

# Oakland County Senior Advisory Council Meeting

June 13, 2022

**VIRTUAL MEETING**

**10:00 am -12:00 am**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairperson Cameron McClure (District 5) called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

**ATTENDANCE:** Secretary Martha Schlesinger (District 20) conducted member roll call and meeting attendance.

Member Attendance:

<b>Dist</b>	<b>RC</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Dist</b>	<b>RC</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Dist</b>	<b>RC</b>	<b>Name</b>
1	P	George Hanley	2	P	Linda Hyaduck	3	P	Jerry Sowik
4	P	Carolyn Morrison	5	P	Cameron McClure	6	P	Renata Erickson
7	P	Barbara Garbutt	8	P	Norene Yuskowatz	9	V	VACANT
10	P	Carolyn Price	11	P	Howard Adams	12	V	VACANT
13	E	Sylvia Whitmer	14	V	VACANT	15	E	Dianne Bubnar
16	E	Mark Kelly	17	P	Barbara Seldon	18	V	VACANT
19	A	Royetta Ealba	20	P	Martha Schlesinger	21	A	Cheryl Cushingberry
AL	P	Rock Abboud	AL	P	Marcus Jackson	SR	P	Pat Zawadzki

Key: **Dist** = District # (AL -Member-at-Large, SR – Staff Rep); **RC** = Attendance P – Present; E – Excused; A -Absent; V – Vacant); **Name** = District Council Member

Others Present:

Commissioner Marcia Gershenson (District #13)

Dr. Russell Faust – Oakland County Medical Director Health Division

Leigh-Anne Stafford – Oakland County Health Officer

Ashley McBride-Braswell – Manager, Community Engagement

Katie Wendel – AAA 1B Director of Planning and Advocacy

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Senior Advisory Council minutes for the meeting May 16, 2022 were unanimously approved.

## **EXECUTIVE OFFICE UPDATE**

Ashley McBride-Braswell, Community Engagement Manager, reported to SAC members on several past and upcoming events involving the Executive Office: Pride Day in Ferndale (held last week), a Juneteenth event in Madison Heights next Saturday (June 18), and a June 30 event for veterans to be held on the County Campus at the Executive Office from 9:00am – 12:00pm (a flyer for this last event is available and will be provided to Pat Zawadzki, SAC Coordinator to send to SAC members to disseminate to their Senior Centers). Carolyn Krause and other Executive Office staff will be in Orion Township June 29 to visit with the Township Supervisor and visit the Senior Center; a flyer is also available for this event and will be sent to Pat for dissemination, and this event is open to the public.

Ms. McBride-Braswell also told SAC members that there is a new, free, door-to-door transportation service available to veterans in Oakland County. It will transport them from their home to veteran service centers where they can receive casework assistance, benefits information, and other specific help.

Commissioner Gershenson informed SAC members that Juneteenth has been declared a federal government holiday, which means all government offices and services will be closed on that day. If the actual date – June 19 – falls on a Saturday, the holiday will be observed on the preceding Friday. If it falls on a Sunday (which it does in 2022), then it will be observed on the Monday following, June 20.

## **COUNTY UPDATE**

Dr. Russell Faust, Medical Director, Oakland County Health & Human Services, informed SAC members that like in months past, there was “good news and bad news”. The good news is that immunity levels are at about 90% across Oakland County and there is a very low number of hospitalizations due to Covid. That said,

the number of new cases reported is currently at about 300 per day in the County, so masking, hand washing, social distancing remains important deterrents to the spread of the virus – even though people are often complacent and “burned out” with observing these practices.

The other news is the ongoing (and upcoming) concerns focusing on the new virus variants that are popping up – and how effective they are/will be at being transmitted. It is estimated that the actual number of new cases could be up to 3 times larger than those officially reported. This discrepancy is due to the widespread use of home testing kits, and the low number of positive results reported from these tests to the County. It is generally felt that a new surge of infection will happen after the summer, in late Fall – after students (at all levels) go back to school, and the weather cools so more time will be spent indoors.

In the ensuing Q & A, Dr. Faust said: the sometimes strong reaction to getting the booster(s) is normal, but the reasons are not clear; and sometimes those getting a Covid booster with other inoculations (particularly the shingles shot) can have a ‘brutal’ reaction. He also cautioned that although hospitalizations are down, leading some to assume Covid is no longer a big deal, it is an unwise assumption to make because the long-term effects of Covid are serious (often affecting the lungs, kidneys, and other vital organs) – and because of virus transmission to (and from) children. He reminded SAC members that second booster shots are easily available through the County either online or by contacting the Nurse on Call number. He also said that we seem to be headed in the direction of getting an annual Covid booster for adults. He had no sense of the timing for the approval of the vaccine for children under 5.

## **LEGISLATIVE AND BLUEPRINT WORKGROUP REPORTS**

Katie Wendel, AAA 1-B Director of Planning and Advocacy, gave an in-depth report on the activities of the three Blueprint Working Groups: Quality of Life, Housing/Volunteers, and Basic Needs (which has 2 subgroups – Transportation and Elder Abuse). These are open, virtual meetings held about every two weeks, and SAC members are encouraged to participate.

Each group has set its own meeting schedule and they are as follows:

- Housing/Volunteers – 11am-12pm
  - June 6
  - June 20
  - July 11
- Basic Needs - Elder Abuse 11am-12pm
  - June 10
  - June 24
  - July 8
- Basic Needs - Transportation 2pm-3pm
  - June 9
  - June 23
  - July 7

SAC Chairman Cam McClure reported that the following SAC members already volunteered to serve on the working groups:

- Quality of Life – Cam McClure, Diane Bubnar, and Carolyn Morrison
- Housing/Volunteer – Barba Garbutt, Linda Hyaduck, and Marcus Jackson
- Basic Needs (Transportation and Elder Abuse) – Marsha Kamin and Linda Hyaduck

The Quality of Life Working Group is addressing many topics, often relating to reducing isolation and the role senior centers can play in that goal. Participants on this working group include senior center directors, who are urging the promotion of center use and promoting existing programs (rather than the creation of new ones), and using flyers and websites and other means to get the message out. The Working Group is also discussing training opportunities for senior center staff that will focus on sharing information on activities and best practices.

The Housing/Volunteers Working Group is discussing the following housing-related topics: how to avoid home-maintenance scams and identify trusted home contractors, how the Commission can promote helping seniors with home maintenance – especially when money is a problem...although even when it's not, contractors are hard to find. Regarding Volunteers, the group is discussing volunteering both BY AND FOR seniors, as the numbers of volunteers have significantly decreased since the arrival of Covid – and they are talking about

developing a “volunteer local” campaign, similar to the ‘shop local’ campaigns that have been developed in SE Michigan.

The Basic Needs Working Group has two focuses - transportation and elder abuse – and the two subgroups meet separately. The goal of the transportation subgroup is to identify ways to the lessen the number of trip request ‘turn-downs’. A SMART FLEX program is being piloted in Troy and Pontiac. It is a door-to-door service (like uber, but less expensive), and will be expanded to other areas. There is a phone number to call in the two pilot areas, and seniors will need to be informed of the program’s existence to increase usage. The elder abuse sub-group is looking to establish an Abuse Prevention Task Force, with a cross section of representatives from relevant professions (lawyers, judges, police, social workers, etc.). The hope is launch it in September; outreach to relevant groups is being done now.

Chairman McClure asked that if other SAC members would like to be added to any of the other groups, or have any other questions, to let Stephanie Hall, Research & Advocacy Specialist of AAA 1B, know. She will be taking on Working Group responsibilities for Katie, who will be out on maternity leave until the Fall. Martha Schlesinger said she would serve on the Basic Needs Working Group, as Marsha Kamin has relocated out of state and will no longer be able to participate.

Katie Wendell was asked to have AAA 1B provide flyers to Pat Zawadzki on any and all of the working group programs and activities mentioned, so she can distribute them electronically to SAC members, who will in turn share them with their respective senior centers.

## **BYLAWS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT**

Barbara Garbutt, SAC second Vice Chair and Bylaws subcommittee chair reviewed the proposed changes to the SAC bylaws, as recommended by members of the subcommittee: Rock Abboud (At-Large), Martha Schlesinger #20, Sylvia Whitmer #13. Ms. Garbutt said that the proposed changes are more of a ‘tweak’ to the existing document than a rewrite, with efforts focused primarily on the timeline for nomination and election of SAC members, given the County’s upcoming redistricting and future changes to the terms of Commissioners’ election. SAC members received a copy of the Bylaws with proposed changes prior to the

meeting (and they are attached to these minutes). Commissioner Gershenson clarified that the redistricting changes (reducing the number of County Districts from #21 to #19) will be in effect for the Fall 2022 election. The change in length of commissioners' terms – expanding from the current 2 years to 4 years – will begin with the 2024 election.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Pat Zawadzki repeated the information she put into this meeting's notice: there will be no SAC meetings in July or August. SAC members will be notified once the September (and other Fall) meeting dates are set. The Officers will continue to meet periodically during the SAC summer hiatus. It is hoped that going forward, SAC meetings will be scheduled on the third Monday of every month, whether they be virtual or in-person meetings.

Regarding creating a 'Dashboard' of Senior Center data and information proposed by Sylvia Whitmer, the County (particularly Leigh-Anne Stafford) and SAC officers will be looking into how best to set it up and maintain it. Officer/County discussions will also be held to discuss how best to fill the open spots on the Senior Advisory Council Board. It is important to have all districts represented on SAC, so that all commissioners will be receiving regular and in-depth information about seniors, senior activities and concerns - and needs - in all of Oakland County's districts. She also asked SAC members to think about possible venues for future SAC meetings – when we will again be holding them in-person.

SAC Chairman Cam McClure urged SAC members to continue to interact with their respective senior centers throughout the summer, even though the Council will not be meeting. Mr. McClure asked that if there is information that needs to be shared that it be sent to Pat Zawadzki so she can share it with the entire Council. Regarding Blueprint Working Group activities, he thanked those who are already participating, urged the rest of the SAC members to consider joining this effort, and called the passion displayed by participating commissioners 'invaluable'. He cautioned that action plans take time to develop and implement and urged patience so that maximum input will be obtained and produce maximum results. He asked those SAC members participating in the working groups' meetings to take their own notes and add their input to the reports given by Katie Wendell and others about the working group meetings at SAC meetings.

He also informed the group that on May 12, 2022, during the Oakland County District Commissioners Meeting, the Commissioners presented the 2022 Oakland County Outstanding Older Adult Awards. Six of the 21 recipients were members of the Oakland County Senior Advisory Council. Those members are:

Barbara Garbutt – District #7  
Carolyn Price – District #10  
Howard Adams – District #11  
Sylvia Whitmer – District #13  
Barbara Purifoy Seldon – District #18  
Cam McClure – District #5

## **COMMUNITY UPDATES**

Barb Garbutt (District #7) reported in Commerce the Library is working on ways to get seniors to take out more books. It received a grant for funding this outreach project.

Cam McClure, reporting for Sylvia Whitmer (District #13), said that the W. Bloomfield Senior Center had to vacate the site they have occupied for the past year in a shopping mall, and may be moving to the soon-to-be-closed Abbott Middle School for 1 year. More information will be available in July. He also reported that the Waterford Senior Center will hold 'Law Day' on June 14, a program where county residents can meet with lawyers and other legal experts free of charge to discuss legal problems.

Carolyn Price (District #10) invited all SAC members to the Bowen Senior Center in Pontiac (5200 Bagley) on June 18 at 2:00 for "Juneteenth: A Play" presented by the North Star Players. She will send a flyer to Pat for distribution to SAC members.

Carolyn Morrison (District #4) extended an invitation to SAC members to come to Clarkston in Independence Township on July 2 for their 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration, which will be hosted by the Senior Center and the Parks and Rec department. It's an all-day program, with lunch for attending veterans, a parade at 10 AM, and fireworks in the evening (which is attended by 10,000 people). She will send a flyer to Pat for SAC distribution.

Barbara Seldon (District #17) reported that on Memorial Day \$5,000 was raised by Southfield/Lathrup Village for veterans' needs and causes. She also reported that Southfield passed a resolution to observe and celebrate Juneteenth from June 13-22. On June 18 there will be a special program presented (in which she will portray Marion Anderson and sing two of her best known songs).

Rock Abboud (At Large) reported that Beverly Hills took a unique perspective when pursuing making it a 'walkable community', by not just emphasizing the importance of sidewalks for children's safety – they included the safety importance for seniors, cyclists, walkers, and all citizens. The addition will help add seniors to those who might vote in favor of the resolution. Barb Seldon suggested they also add wording from the Americans Disability Act.

He apologized to SAC members that technological challenges prevented Michigan State Senator Rosemary Bayer (District #12) from addressing in today's SAC meeting. He will ask her to come to a future SAC meeting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned at 11:20 AM

**HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!**

## **NEXT MEETING**

**SEPTEMBER 2022**

**10:00am – 12:00pm**

***Specific date and in-person/virtual format to be determined***