

**TOWN OF TRUMBULL
CONNECTICUT**



Town Hall
5866 Main Street
Trumbull, Connecticut 06611

Commission on Aging Meeting
Friday, January 23, 2026
Council Chambers
2:00 pm

Present: Chairman Ron Foligno, Eve Rothbard, Linda Randall, Kathleen Bordelon, Mark Ryan, Paul McGahey and Evelyn Wiesner

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 pm by Mr. Foligno followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Past Minutes

Motion was made by Mr. McGahey to approve the minutes of December 12, 2025; seconded by Mr. Ryan and approved with an abstention from Ms. Bordelon.

Reports

Senior Center Report

No report.

Stern Village Report

No report.

Chairman's Report

Senior Center Update - Mr. Foligno read the following excerpt from the Capital Improvement Plan 2026 (Town Council agenda for February 2) regarding the Senior Center.

"New Facility Concept Development – Revised Building Plan, Site Evaluation & Schematic Design Study \$275,000 CY2026

Priscilla Place Existing Facility Modernization Study – Feasibility, Assessment, Renovation & Schematic Design \$225,000 CY2026

The Senior Center at Priscilla Place has reached the end of its lifecycle. We have two options to consider: first, we can renovate the existing facility to make it like new, or second, we can begin the process of designing and constructing a new facility. Major capital investments in the current building have been postponed, as we anticipated a positive outcome from the referendum. A substantial investment is required to modernize the facilities and support the programming studies developed by the building committee. Priscilla Place is an old school building constructed in 1920 and its layout poses challenges for today's programming and activities in a modern Senior Center. The building will require a thorough investigation to assess its structural deficiencies and identify corrective measures, while also reconfiguring larger open spaces. The second option will be to redesign a new facility, considering the Grace Church, Hardy Lane, and Priscilla Place sites. The first two have been thoroughly studied, and existing designs can be modified. The third Priscilla Place will require more focus, including a traffic study, demolition impact study and an environmental analysis."

Discussion was held regarding the two studies and the Commission's stand on the options. Mr. McGahey moved that the Commission take a vote to express its opinion in favor of a new Senior Center instead of a renovation. Seconded by Ms. Bordelon and approved unanimously. Mr. McGahey will draft a letter addressed to the Town Council for review at the next meeting.

Update on the Veteran's Center – There is a shortfall of approximately \$500,000-\$700,000. The Town may be funding this difference. If funding is received, construction will begin in the Spring with completion in seven to nine months. If the funding is not received, the Committee will review the drawings to scale back the building.

Senior Advocacy Programs – Discussion was held regarding a group in the State working to identify needs of seniors. Ms. Bordelon noted it is the beginning of putting together and strengthening the network of independent advocacy groups and volunteer groups mostly made up of senior centers across the state to building stronger advocacy to offer support and resources for the older population. This is conducted by Aging CT which is a federal level group comprised of the five Councils on Aging within the State.

Old Business

Concerns of and Concerns for Senior Citizens – no discussion.

New Business

COACT - Mr. McGahey and Mr. Ryan discussed COACT (Commission on Aging of CT), another advocacy group that is a 501(c)3, working with all the towns in the State and their respective Commissions on Aging to gather information on individual town senior needs. Mr. McGahey provided the initial virtual meeting minutes of COACT for inclusion in these minutes. After further discussion, Ms. Bordelon will research COACT and its relation to the Trumbull Commission on Aging. This group is attempting to be a guide and resource for the Commissions by consolidating information and sharing resources. The Commission will continue to participate in this valuable program. Mr. McGahey will send an email to the chairman of COACT to determine the distinction between COACT and Aging CT.

Property Tax Abatement - Mr. McGeary noted it came to his attention that the income level for abatement on property taxes in Trumbull is set at a maximum of \$70,000. This has not been raised in over ten years. He sent a letter to the First Selectman pointing out that fact. She responded that a number of senior topics are being addressed.

Next Meeting

Friday, February 27, 2026.

Adjournment

There being no further business, motion was made by Ms. Rothbard; seconded by Ms. Randall, to adjourn the meeting at 2:46 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Crandall
Clerk

The Commission on Aging of Connecticut (COACT) offered an online zoom meeting event for Commission on Aging members across the state on January 16, 2026.

98 people registered for the event, representing 58 towns. 66 people attended the zoom meeting.

The event began promptly at 3:00 pm. Alison Dvorak, Chair of Franklin COA, welcomed participants as they joined and offered assistance with any technical questions.

Participants were asked to enter their name, town and organization in the Chat.

Dr. Eric Rosenberg, Chair of East Hampton COA, provided a welcome and introduction of COACT as well as review of the agenda.

- COACT goal is to help the leaders and members of volunteer organizations in CT who serve older adults to achieve their missions more fully. For the purposes of this group, “COA,” means “volunteers who serve on a municipal board or commission whose mission is to serve older adults,” and similar nonprofit organizations founded by community leaders.
- Kickoff Webinar goal – to start to experience the joy and excitement of finding out what other COAs are doing, to start to explore more possibilities for your own group, to network, and start to pick up ideas about how to achieve more in your volunteer role.
- Agenda will be the discussion of the evolution of COACT, Polls of your interests in being here today, Breakout rooms for smaller group discussions on important topics led by other Steering committee members, and a wrap up summary so everyone hears about all of the discussions as well as sharing thoughts for our next steps.
- COACT History– 2 years ago, LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program) fuel money ran out in early January. Eric wrote to newspapers, posted on social media, contacted state elected officials, and reached out to several other COA Chairs that did the same. However, it was discovered that no comprehensive list of COA leaders existed. Working with the State, a project was started to identify older adult advocacy groups across the state, including COAs and other similar local groups of volunteers working to improve the lives of older adults in their town. Claire Cote of the Bureau of Aging and Michael Werner, the Legislature’s Lead Aging Policy Analyst, mentored two interns in polling Municipal Agents for the Elderly in each municipality to get the information, and they published it in November 2025. Although this was a great start, the database is incomplete; for many towns, the only contact information is for the Municipal Agent, and not anyone on a COA. Because the information is incomplete, we need your help to find more leaders and members of volunteer groups working to improve older adults’ lives. Along the way,

a steering committee gathered to discuss, convene, offer assistance and guidance to the feasibility and development of this gathering. Although we started with a focus on advocacy for older adults, we quickly realized many possible benefits of COAs working together - that sharing ideas could improve our ability to serve older adults in many ways such as sharing best practices, networking, and helping us all to achieve more more efficiently! Over many months, the Steering Committee decided to form a statewide group to support leaders and members of volunteer organizations that support older adults.

- COACT is NOT an organization of COAs, but of people serving on them. This will keep us nimble and avoid red tape. Later this year, we plan to form a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Meanwhile, we can share information and resources right now, and get the ball rolling!
- Aging CT, the unified name for the non-profit group of the 5 Area Agencies on Aging across the State, had offered many valuable resources to support and partner in our goals. Aging CT saw that we have similar missions to serve older adults, and that working together would create synergies for both groups. They are sharing website (an area of the Agingct.org website will be committed to reflect COACT partnership and important information and resources), email with large capacity (mailchimp), Webinar capability, and some access to their lobbyist firm.

The 1st Poll asked “What would you like to learn more about from a statewide perspective as a Commission on Aging or similar organization” with participants able to pick all that apply. Results (in rank order):

- Town/Municipal support: How to work with town leaders and other town organizations for budget and/or services that support aging. 36/53 (68%)
- Senior Center: Activities, Size, Use, Opportunities- what is the right fit? 36/53 (68%)
- Socialization: Keeping older adults engaged in life and community. 29/53 (55%)
- Housing: Assessing needs, inventory, affordability, accessibility and more. 25/53 (47%)
- Data Resources: Where to find good information for Census, statistics, and comparative data. 23/53 (43%)
- Legislative Advocacy: How to connect and impact State and Federal Legislators 19/53 (36%)
- Transportation: Assessing needs, inventory, capacity, affordability, accessibility. 16/53 (30%)

Participants were separated into Breakout Rooms for 20 minutes of discussion on 4 main topic areas with 2 Steering Members in each room to lead the conversation and take notes for reporting back to the whole group

1. Advocacy at the State, Federal and Municipal Level: (Leader: Chris Morren, Notetaker: Kathy Roby), 14 Attendees

The aspects of successful Advocacy include the following:

- a. Have a clear idea of what your end point goal
- b. Have a solid understanding of the “problem”/Service/Goal before you begin
- c. Do your research
- d. Bring forward any recent or new data/info in the presentation
- e. Be able to answer how/why it is doable?
- f. Be patient with everyone and respectful of opinions
- g. Bring new and/or summary information to hand out
- h. ALWAYS thank your audience at the beginning and the end

Examples of Advocacy efforts:

- a. The evolution of the “Essential Caregivers” Program Public Act 21-71: grew out of the issues from COVID in facilities, worked with Ombudsmen first and then with fed legislators-took 5 years but a final bill passed December 2025
- b. Granby looking at what local aid programs are needed to enable seniors to age in place, help to afford taxes/upkeep; working with town boards/gov’t to look at options, still in progress
- c. Guilford: a 1:1 program to reach out to seniors housebound due to age/disabilities . Started in Covid with obtaining funds for IPADS taken out to those at home with a 1:1 tutor, has continued for 6 yrs and now has a weekly Zoom social group
- d. Resource Manual to connect folks to what they need. Here is an example from Windsor: <https://www.windsorct.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2188/Senior-Resource-Booklet-PDF?bId=>

2. Supportive Services: Housing, Transportation, Food Security, Financial Concerns (Leader: Eric Rosenberg, Notetaker: Joan Marshall), 18 attendees.

Service issue that needs attention:

- Reaching Shut ins and people who don’t access services
- Lack of Town Support

- Housing specifically for Seniors
- Mental Health Services for Seniors

How to address:

- Handwritten notes mailed to people with info about resources (one town wrote over 500 notes to shut-ins during Covid)
- Celebrations for 90+ to try and bring people out
- Newsletter using the voter registration list
- Collaboration with police and 911 responders – they know the people who reach out with recurring issues (ex Stonington)
- Volunteers to outreach and assist people
- Friendly visitor program
- Collaboration with other town departments
- Collaboration with a Social Worker housed in the police department (ex Branford)
- Outreach through as many methods/vehicles as possible.
- Educating town leaders -Advocacy by people who do use senior services
- Highlight the differences between 'low income' and 'senior' housing
- Learn about the housing development process and advocate for senior housing
- Educate providers about the specific mental health needs of the older population

What is being done well:

Many towns reported new, welcoming and thriving senior centers with lots of services.

3. Data: what exists, how to access, how to survey our population needs (Leader: Peggy Golfin, Notetaker: Sandy Waldo), Approximately 13 attendees
Introduction to utilizing data collected regarding population growth and evolving related needs and utilization of data related to studying specific issues ie housing and Senior Center (SC) needs etc..

Discussion opened with questions related to data: what exists, how to access, how to survey our population needs.

- a. West Hartford – Age Friendly Community program currently underway. 22% increase in over 60 age group housing issue specific to "missing middle housing", seniors wishing to downsize to smaller two bedroom homes finding it difficult as minimum types of housing are available. Another successful

project there is the condo project with two bedrooms is currently underway. Peggy responded with house bill # 8002 in legislation currently that may ease this situation.

b. Easton – data obtained through survey in 2018 regarding housing sent to seniors by senior council. (example survey is available to share if needed) Results #1 choice- remain in their current homes age in place. #2 move to live with family out of state if need be. #3 granny pod or live in apartments added to existing family homes. Problem identified in their area watershed region exists, limiting development and building.

Question posed – how much money is spent on seniors as compared to other towns Connecticut data.org. Most often town budgets identify expenses in other ways i.e. transportation not specific to “seniors”. Using this data to compare with other towns, to support discussion around requests and needs for seniors. Some towns (Meriden and Wallingford) identified the goal being establishment of new Senior centers in their town. Colchester Connecticut new Sr Center was mentioned as an example of how to achieve this goal suggestion made to those towns to tour that facility and meet with leaders to brainstorm and get ideas as to how this was achieved.

Question posed –SNAP benefits discontinued – how many seniors are depending on these benefits? lack of data. Available data select, determined that in comparison to pre-and post Covid, poverty levels in seniors went from 2% to 9%. West Hartford – surveys of seniors at the senior center were done there relating to the issue of housing - should I stay or go? Our commission on aging in (COA) is one of ADVOCACY, this was stressed.

Leader made a last comment regarding a Flash Vote, which was done in Marlborough in April and they have used that successfully in town government to survey seniors. It is a quick way to get a feel for the response and it's not expensive.

Peggy shared this resource list:

SOME DATA SOURCES

Healthy Aging Data Reports: healthyagingdatareports.org/ct/ct-community-profiles/

Connecticut Data Collaborative: ctdata.org/

CT Office of Policy and Management (OPM): portal.ct.gov/opp

CT Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS): portal.ct.gov/ads

CT Department of Public Health (DPH): portal.ct.gov/dph

CT Department of Social Services (DSS): portal.ct.gov/dss

U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey: census.gov

Partnership for Strong Communities:

<https://housingprofiles.pschousing.org/profile/#Marlborough>

Area Agencies on Aging (AAA): links are at agingct.org

CT DataHaven: ctdatahaven.org

Connecticut Association Of Senior Center Personnel (CASC): caspc.net

4. Building for the Future: Senior Centers, Housing, Grants, Funding sources (Leader: Peter Eder, Notetaker: Gary James Kelly), Approximately 17 attendees.

We had active discussions primarily centered on senior centers and housing. Below are the questions and comments:

- HB 8002 was discussed regarding the recommendation of affordable housing. Comments were made on how the bill does not specify how much of the funds are spent on the workforce percentage versus senior housing needs. Several noted that they seem to favor the workforce over seniors. It was suggested that there are better tax advantages for workforce initiatives.
- Another comment was that each town must have 10% of affordable housing available. A question was asked about whether available housing has income restrictions, and a response was yes, along with market value considerations. One town uses adjusted mean income levels, while another uses area-adjusted mean income levels.
- One town noted there was a 2-year waiting list for senior housing. In that town, they claimed there was no land available, but the COA took an active part and suggested that a school, vacant for over 10 years, could be used for such a purpose. The COA took an active part in negotiations, and the town recognized their skills and talents in achieving this.
- One participant asked which towns have Planning and Zoning considerations for senior housing. It was stated that South Windsor has this.

- One large town was told that the cost of building a new senior center was not even under consideration due to its prohibitive costs.
- Comments were made on how many seniors wished to downsize their living quarters now that the family has been raised, and they require much less room.

2nd Poll for feedback on how you prefer to receive or find out information, ranked in order as Best to Worst

	BEST	OK	WORST
email	38 (90%)	4 (10%)	0 (0%)
webinar or in person conference	20 (51%)	18 (46%)	1 (3%)
meeting with people in person or via zoom type platform	19 (48%)	21 (53%)	0 (0%)
website search	8 (21%)	18 (46%)	13 (33%)
from legislator or town leader	5 (13%)	26 (68%)	7 (18%)
social media	5 (13%)	15 (39%)	18 (47%)
phone or text	4 (11%)	18 (47%)	16 (42%)
regular mail	4 (11%)	11 (29%)	23 (61%)

Wrap up discussion led by Eric Rosenberg who thanked everyone for joining and noted that we will be contacting everyone that registered for the event as soon as possible with the summary notes and additional information about COACT membership and future plans. Request to all to help spread our contact information. Participants encouraged to review the agingct.org website and consider signing up for their quarterly newsletter and other updates. Mark your calendars for the annual AgingCT Aging and Disability Summit on Tuesday, October 6, 2026 for excellent speakers and an opportunity for statewide in-person networking.

COACT will be scheduling deeper dive small meetings on individual topics we discussed today.

Please reply to the email that will be sent to you so that you can officially “opt in” to receiving information from us going forward, including invitation to future meetings and events.

Thank you again for being here today. More importantly, thank you for the work you do in your community to help older adults in Connecticut age with dignity.

Steering Committee members stayed on the zoom for an additional 15 minutes to talk with participants and further to discuss next steps and planning.

Respectfully submitted as a compilation of notes, Alison Dvorak