

**SENIORS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
(SAC)**

**March 14, 2019 at 2:00 p.m.
Committee Room 2, City Hall
MINUTES**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillor Chinu Das	- Chair
Wayne Benitez	- Alternate Chair/Community Member
Deanna Cavanagh	- Community Member
Joy Davies	- Community Member
Calvin Donnelly	- Sapperton Old Age Pensioners' Association Representative
Rosemary Dunne	- Community Member
Tim Hicks	- Community Member
Val MacDonald	- Community Member
Donna MacLean	- Queensborough 50+ Social Club Representative
Betty McIntosh	- Senior Services Society Representative
Carole Wylie	- Century House Association Representative

GUESTS:

Tracey Dermirbas	- Manager, Fraser Health Authority
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STAFF PRESENT:

John Stark	- Senior Social Planner
Carilyn Cook	- Committee Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

Councillor Das took a moment to acknowledge the recent passing of Mr. Sylvester "Syl" Helminck who sat on the Seniors Advisory Committee for 14 years, noting that his contributions to the Committee would be greatly missed.

Procedural note: Item 3.1: Orientation and Oaths of Office was addressed prior to the start of regular agenda Items.

1.0 ADDITIONS / DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

1.1 MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the March 14, 2019 Seniors Advisory Committee meeting agenda be adopted with the addition of Item 6.4: BC Association of Community Response Networks – Wayne "Ben" Benitez.

CARRIED.

All members of the Committee present voted in favour of the motion.

2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

2.1 Adoption of November 15, 2018 Minutes

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Minutes of the November 15, 2018 Seniors Advisory Committee meeting be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED.

All members of the Committee present voted in favour of the motion.

3.0 PRESENTATIONS

3.1 Orientation and Oaths of Office – Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk

Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk, briefly introduced herself, Councillor Das, and staff liaison, John Stark, Senior Social Planner. After a short roundtable introduction of Committee members, Ms. Cook commenced with her presentation which included the role of advisory committees, the terms of reference, meeting attendance and quorum, meeting conduct, City policies & freedom of information, and, lastly, oaths of office.

4.0 NEW BUSINESS

4.1 Election of Alternate Chair – Committee

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT Wayne “Ben” Benitez be elected as the Alternate Chair for the 2019 Seniors Advisory Committee term.

CARRIED.

All members of the Commission present voted in favour of the motion.

4.2 Committee Topic/Speaker Suggestions – Committee

Councillor Das asked members for discussion topic and speaker suggestions for the upcoming term. Mr. Stark shared that past speakers addressed topics such as, dementia/Alzheimer's, transportation, public works, housing affordability, renovations, etc.

Members provided the following suggestions:

- The effects of poverty on seniors;
- Access to food, housing, and being able to afford a comfortable life;
- How the City's role as a dementia friendly city impacts the lives of not only the person experiencing dementia but their family/partner/caregiver as well;

- Street safety for those with mobility, hearing, and vision challenges;
- Renovictions which see seniors slipping into poverty;
- Invisible, shut-in seniors;
- Elder abuse;
- The lack of sidewalks and need for more police presence in Queensborough;
- Seniors housing near the Sapperton Pensioners' Hall; and,
- Cannabis dispensaries within the City and the possibility of holding a community forum about medical cannabis for seniors.

In response to suggestions related to housing, Mr. Stark advised that the City is in the process of signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with BC Housing which will identify City-owned, non-profit, faith organization, and private sites where there is the possibility of below market housing, etc. Once identified and included in the MOU, they will be eligible for grants, financing, low interest rates, and other incentives.

4.3 Possible Topics and Speakers for 2019 – Chair

This item was addressed above.

5.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

5.1 Draft Clarion Article on Food Insecurity – John Stark, Senior Social Planner

Mr. Stark provided background information on the food insecurity issue, stating that the City's goal is to raise awareness of food resources available in the community and that the Clarion, a newsletter for Century House members, is a good way of sharing this information. He also informed the Committee that:

- Other avenues for sharing information could include a resource package, publishing the article in the New Westminster Record, etc.;
- Two other publications that outline food programs include the Helping Hand pamphlet and the Fraser Health Low-Cost Food Directory;
- The Olivet Church, which houses a Greater Vancouver Food Bank, now offers staggered pick up times to alleviate lineups and provides tokens for patrons to determine which foods they would like to "purchase";
- The City facilitates the Plant a Row – Grow a Row program wherein participants donate homegrown produce to the Union Gospel Mission; and,
- The City will be implementing the Food Security Action Plan to meet gaps in service, etc., as the high cost of housing contributes to food insecurity.

Mr. Stark requested feedback from Committee members on the draft article, adding that the City would like to have this be an ongoing column in the Clarion.

In response to a comment from a Committee member, Mr. Stark shared that the City acknowledges that rents need to be kept low in recognition of tenants with consideration also being made to ongoing building upkeep for things such as elevators, which can cost thousands of dollars to maintain.

Discussion ensued and Committee members provided the following comments:

- Years ago, after identifying housing as an issue, the Seniors Services Society created a housing program which is still very active today;
- If peoples' needs are not understood and addressed with appropriate resources, it can mean that other things are also overlooked;
- The article does not indicate if the caller was informed of possibly being eligible for Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER), etc.;
- Existing services must be determined so people are referred to the right places;
- The new editor of the New Westminster Record could be invited to attend a Committee meeting;
- Meals on Wheels should be included in the article;
- Owners will find it increasingly difficult to pay rising taxes on their aging homes and still be able to maintain a certain standard of living; and,
- The City is losing a number of important publications, including the Piffle, which was a great way to communicate with seniors.

5.2 Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan Implementation – John Stark, Senior Social Planner

Mr. Stark provided an overview of the Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan (Plan) and shared that with respect to increasing awareness about dementia, he may be able to bring to a meeting, a simulator that will put the participant in the place of someone who has accessibility issues and is in an unfamiliar environment. The simulator may also be included in the Seniors' Festival.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Stark advised:

- The City conducted a wheelability assessment of sidewalks and crosswalks which included staff from both the Planning and Engineering Departments visiting various sites throughout the City. For further discussion of this issue, it would be appropriate to invite Lisa Leblanc, Manager of Transportation, to attend an upcoming meeting to speak about what is proposed and what is currently being done with respect to the City's crosswalks and sidewalks;
- Mr. Gwilym Davies, who was living with dementia, was able to participate for the duration of the Plan's development. The spokesperson participant for the Plan's implementation may be required to commit to an approximate four-month period and may include the participation of their caregiver; and,

- Forty percent of new, multi-family, single storey housing must be adaptable (adapt with people as they age) and include such things as wider hallways and bathrooms, lower light switches and higher electrical sockets, etc. Developers receive an extra 20 square feet for an adaptable one bedroom suite and an extra 40 square feet for an adaptable two bedroom suite.

Committee members provided the following suggestions with respect to the Plan:

- Planning and development codes need to be updated to address aging in place and a senior’s built environment;
- While January is Alzheimer’s Awareness month, it can strike anyone at any time, so the conversation should be ongoing and not limited to one month;
- Library themed book club packages could address specific issues, including dementia, to get people talking;
- The spokesperson aspect of the Plan should include a whole family, caregiver(s), etc., as the challenges of living with dementia are not limited to the person with dementia;
- The City needs to lead by example as it builds new facilities, such as the new Canada Games Pool and Centennial Community Centre, by implementing dementia-friendly protocols and ensuring they are being followed;
- The City’s museum and archives could include the power of music for those with dementia, as it has been proven that music remains in the brain when other things do not;
- Infrastructure and lack of accessible parking, especially around parks, needs to be addressed; and,
- Having a “poster” person is a great idea as well as hearing the family’s experiences, too.

5.3 Renovictions Update – John Stark, Senior Social Planner

Mr. Stark commenced with his presentation “Rental Housing Revitalization Program Addressing Renovictions.”

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Stark provided the following comments:

- Letters will be sent to occupants in purpose built rentals with “soft” letters going to those who are not in imminent danger of being renovicted and “hard” letters to those that are at direct risk of being evicted;
- Some landlords offer buyout packages to those being renovicted;
- As it is not in their best interest, those doing the renovictions may not provide timely and appropriate information to tenants so the City has not relied on that in the past;

- Flyers and newspaper inserts are not reliable forms of communication since people do not always read them; and
- The Program does not address secondary suites, which the City only inspects if a complaint is received.

6.0 REPORTS AND INFORMATION

6.1 Seniors Services Society Report

– Betty McIntosh, Senior Services Society Representative

Ms. McIntosh made the following announcements:

- The Grand Parade, which is a fundraising event for charities that support seniors, will take place on Saturday, June 1st, replacing the Coldest Night of the Year event. The initiative is new to Canada and will take place at the New Westminster Quay;
- SHINE (Seniors Housing Information Navigation with Ease) is a new initiative attempting to get funding from a variety of ministries with the provincial government. The executive director of the Society has visited Victoria to explore various funding models to help meet the needs of the current housing issues. More information will be forthcoming regarding an October fundraiser;
- The Society's AGM will be held on June 25th and nominations to the board are open; and,
- Various services offered by the Society include meals on wheels, light housekeeping, tax clinics, medical transportation, etc.

6.2 Century House Association Report

– Carole Wylie, Century House Association Representative

Ms. Wylie shared that the current executive is working on its 2020 vision which includes updating policies and procedures to ensure transparency, as well as increasing cultural diversity within the many groups.

6.3 Sapperton Old Age Pensioners Association Report – Calvin Donnelly, Sapperton Old Age Pensioner's Association Representative

Mr. Donnelly shared that the Sapperton Pensioners' Hall continues to be a very busy facility including offering a \$3 exercise class every Thursday. He noted that Mr. Ken McIntosh is currently the acting president, replacing the now retired Mr. Eric Perkins.

**6.4 BC Association of Community Response Networks
– Wayne “Ben” Benitez, Community Member**

Mr. Benitez announced that in November the BC Association of Community Response Networks formed a table that will focus on elder abuse in the LGBTQ community and, as he will be sitting at the table as a retired senior representative, he queried if it would be appropriate for him to represent and liaise on behalf of the Seniors Advisory Committee. The Committee’s ability to approve and endorse Mr. Benitez’s request will be clarified at the next meeting.

With respect to the formation of a Seniors Festival subcommittee, Ms. Cook will follow-up with Robyn McGuinness, Manager, Seniors & Youth Services.

7.0 CORRESPONDENCE

There were no items.

8.0 NEXT MEETING

Thursday, May 9, 2019 at 2:00 p.m. – Committee Room 2, City Hall

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

ON MOTION, the meeting was adjourned at 4:09 p.m.

Certified correct,

Original Signed

Chinu Das
Chair

Original Signed

Carilyn Cook
Committee Clerk