State Representatives to advocate for resources that may serve our community.
  - d. The Commission will advocate for specific services to fulfill the needs of the senior citizens of Colchester, and therefore represent the greatest opportunity. Affordable transportation, both medical and those that support keeping residents in their homes, is a high priority. Access to a supplier for durable medical goods is also a missing resource that represents opportunity.

Summary:

The Colchester Commission on Aging has adopted a more active role in our community. We believe it is vital to keep the needs of our aging population in the consciousness of our government and community, and to the extent we are able to do that we will have been successful. Aging is a natural blessing that is not constrained by race, religion, or political leanings. We will continue to advocate for our grandparents, parents, and ultimately ourselves to make Colchester a recognized senior friendly community.

Colchester Commission on Aging

- Gary Siddell, Chair
- Jean Strawicki, Vice Chair
- Golder Liveant, Treasurer
- Rob Gustafson, Member
- Rose Levine, Member
- Susan Choma, Alternate Member

Budget 2014-2015:

Note: The budget for Clerk is being moved out of the Director of Senior Services budget and should be considered as budget neutral. Therefore, we are seeking only \$810 to supplement what we can accomplish through fund raising.

Commission on Aging				
Budget 2014-2015				
Town Clerk / Meetings	14: Meetings	\$60	\$	840.00
Lunch & Learn Programs	2 events	\$ 240	\$	480.00
Printing			\$	300.00
Communication/Postage			\$	30.00
			\$	1,650.00

12 Regular & 2 Special Meetings  
 Assumes TVCCA lunch (\$8 each/30 participants)  
 Assumes handouts, etc. for Lunch & Learn, Senior Resource Guide 2015 update

## Tricia Dean

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**From:** Kimberley Russo <KRusso@unitedwayinc.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 14, 2015 9:27 AM  
**To:** Tricia Dean  
**Subject:** January Chair Meeting

Tricia,

I will not be able to attend the Selectman meeting Thursday night. Below is my report on behalf of the Fair Rent Commission. If you need anything else, please let me know.

“The Fair Rent Commission continues to respond to requests for support regarding cases of fair rent although things have been very quiet lately. We still plan to connect with the Town’s IT Manager in order to discuss possibilities of adding some additional information to the Fair Rent Commission’s page on the Town’s website so that we can clarify our role, residency requirements and provide additional referral sources for individuals seeking support that we may not be able to provide such as 211.”

With respect to the last part, I cannot find the contact info for the person that handles the website. Can you send that to me so that I can contact him/her? I have been lax in getting this done. Thanks.

Kim

**Kimberley Russo / Director of Community Investment / United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut**  
30 Laurel Street / Hartford, CT 06106 / tel 860-493-1108 / fax 860-493-1199 / [krusso@unitedwayinc.org](mailto:krusso@unitedwayinc.org) / [unitedwayinc.org](http://unitedwayinc.org)

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**Tricia Dean**

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**From:** Mathieu, Joseph B (Middle Market + UW Support) <Joseph.Mathieu@thehartford.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 15, 2015 11:01 AM  
**To:** Tricia Dean  
**Cc:** Adam Turner; Stan Soby

Dear First Selectman Soby,

I am unable to attend this evening's Chairman's meeting so please accept the following brief update for the Planning and Zoning Commission.

- I am pleased to report that at our last meeting held on December 16<sup>th</sup>, the Commission unanimously voted to approve comprehensive revisions to our zoning regulations and zoning map. As you are aware, these amendments have been under consideration for some time now so the Commission is extremely pleased to have finally adopted them. We appreciate the support and insights provided by the Selectmen, Board Chairs and various members of our professional staff as we developed these regulations, and particularly want to acknowledge the time, effort, ingenuity and dedication of Adam, Gail and Randy in developing regulations that will positively shape our Town's future development.
- With the regulations approved, the Commission will now focus its efforts on completing the Plan of Conservation and Development. This project is on track and our consultant, Glen Chalder has made good progress in developing a preliminary draft of the Plan based on all the input gathered over the course of 2014. Glenn will be reviewing his work with the Commission at our next meeting on January 21<sup>st</sup> and I would encourage any Board Chairs who are interested in the Plan to attend that meeting and provide additional input.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joe Mathieu  
Chairman

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# Sewer and Water Commission – Chairman Report

January 15, 2015

1. Well 3A is a top priority. We are planning to submit our plans to the state this year. Initial estimates are in the \$180,000 range so we are planning a budget of \$250,000.
2. Bids for repair of the Water Spray park will be ready this month.
3. Joint facilities report – A contract has been signed to Mr. Susco on in a consulting capacity.
4. We discussed enhancements to the Charter Revision commission.