NEWS

"It is the sun shining on the rain and the rain falling on the sunshine..."
THE SECRET GARDEN FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT

Downtown volunteer group reconvenes after eight-month hiatus

BY JESSICA HICKLE
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

For the first time in eight months, New Haven's Downtown-Wooster Square Community Management Team met Tuesday evening at City Hall — this time, with Rhea McTiernan Huge '27 at the helm.

At least 30 local residents attended the meeting — including alders, police officers and staff from the New Haven Free Public Library and the Yale Office of New Haven Affairs — and discussed a range of topics. Public safety and cleanliness issues were among the most common concerns, and some residents expressed worry that problems could worsen as the weather turns warmer.



JESSICA HICKLE / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER
Rhea McTiernan Huge '27, who once campaigned to represent downtown on the Board of Alders, led the effort to revitalize New Haven's Downtown-Wooster Square Community Management Team.

The team serves as "a forum for addressing quality-of-life issues in the Downtown and Wooster Square neighborhoods," according to its website. According to McTiernan Huge, the team's new chairwoman, the revival of the group grew out of enthusiasm from neighborhood residents.

"I had heard from so many people who were like, 'The CMT isn't meeting. Why is that?'" she said in an interview after the meeting. McTiernan Huge previously launched a campaign to represent downtown New Haven on the Board of Alders, but dropped out before the primary election to back the current Ward 1 alder, Elias Theodore '27.

Theodore, who represents a part of downtown that includes much of Yale's campus, said he received similar feedback from constituents about the importance of the team.

"I heard from people in my ward, especially people who are not Yale undergrads, that this is something the community is really missing right now," he said in an interview after the meeting.

Until last summer, the team met regularly on Zoom, but attendance dwindled and meetings eventually ceased, according to Theodore.

Since then, McTiernan Huge worked with members of the Board of Alders, the New Haven Police Department and the team's former chairwoman Sarah Ficca to organize Tuesday's meeting, McTiernan Huge said.

For her part as chairwoman, McTiernan Huge does not have any set priorities for the team and instead hopes to play a "neutral, facilitating role" among the group's participants, she said.

"I hope it helps people stay more informed about what's going on and just stay more connected to decision-making in the city," she said.

The team plans to next meet on April 21 at 6 p.m. at City Hall.

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Gubernatorial hopeful talks ranked-choice voting at Yale event

BY NELLIE KENNEY
STAFF REPORTER

Connecticut gubernatorial challenger Josh Elliott joined a small group of Yale students to talk electoral reform and campaigning in a William L. Harkness classroom on Tuesday.

The conversation was hosted by Yale Students for Ranked Choice Voting, a nonpartisan student organization which advocates for electoral reform. Elliott, who is challenging the two-term Democratic incumbent Gov. Ned Lamont SOM '80, has supported ranked-choice voting — which would allow voters to rank multiple candidates on their ballots according to preference — since his election to the Connecticut House of Representatives in 2016.

"The systems of voting determines what kind of elected officials you have," Elliott said, pointing to ranked-choice voting as an opportunity for more "fringe" candidates to garner votes.

Elliott said that his support for ranked-choice voting in 2016 made him "far and away the outlier." That is no longer the case, as the intervening years have seen a "slow drip, drip, drip of people becoming aware of it," he said.

On March 12, Senate Bill 386, which would allow municipalities to opt for ranked-choice voting for party caucuses, conventions and primaries, was advanced by the state legislature's Government Administration and Elections Committee.

Elliott called the bill a "foot in the door" for ranked-choice voting, but cautioned that he thinks it will be a "long road yet."

Elliott also discussed his own campaign for governor, which he launched last July. Elliott hopes to face off against Lamont in an August Democratic primary. Elliott said that his current focus is making sure that potential supporters know he is a "viable" candidate.

That means "getting on the ballot and raising money," he said. Elliott needs to raise $335,000 in small donations in order to reach a state fundraising threshold that will allow him to receive public financing for his campaign. Elliott said he believes his campaign is on track to raise the money by early June.

Yale Students for Rank Choice Voting Chair Alden Okoh-Aduako '28 said that the group first reached out to Elliott "not just to ask for a speaker event, but also just to ask for advice on state advocacy." The conversation was "successful," Okoh-Aduako said, and so the group asked Elliott to come speak formally.

In an interview before the event, Okoh-Aduako pointed to the small size of the gathering, which comprised eight attendees, as an opportunity for an "interesting dynamic" between the group and the speaker.

In an interview after the event, Elliott said he chose to speak with the group because he loves "people who are passionate about the same things that I'm passionate about."

Attendees suggested they had been impressed with Elliott.

William Kessler '29 said that he found Elliott "pretty persuasive."

"He painted quite a vivid picture of Connecticut politics," Kessler said.

Elliott co-owns a natural food store named Thyme and Season in Hamden.



NELLIE KENNEY / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER
Josh Elliott, a Democrat who represents Hamden in the Connecticut House of Representatives, is set to challenge Gov. Ned Lamont in an August primary. Elliott spoke at an event hosted by Students for Ranked Choice Voting.

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NHPD oversight board says it has cleared backlog of complaints

BY ADELE HAEG
STAFF REPORTER

All civilian complaints logged against the New Haven Police Department between 2022 and 2024 have been closed, the New Haven Civilian Review Board announced at a Monday evening meeting.

Since the board began reviewing complaints in 2021, some officers and complainants have had to wait years for a resolution, according to board chair AnneMarie Rivera-Berrios. Now, without a case backlog, the review board and the police department's internal affairs unit hope to close all new complaints within 90 days, including the 17 received in 2026 so far.

"The community needs to hear that if their complaint comes in, it's not going into a backlog. Actually, we're moving forward with everything," Rivera-Berrios said to the six other members present in person and one on Zoom. Assistant Police Chief Manmeet Bhagtana was also in attendance at City Hall.

To close a civilian complaint against the department, the internal affairs unit, led by Lieutenant Jessie Agosto, must complete an investigation of the complaint and assign it to the Civilian Review Board. The board must then review it and make recommendations to the department if necessary, as part of its oversight responsibility. The police chief must sign off on each complaint to officially close it.

All cases from 2022 through 2024 have been closed, and cases from 2025 have been assigned or closed.

"We have to give huge kudos to Lieutenant Agosto and her team because that's tremendous," Rivera-Berrios said during the meeting.

When the board started reviewing complaints in 2020, it had a "huge backlog" of open complaints against the police department, Rivera-Berrios said. Now, according to a December 2025 report passed out to meeting attendees on Monday, there are only 28 open cases from 2025.

"It's very time consuming" to review complaints, Rivera-Berrios said, which is why members of similar review boards across the country "get a stipend to review cases," she said. The New Haven review board's members do not receive stipends. Delays in complaint resolution could potentially cause delays in disciplinary action, if that is what board members were to determine that was necessary in a specific case, according to Rivera-Berrios.

By city ordinance, the board can have up to 15 members. As of the report's release, it had seven members, and it now has six, with one stepping down after the Monday meeting, according to Rivera-Berrios. The position of Civilian Review Board administrator has also been vacant since the beginning of 2026.

Though the cases are being cleared quickly, they are "also thorough investigations. So it's not just quick, just for the sake of being quick, they're very good, thorough, appropriate investigations," Lieutenant Michael Fumiatti said.

"We have been working collaboratively very hard in a small group" with the police department, Rivera-Berrios wrote in a text to the News. "I put a whole lot of hours of my time into this," she added.

In 2023, only 11 percent of cases were closed within three months. In 2024, that number was 27 percent. In 2025, that jumped to 60 percent of cases closed within 90 days. "That's a huge difference," Rivera-Berrios said.

The Civilian Review Board was first created by a city ordinance in 2019.



ADELE HAEG / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER
Some civilian complaints against the New Haven Police Department have gone years without being resolved. The Civilian Review Board's chair said Monday that it had addressed all cases from 2022 to 2024.

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