BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE

There was a special meeting for the above referenced subcommittee held at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 11, 2021 via Zoom meeting.

Present were: Councilor Danielle Wong, Chair, Mayor Suzette DeBeatham, Councilor C.F. Politis (in at 6:10 p.m.)

Also present were: Philip K. Schenck, Jr., Interim Town Manager, Camilla Hillian, Director of Social & Youth Services, David Melesko, Director of Leisure Services and Sharon Mann, Bloomfield Beautification Committee, Chair, Marianne Horn, Conservation, Energy and Environment Committee, Chair, Gail Nolan, ABC Coordinator and India Rodgers, Clerk of Council

Absent were: Councilor Stephanie Calhoun and Yvette Huyghue-Pannell, Director of Senior Services

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

Report from Town Staff and Committee Chairs

Social & Youth Services

Mrs. Camilla Hillian, Director of Social and Youth Services provided a status report of Social & Youth Services programs and services.

A.L.I.C.E. Challenge Grant

The Town of Bloomfield was awarded a $20,000 grant from the United Way to assist Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (A.L.I.C.E.) families with social service programming in the community such as: Rental/Mortgage Assistance, Translation Services, Summer Camp financial assistance, Senior Services Mini-Bus transportation and Meals on Wheels initiatives for seniors.

The department also received another grant from United Way for Emergency Food and Shelter Program (ESFP). This grant will be utilize to assist families with rent/mortgage assistance as well as provide funding to address food insecurities.

Social Services Programming

- Energy Assistance – Community Renewal Team (CRT) and Operation Fuel
- Access Health Application Deadline has been extended for Special Enrollment (February 15th – March 15th)
- Renter’s Rebate will begin on April 1, 2021 – October 1, 2021. Applicants can continue Social & Youth Services for more information.

Youth Services Programming

The department has been creative in reinventing programs that we provide with some virtual and small group activities such as:

- Police and Youth Group
- CAMS After School Virtual Program  
  (This program provides enrichment, leadership, mental health support services and parent workshops)
- Sunbeams Girls Group
- Project 330 LIT (Leaders in Training), formerly Youth Action Club
- Tribe Young Men’s Group
- Life skills – Co-Ed (Job seeking, financial budgeting, cooking, car/home maintenance)
- Summer Youth Employment Program – applying for FY 2021 grant to provide summer job sites to youth ages 15-17 in collaboration with Capital Workforce Partners. Youth Services would also like to expand to work with local businesses in the community.

**Leisure Services**

Mr. David Melesko, Director of Leisure Services provided a status report of Leisure Services programs and services.

The Summer Concert Series sponsorship letters had been sent out. The new location on Rockwell Avenue averaged 300 people per concert versus the Town Center of 125 people per concert.

During the months of November, December and January, daytime paint parties were held in collaboration with Senior Services, Tie Dye, Junior Legos, Fun Fridays, Vision Board workshop and other special events.

Limited classes are being held per Governor Lamont’s Executive Orders related to social distancing guidelines. Mr. Melesko reported standard programming for Night ball and Pickle ball groups.

Recruitment is underway for summer hiring. There will be three camp programs offered this summer, Lil Rec’ers (5-6 years), Rebel Rec’ers (7-9) and the Rec’ing Crew (10-13). In addition, a new drop-in program will be offered at the municipal pool and pavilion areas.

Carmen Arace Middle School partnered with Leisure and Social & Youth Services with the Bloomfield Board of Education to provide enrichment programming for middle school youth. The program will be offered virtually Wednesday – Friday via Zoom with Mr. Matthew Rivera (Dream Catchers Academy).

Mr. Melesko also reported a successful event held at Town Hall, the Presidential Inauguration COVID-19 Remembrance Event.

The Wintonbury Land Trust is offering nature virtual programs and webinars on a monthly basis.

The Beautification Committee have been working in collaboration with DPW to identify tree locations at certain parks.

Mr. Melesko stated that the operating budget has been completed for the department. He mentioned applying and receiving a grant for the NCRS drainage project at Lisa Lane.

The department has been working and planning for the 3rd Black Lives Matter (Martin Luther King, Jr.) mural location in Town.
Several Public Service Announcements have been completed relating to the COVID-19 vaccination shots. A promotion campaign on the benefits of receiving the vaccine will be presented by Mr. Donald Harris and Mr. Tony Harrington. Information will continue to circulate on how to get COVID-19 updates.

Discussion

Councilor Wong inquired about how many languages will the Social & Youth Services translation services offer? The Board of Education provided a list of the most popular languages that they utilize for student services. There are approximately 75 students, 11 different languages within the Bloomfield school district for translation services.

Councilor Politis thanked staff for going above and beyond for the Bloomfield community during this pandemic. He inquired about information regarding the status of the Municipal Pool for this summer. He expressed concerns regarding the dilapidated Wading Pool. This item is listed for Capital Improvement dollars in the proposed FY 2021/2022 budget. The pool will open this summer and sign-ups will be available for specific time slots to reduce overcrowding.

CEEC

Mrs. Marianne “Charlie” Horn is the Chair of the Conservation, Energy and Environment Committee”. Mrs. Horn stated that the CEEC engages in a wide variety of projects and education initiatives aimed at improving and conserving the environmental quality of life.

The Committee is in the process of prioritizing projects and reviewing the following initiatives:
(See attached project report)
- Trees in Bloomfield
- Recycling/Composting/Solid Waste Management
- Home Energy Solutions (HES)
- Solar panels on Municipal Buildings
- Large Scale Solar Siting
- Electric School Bus
- Energy tracking
- Educational programs related to Clean Energy and Energy Transition

Discussion

Mrs. Mann inquired about the “Pay as you go Garage” discussion. This discussion will focus on identifying a productive way to get solid waste reduced in Town. Mrs. Horn indicated that it is more difficult to make this work with residents are being charged taxes for having their garbage picked up and then charged another tax and having to pay for bags as you go under this program.

Councilor Wong asked if there is a way to acquire comparative data to the energy tracking energy system utilized by the Town in other towns if they’re using that as well.
Mr. Philip K. Schenck, Jr., Interim Town Manager indicated that town and municipal buildings in Bloomfield and other towns are different in size with many variables to compare.

** Beautification Committee **

Mrs. Sharon Mann, Chair of the Bloomfield Beautification Committee has been working very hard to do things that makes the town look beautiful, so that people feel good and for the residents that live here. The Committee has been continuously in all of the town parks throughout the community.

The Beautification Committee has planted all the town garden spaces with careful attention to the COVID-19 Crisis. (See attached the Beautification activities for months October, November December and January).

Mrs. Mann also mentioned other collaborative programs the Wintonbury Land Trust and Leisure Services now through August 2021 such as, the Nature Lecture Services webinars

She noted that fall decorations have been installed at the Town Hall entrance.

The Notable Landscape Awards were presented to residents and local businesses. The Committee received 100 nominations of which 37 awards were issued to residents and 5 for local businesses.

On May 24, 2021, there will be a lecture on the “Value of Trees” with Mr. John Kehoe, Arborist. There will also be a tree planting workshop provided to support “Trees for Bloomfield” on Arbor Day, April 30, 2021.

** Family Resource Center (FRC) **

Mrs. Gail Nolan, Director of the Family Resource Center gave a brief status report of FRC activities.

The Family Resource Center received a grant for the Diaper Bank. In collaboration with Social & Youth Services, the FRC will provide diapers to individuals in need.

The FRC have hosted the following programs to residents, providers and the community:
- Home Daycare Provider Group
- Mommy & Me Playgroup – new families have joined
- CT Cares Grant – Office of Early Childhood
- Basic Human Needs Grant – Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
- Fatherhood Program
- School Readiness Program

** Discussion regarding Bill Lee Fields – Cost Estimate for Possible Referendum **

Mr. Melesko reported that the Town is moving forward with the Athletic Fields/Park Improvements Study Plan. As a part of the 5 year Capital Improvement Plan, $500,000 was set for FY 2023/2024 as a budget placeholder for implementation of the plan.

There ensued a detailed discussion regarding the Bill Lee fields and plans for the park. There are several areas that need to be consider such as:
- Solicitation of community involvement to gather cost estimates
- Follow the active plan in place for Athletic and Park Improvement plans
- Engage professionals (landscape architect, engineering)
- Athletic Field usage

Public Comments

1. **Councilor Kevin Gough, 5 Bear Ridge Road** commended town staff and volunteers serving on town committees and working in town departments. He also commented on the lack of strategic thinking relative to the athletic fields at the Board of Education capital plans for restoration.

2. **Lynette Easmon, 8 Jackson Road** inquired about the overall condition and vandalism that occurred at the Oliver Filley House.

Adjournment

It was moved by Councilor Wong, seconded by Councilor Calhoun to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m.