

**Oakland County Senior Advisory Council**  
**Virtual Meeting**  
**February 13, 2023**  
**10:00 am -12:00 pm**

**WELCOME, CALL TO ORDER, SELF-INTRODUCTIONS:** Chairperson Cameron McClure (District #5) welcomed all to the SAC meeting and called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM. He asked meeting attendees to introduce themselves (as there are a number of new people attending) and indicate what geographic area their district includes.

*Please note the districts below represent the newly redistricted areas and the SAC representatives indicated have been officially appointed by county executive David Coulter.*

| Dist | RC | Name               | Dist | RC | Name             | Dist | RC | Name            |
|------|----|--------------------|------|----|------------------|------|----|-----------------|
| 1    | P  | Royetta Ealba      | 2    | P  | Mark Kelly       | 3    | P  | Suzanne Patton  |
| 4    | P  | Dianne Bubnar      | 5    | P  | Jerry Sowik      | 6    | V  |                 |
| 7    | E  | Linda Hyaduck      | 8    | P  | Carolyn Morrison | 9    | V  |                 |
| 10   | P  | Cameron McClure    | 11   | P  | Sylvia Whitmer   | 12   | P  | Barbara Garbutt |
| 13   | P  | Noreen Yuskowatz   | 14   | V  |                  | 15   | P  | Brenda Anderson |
| 16   | V  |                    | 17   | V  | *Barbara Seldon  | 18   | P  | Greg Keeler     |
| 19   | P  | Martha Schlesinger | 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:**

Howard Adams – former District 11 SAC District.

Leigh-Anne Stafford – Director Oakland County Health Department

Dr. Russell Faust – Oakland County Medical Director

James Ellison – Chief of Oakland County Older Adult Services

Katie Wendell – AAA 1B Director, Planning and Advocacy

Sandy Dorey – Oakland County Recreation Supervisor

Genessa Doolittle – Oakland County Health Division, Public Health Educator

Max Sanford – guest speaker: Partner, Get Set Up

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Approval of the Senior Advisory Council minutes for meetings held December 12, 2022 had been deferred from the January 13, 2023 meeting until this one, so SAC members

could be officially appointed by County Executive Coulter. Those minutes were amended to show that Barbara Seldon (District #17) was excused (not absent), and unanimously approved. The January 13, 2023 minutes were approved after the following addition was made: Recording Secretary Martha Schlesinger thanked SAC Chairman Cameron McClure for his assistance with the minutes of the January meeting, as technical difficulties prevented her from logging on and participating in the first half of the meeting.

## **INTRODUCTION OF NEWLY APPOINTED OAKLAND COUNTY CHIEF OF OLDER ADULT SERVICES**

SAC Chairman McClure introduced and welcomed Jim Ellison, newly appointed Chief of Older Adult Services. He comes to the position after serving 6 years in the Michigan House of Representatives (and being on the Family Services Committee), 13 years as mayor of Royal Oak, and 4 years as a commissioner for the city. Ellison said he will function as part of the Public Communications Department and looked forward to working with the Senior Advisory Council. He is currently in the 'information gathering' stage and will be reaching out to SAC members and the senior centers over the next few months. Chairman McClure suggested – and Jim Ellison agreed - that a special meeting with all of SAC members be scheduled in the near future, before individual conversations and meetings are held, so that he can get an overall feel for what SAC is, how its members function, and what the overall-general and center-specific priorities are.

He can be reached via email at [ellisonj@oakgov.com](mailto:ellisonj@oakgov.com), at his county office (248) 858-0593, and on his cellphone (248) 760-5659.

## **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Katie Wendell, AAA-1b Director of Planning and Advocacy, began her report with a brief overview of AAA-1b and her portfolio so new SAC members would have a context into which to put her report. Currently the Michigan Area Agency on Aging is in a state-wide process of developing its next 5 year plan, which involves holding conversations and conducting surveys (on line and by paper forms) in each of its areas (Oakland County is in area 1B) to determine priorities and identify challenges. SAC members have collaborated with AAA-1b by getting the surveys distributed and the information collected.

Regarding a legislative update: AAA-1b is meeting with new state legislators to discuss issues of particular interest and importance for Michigan seniors, including:

- The repeal of the pension tax, which will be happening but will roll out over four years
- Items in the Governor's budget, specifically increasing the pay for Direct Care workers (\$2.35/hr. is in the budget, the Governor is proposing adding another \$1.50/hr.)
- Increasing access to in-home care services
- Increasing support for long-term ombudsman care services – there are currently only 3 people for 6 counties, and there were over 1100 complaints made last year that needed investigation.

Discussion following the update covered several topics:

- Concern was expressed over the qualifications and vetting process of these service providers. It was pointed out that ombudsmen are not legal 'Guardians' appointed by the court (which have been the focus of numerous investigations and news-worthy 'horror stories'). Ombudsmen are advocates, NOT decision makers. They are highly trained and conduct on-site investigations before making recommendations. There is a website to check for ombudsmen information.
- Inquiries were made about any activity going on regarding getting more Medicaid beds into nursing homes. In Michigan, most Medicaid funds are spent in/on care facilities – not homes – while nationally most funds are spent in/on home care. The push in Michigan is to increase funding for in-home care. Additional information was requested on how to qualify in Michigan for in-home care, and support was expressed to increasing the wages of in-home care givers, to attract (and retain) more qualified people. Efforts are also underway to include family members (who are in-home care givers) in funding opportunities.

Ms. Wendell concluded her report by announcing AAA1-b Connect Resource Guide is being updated and will be available in April. She also said that they have a Caregiving Coaching/Training Program, and asked SAC members with interest and/or experience, to check it out as they are always looking for more volunteer caregivers.

## **COUNTY UPDATE**

Dr. Russell Faust was happy to report 'good news' to SAC members: regarding influenza, Michigan cases remain minimal, and it might be a light season; regarding Covid, the clinical picture severity numbers are low. This is important because it is difficult to get an accurate number of cases, as most tests are being done at home and most results are not reported. In January 2023 in the Tri-county Area (Oakland, Wayne and Macomb) there were around 400 hospitalizations, we are currently at 160/170 - less than half of

where we were in January. New strains are more transmissible, but their severity is lower – due to a vaccinated public, many who have already had Covid, etc.

Other points Dr. Faust made:

- Regarding vaccines: Dr. Faust said the new bivalent booster (after the two initial regular Covid vaccines) is proving highly effective. He foresees people getting an annual updated vaccine, much like the flu vaccine protocols. For any questions, he suggested the Oakland County Nurse on Call as an excellent source of information.
- RSV seems to have run its course, so there are hospital beds now open for other patients; and there have been no reported cases of monkeypox for at least a month.
- In May, President Biden will end the COVID-19 National Emergency Status. We will still have a pandemic; we are not having the surges in infections and massive fatalities due to COVID, but COVID fatalities are still much higher than fatalities from Influenza. CMS will still cover the cost of vaccines.
- Regarding the status of polio tests of wastewater: there have been zero findings in either Oakland County or Rockland County, New York since October, but testing of wastewater surveillance is continuing in specific locations. Responding to a question about testing Southfield's water, as city residents have septic tanks, Dr. Faust said that they are not testing every family or block, as it is assumed that the sewer system will provide a representative sample.

## **PRESENTATION: MAX SANFORD, GET SET UP**

Guest speaker Max Sanford told SAC members that Get Set Up is a global social learning platform for older adults. The company works with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. It was created a few years ago – before the pandemic hit –so it was in place when the pandemic changed the way individuals interact with each other. There are 4 million users globally – called “Learners” – who range in age from 55 to 100 years old and are located in 160 countries. There are 400 classes in their catalogue, which are currently taught in 4 languages: English, Spanish, Hindi, and Mandarin, but that number will be expanding.

There are several ways to enter a class and participate, not just by watching a class but by asking questions and interacting with others. There is also a place on their website called “The Club” where interest groups are located. In addition to daily classes and class series (including seasonal programs), there are also special one-time presentations by guest speakers.

Their partnership with the State of Michigan means they are found in 400 libraries across the state, and they work with the Gerontological Society. The most popular classes in Michigan are fitness-related.

In the Q & A session that followed the presentation, the following questions were addressed:

- How do the programs differ from others, like those of AAA-1b?
  - These programs are meant to be a compliment to - not a competition with - other programs.
- What is the cost, and what kind of personal information is required?
  - Classes are free, and the only information required is name and email address – providing additional information is optional.
- Is instruction live or taped?
  - Mostly live, though 'encores' are a live replay of a specific class.
- Given the lack of technological sophistication among seniors, is there a tutorial or guide to get into a class?
  - There are several options for getting assistance: there is a new member orientation lasting 30 minutes; there is a support team that can be contacted with questions or problems; and there is a "How to..." guide that he will share with Pat Zawadzki to share with SAC members. There is also help and assistance with/for each class, and there is a class on how to use specific platforms – Zoom, Google Suites, and many others.
  - Chairman McClure told SAC members that Pat Zawadzki had sent out information that we can share with our senior centers. Additional information on Get Set Up can be found on their website:  
<https://www.getsetup.io>

## **PARKS AND RECREATION PROGRAMS 2023**

Sandy Dorey, Oakland County's Recreation Supervisor, reported that the program lineup for 2023 has been distributed to the senior centers and is available on the Oakland County website. Pat Zawadzki announced that the SAC meetings in May and June will be held at the Waterford Oaks Park site and thanked Ms. Dorey for her help in making that happen.

## **APPOINTMENT/REAPPOINTMENT UPDATE**

Pat Zawadzki, SAC Coordinator informed SAC members that they should have received an appointment letter from County Executive David Coulter sometime last week. Welcome aboard! Orientation Sessions for new members will be scheduled after the Members at Large recommendations have taken place.

## **SENIOR CENTER MATCHING GRANTS**

An update was not available from Ken Dobson or Ashley McBride as they both had to leave the meeting.

Jim Ellison announced that Dave Coulter will conduct a press conference announcing the Senior Center Grants Awards on February 23, at 11:00 AM. Place to be determined. Chairman McClure told Mr. Ellison that there are serious questions and concerns about the status and process/criteria of awarding the grants and hoped there would be an opportunity to officially discuss them and rectify those problems soon. Other SAC members noted that we had been asked to say nothing about the grant awards until now, and asked we be informed when we could share that information with our respective centers.

### *Response to Norene Yuskowatz's Senior Center Grant question -*

Per Ken Dobson, 43 Grant Applications were submitted. There were 29 Applicants of the 43 submissions who were selected to receive a Senior Center Grant Award, and letters have been sent to the 29 Grant Awardees.

Since that time some, of our District Reps have received inquiries regarding not receiving a status on their Senior Center Grant submission. These inquiries were mainly from organizations who were not among the 29 Approved Grant Recipients. Our District SAC Representatives were not able to respond to those inquiries.

Another concern from some District Reps is that the announcement of the Senior Center Grant Award and the plans for how the award would be used for their senior center members was not well received. The seniors indicated that there didn't seem to be a clear connection between why the grant money was requested and what the positive impact those funds would have on senior programs/activities and facilities. SAC members were also concerned because not every community has a dedicated senior facility, so close attention needs to be paid to how funds are going to be used to benefit seniors specifically and the confluence/connection of more funds for seniors and versus

more for a community's general fund which may not affect seniors. Since these funds are Federal Government ARPA monies, the criteria for allowable usage are both public and specific information so there should be no confusion.

Now that the Senior Center Grants have been announced and the 29 Awardees should be signing their documents, Chairman McClure requests that our district reps, if you have not already done so, do the following:

1. Contact your senior center to inquire as to how their Senior Center Grant Funds are going to be spent.
2. Have their seniors been informed of the Plans and how those Plans will benefit them?
3. If these meetings have happened what was the senior feedback?
4. Please inform your County Commissioner and Pat with your information

### **GENERAL REPORT FROM THE SAC CHAIRMAN & INFORMATION ABOUT OFFICER ELECTION PROTOCOLS AND TIMING**

In 2022 Oakland County Approved Redistricting Map, which presented new challenges for the SAC. The Oakland County Board of Commissioners went from 21 Commissioners to 19 Commissioners, which meant that our 21 District Reps were also reduced to 19 (displacing 2 of our SAC District Reps). In addition, 2 of our 19 2023 District Commissioners are newly elected. They have to be brought up to speed regarding the Purpose of the SAC and the Process for nominating a candidate to fill their vacant District Rep Position. We also have 4 Commissioners actively looking for candidates to fill their SAC District Rep Position. (Gingell, Powell, Miller, and Raman).

The Redistricting moved several of our senior centers from their previous district into a new district, which will change some of the senior center 'assignments' for our SAC members. As we have in the past, SAC members who have adjacent districts may work out actual assignments based on their physical location to a senior center and their history with a specific senior center. Please inform Pat regarding these discussions on assignment-revisions so that our Master Senior Center Roster will be accurate. In addition, District #5 Rep Jerry Sowik has informed Pat that there is a new senior center in Oxford, Michigan - The Oxford Senior Center - about which he will be obtaining more information.

Per our Bylaws, we will also immediately begin planning for the nomination and election of Officers, which will take place (using on-line communications) before our April 17, 2023 monthly meeting. A preliminary slate of officer-nominees will be made known for

the March SAC meeting, with on-line voting to take place in the two weeks after the March 20 meeting. The results of the officer elections will be announced in the materials sent out for the April meeting. The positions of Chairperson, 1st Vice Chairperson, 2nd Vice Chairperson and Recording Secretary will be open. The description of Officer Duties and Responsibilities are spelled out in our By-laws Document. If you are interested in running for an Officer's position, please inform Pat Zawadzki via email.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:12pm.

**NEXT MEETING  
VIRTUAL  
MONDAY MARCH 20, 2023  
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**