

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 3 PRIMROSE STREET, NEWTOWN, CT
WEDNESDAY, JULY 7, 2021**

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
MINUTES**

PRESENT: Jordana Bloom, Alison Plante, Ryan Knapp, Judit DeStefano, Paul Lundquist, Dan Wiedemann, Cathy Reiss, Andy Clure, Dan Honan

ABSENT: Chris Smith, Phil Carroll, Chris Eide

ALSO PRESENT: First Selectman Dan Rosenthal, 8 public, 1 press

CALL TO ORDER: This is a public hearing to hear comments on the possible enactment of the following proposed ordinance: Community Center Commission Ordinance. *See attachment A.* Mr. Lundquist called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:05 pm.

VOTER COMMENT: *Kinga Walsh, 21 Horseshoe Ridge Road, Sandy Hook* - As Community Center Committee Chair, she began by thanking the Council, Mr. Knapp and the entire Ordinance Sub-Committee, the First Selectman and Community Center Director Matt Ariniello. She commented that its success today is a testament to the mission that they have worked to create. She spoke on how hard they have all worked by advising the director on the center's workings, and to outline how they hope the future commission will continue to collaborate with the center to create a more enhanced user experience and long-term use. She also thanked all the organizations that have donated to date.

John S. Boccuzzi, Sr., 57 Queen Street, Newtown – Mr. Boccuzzi read a statement on behalf of Friends of Newtown Seniors (FONS). *See attachment B.* He added that the whole point of the charter is to establish processes that are sustainable and that will help to be a productive look to the future. He is in no way criticizing or commenting on present operations.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, Mr. Wiedemann moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:14 pm. Seconded by Mr. Knapp. All in favor.

*Respectfully submitted,
Rina Quijano, Clerk*

**THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
AT THE NEXT MEETING.**

Establishment

The Legislative Council of the Town of Newtown, pursuant to the power granted to it in Chapter 5 of the Newtown Charter, does hereby authorize the establishment of a Community Center Commission, to be hereinafter known as the Newtown Community Center Commission, which shall consist of seven members to be appointed as hereinafter provided and whose purpose and duties shall be as follows.

Commission Members

- A. The Commission shall consist of seven members who shall be appointed by the First Selectmen of the Town of Newtown with the approval of the Board of Selectmen and who shall serve without compensation.

- B. The initial members of said Commission shall be appointed for the following terms: two members to service until December 31, 2021, two members to serve until December 31, 2022, two members to serve until December 31, 2023, and one member to serve until December 31, 2024; thereafter, the successive terms of members shall be for a period of four years.

- C. The Board of Selectmen may remove any member for cause and shall fill all vacancies.

- D. The Commission shall elect a Chairman and Co-Chair from its membership and shall adopt rules of procedure for its meetings not contrary to the terms of this article. Election of officers will take place annually each January.

Purpose/Duties

The purpose of the Newtown Community Center Commission is to oversee the Community Center's operations. Specifically:

- A. To advise and support the Center's Director on areas related to membership, programming, rentals, capital improvement, fund raising, marketing, and strategic planning.

- B. To oversee and approve the Community Center's annual budgets with monthly reviews, rate/fee changes, and other financial operations both short and long term to ensure the GE grant's original intent is followed.

Staff

A. Based on the recommendation of the Community Center Director, the First Selectman shall have sole authority to employ such staff as may be necessary to properly supervise, maintain, and develop those areas of the Center's programming, function, structures, and equipment, provided that the cost shall be kept within the funds available in the Community Center Special Revenue Fund.

All final staffing decisions to be approved by the First Selectman.

B. All staff employed at the community center shall be Town of Newtown employees and shall follow/adhere to all Town policies.

Finances

A. The funds available to the Community Center Commission from gifts or bequests, dues, fees, charges and other revenue sources shall be placed in the custody of the Financial Director of the Town of Newtown, to be held, administered and disbursed by the Financial Director as part of, and through, the Community Center Special Revenue Fund, as authorized by the Legislative Council on June 6, 2018.

B. The Community Center Commission shall review and approve the Community Center Director's proposed annual budget. Budget line-item authority is under the purview of the Director along with the Commission with Commission majority approval needed for undesignated/unanticipated costs/expenses including capital expenses above \$50,000.00. An annual budget will be submitted for inclusion in the Town's annual budget as an exhibit for presentation purposes.

C. All accounting procedures, purchases and/or disbursements shall be governed by Town of Newtown policies.

D. Dues, Fees, and Charges

The Community Center Commission with the recommendation of the Community Center Director shall establish all dues, fees and charges related to member and non-member usage of the facility and all its parts.

E. CIP Inclusion

Major capital repairs and/or improvements meeting the threshold for inclusion in the Town's CIP plan shall follow the CIP plan process as set forth in The Charter of the Town of Newtown and The Town of Newtown Code Book.

F. In the event that a situation arises that creates conflict between this document and the Town Charter, the Town Charter language shall govern.

FRIENDS OF NEWTOWN SENIORS



July 7, 2021

I am John S. Boccuzzi Sr., 57 Queen Street Newtown, CT 06470.

I want to start by thanking the Legislative Council Ordinance Committee for listening to public comment on the proposed Community Center Commission Code Book Language

I am here as President of Friends of Newtown Seniors (FONS). FONS is an all-volunteer non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization which provides advocacy and services to Newtown Seniors.

The Senior Center and the Community Center both occupy the building at 8 Simpson Street. It is important to note that the mission statement positions the Community Center as "a multi-generational hub . . ." So FONS has a great deal of interest in both the Senior Center, the Community Center and the facility that houses them. We think the Community Center Commission Ordinance should explicitly acknowledge Newtown's seniors and both occupants of the building.

We have three recommendations for additions to the Code Book Language:

1. Under Commission Members Section A. There should be two Commission members appointed by the Commission on Aging (COA.) COA commissioners should be active Senior Center Members and at least one should also be a Community Center Member. To fully acknowledge these members, Section C would need to be modified so that if a COA appointee is removed that vacancy would be filled by a COA appointee.
2. Purpose/Duties. A new Section C should make the commission responsible for assuring that the autonomous use, functions and programs of the Senior Center and the specific needs of our senior population are considered during any planning for Community Center operations and programs.
3. In order to continue the well-established partnership between Human Services and the Community Center, the commission should be encouraged to seek the advice and counsel of the Director of Human Services on issues related to Community Center planning.

FONS is aware of the initiative and efforts of the Community Center Planning Committee and Community Center Committee in making decisions that affect and enhance the ability of the Senior Center facility to house appropriate senior programming. The Community Center Commission can and should embrace the features of an age friendly livable community for the benefit of all and we therefore respectfully request and recommend explicit senior membership and responsibilities on this new Commission.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration. *The whole point of a charter is not to record + codify what is, but to establish processes which assure a consistent, sustainable and productive approach for the future.*

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