

**Oakland County Senior Advisory Council
Meeting
Southfield Department of Parks & Recreation
Monday, September 16, 2024
10:00 AM – 12:00 pm 1:00 PM**

Welcome, Call to Order

Chair Rock Abboud called the meeting to order at 10:14 AM and asked each member present to introduce themselves. He welcomed all members to the SAC meeting.

Attendance Matrix:

Dist	RC	Name	Dist	RC	Name	Dist	RC	Name
1	E	Royetta Ealba		E	Mark Kelly	3	E	Suzanne Patton
4	A	Dianne Bubnar	5		V	6	P	Bridgette Giampa
7	E	V	8	P	Robert Whitcomb	9	E	Ruth Jordan
10	P	Cameron McClure	11	P	Sylvia Whitmer	12	V	
13	E	Norene Yuskowatz	14	A	Marcy Boskee	15	P	Brenda Anderson
16		V	17	P	Barbara Seldon	18	P	Greg Keeler
19	P	Martha Schlesinger	AL	P	Rock Abboud	AL	V	
SR	P	Pat Zawadzki						
SR	P	Genessa Doolittle						

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

Others Present

Stephanie Hall, Asst. Director of Planning and Advocacy, AgeWays
 Danisha Weathersby, Communication & Marketing Assistant, Older Adult Services
 Marcia Gershenson, County Commissioner, 11th District.
 Angela Verges, Southfield Senior Services Coordinator
 Rhonda Terry, Outreach Coordinator for the Southfield Human Services Department
 Vineta Mitchell, Vice-President Commission on Senior Adults (COSA)
 Olivia Duvall, COSA member and Precinct Delegate
 Debbie Binder, West Bloomfield Township, Clerk
 Cheryl Thames, VP, Southfield Lathrup Village Optimist Club
 Janet Jackson, Southfield City Clerk

Roll Call

There is a quorum (11 members).

Approval of Minutes

Senior Advisory Council minutes for the meetings held in May and June 2024 were approved as presented.

Host Update - Angela Verges

Ms. Verges presented an update on senior activities in Southfield. She provided an update on the Senior Center grant funding; a design team has been selected and the next step is getting a letter to the City Council for discussion and approval of the project.

Budget/Legislative Update - Stephanie Hall

Budget:

- Federal Update: The budget right now is all over the place. The health and Human Services budget for the house and senate has been released for consideration. That is as far as they have gotten. The federal budget has not been voted on or advanced. There have been some increases in certain programs such as Native American Support programs, Caregiver Support Programs, Program Administration, 3D programs. There have been some decreases in programs such as the Nutrition Program. There is no explanation for the decrease in the nutrition program.
 - The Senate released its budget. It was pretty level across the board with just slight increases in caregiver programs, respite care, and program administration.
 - Advocacy letters have been sent indicating that AgeWays support increases and do not support decreases.
 - The budget is supposed to be finalized by October 1st, but this is not expected to happen.
- State Update: On July 24th Governor Whitmer signed the \$82.52 billion FY25 budget.
 - \$3 million increase for the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, which was an advocacy priority for AgeWays. This funding will allow additional staff to be hired across the State to better assist residents of long-term care facilities. There will be the hiring of three additional ombudsmen, which is an enormous success for AgeWays.
 - A \$.20 per hour wage increase for direct care workers and general fund was added to replace expiring federal funds supporting the previously appropriated Direct Care Worker wage increases.
 - \$5 million appropriated for training, support, and stipends for live-in family members to MI Choice participants through Structured Family Caregiving.

Legislative Update:

- Federal: OAA Reauthorization they looked at to see the need for re-adjustments or changes.
 - The Senate HELP committee has released their markup of the Older Adults Act (OAA) allowing for evidence-informed not just evidence-based programs, also making some changes to the rules surrounding the OAA, allowing AgeWays to do business outside the OAA, and allowing AgeWays to enter into contracts that are not using OAA funding without the approval of the state unit on aging – just informing them of the contract instead of needing permission.
 - Authorized increased funding and allowing grab and go meals under congregate funding.
 - The House has not released anything; we are letting them know that AgeWays supports the increases in the House and Senate.
 - Asking everyone to reach out to your Representatives and Senators to support USAging priorities even if they are not on the key committee – can provide advocacy materials if you send her an email.
- State: MDHHS was able to raise the asset limit for Medicaid programs from \$2,000 to \$10,000. It was an advocacy asset from AgeWays, and they saw the need. This is huge for Medicaid participants. The program may start on October 1st.

AgeWays:

- Care Transitions helps individuals in hospital settings transition back into their communities, providing them caseworkers to get the support they need once they return home from physical therapy and other long-term hospital stays. This program has not started yet. They are working on administrative contracts and health systems trying to get things in place for smooth transition. AgeWays will let you know when the program begins. It will not roll out until later in the year.
- Caregiver Respite Voucher, AgeWays supports the \$575.00 grant program for caregivers to support respite care. AgeWays have given out all the available vouchers (195) for the grant period. AgeWays is looking at ways to continue the program through other internal funding outside of the grant.
- Stephanie Hall provided an extensive overview of the AgeWays programs to include independent programs, adaptive wellness programs, family respite programs, home health ADL light housekeeping programs, CHORE programs, elder abuse programs, nutrition programs, resource center for assistance, assisted living programs, Medicare counseling programs, non-Medicaid home health assistance programs, transportation programs, health and wellness classes, caregivers coaching program, Medicaid, MI Choice program, and much more.
- SAC Coordinator Pat Zawadki spoke about the role SAC has played as advocate for two of the major successes of AgeWays initiatives. SAC provided strong advocacy for the Ombudsmen Program to secure the help AgeWays needed to

get the additional employees and move the program forward, and the success of the Respite Program where caregivers may get needed rest from giving care to their loved ones.

County Update - Danisha Weathersby

- Ms. Weathersby announced two upcoming food and conversations being planned.
- She shared that the Encore newsletter had been completed and sent to every home in Oakland County. It was noted that a picture of the Oakland County SAC was included with a description of its purpose.

Presentation: Election Process - Debbie Binder, MiPMC, West Bloomfield Township Clerk

- In 42 of the 50 states the County conducts elections. Michigan is a state where the local municipality runs the election.
- There were some legislative changes last year. It is demanding work for elections because you are trying to implement the changes while you are in the throes of the election.
- Proposal #2 addresses early voting. It brought a really positive change to voting. It provides convenience for the voters, County Clerk Lisa Brown placed early voting in nine locations. It took away a lot of worry, it was inexpensive, it helped with counting ballots, cost of equipment, and it helped a lot with staffing. City clerks have also partnered with the county in counting ballots. A citizen may vote 9 days prior to every election beginning the second Saturday before election day (the days are Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday).
- Proposal #2 also brought in the permanent ballot list. If you are a snowbird, you still may vote from the permanent list in Michigan, just make sure the office has the correct address so it may be forwarded.
- There is same day registration where citizens may register on the same day they vote, and anyone may vote by affidavit.
- Proposal #3 of the 2018 changes “no-reason absentee voting” has led to change in voter habit toward absentee voting and in an increase in voting. Also, Straight party voting is protected by Constitutional Amendment (18-3).
- The process of election security is extremely detailed and secure behind the scenes. Every State must comply with State and federal laws.
- Oakland County burns the election on a V-drive.
- All voting equipment/machine is pre-tested. Public may come to watch the testing at a public meeting.
- For most, the clerk’s office will not send you a text message about your absentee ballot or voter registration. They will not send you a text or reminder to return

your absentee ballot. If you receive something you think is odd call the clerk's office.

- For most offices, the clerk's office may contact you by phone, e-mail, or USPS to secure your signature on your application of ballot; for an unsigned application or ballot; or clarification of address for an undeliverable ballot. The clerk's office may only contact you by phone, e-mail, or USPS first class letter to:
 - Secure your signature on a ballot.
 - An unsigned application or ballot
 - Clarification of an address or undeliverable ballot
- You may receive voter information from a third party. Please beware. You may receive requests for voter information from government organizations under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).
 - Some are legitimate trying to encourage voter registration. Third parties' information is almost immediately out of date the moment it is received.
 - Some may be concerning (voter intimidation, or influence).
 - Call the clerk's office if any correspondence asks for money or a notarized signature. It is either not legitimate or offering a service that is provided free at the clerk's office.
 - Be careful of incorrect links confirming your registration. The only guaranteed correct link is _____.
 - Information that is exempt from being shared by FOIA and will never be provided by the clerk's office are: Driver's license or state ID card numbers, Birthday/month, Phone number, Email address, or digitized signature of an elector.
 - If you rely on the mail allow ample time for your application or ballot to arrive at the clerk's office or use the drop box, drop boxes are available 24/7.
- The State of Michigan Voter Information Center for voter information or to track your absentee ballot <http://mvic.sos.state.mi.gov/MIVoteOptions>
- Pat Zawadzki pointed out that many seniors complain they are not getting their absentee ballots. They do not know if they are on the list. The county needs to make it clear for them. They must also recognize the power of attorney does not count.

Ms. Binder provided information about when one can vote.

- Registration for voting up to 8PM on election day.
- 14 days before an election, so contact the clerk's office for details. Early requests and returns of you application is best to avoid issues.
- Ballots are available 40 days before an election.
- Military and overseas voters have new deadlines. Call for details.

SAC Summer Community Updates

Each SAC member spoke about their accomplishments for the summer.

Coordinator Update - Pat Zawadzki

- Thanked the SAC officers for attending officers meetings, identifying topic and speakers for each of the monthly meetings.
- Reminded everyone of the AgeWays Caregivers event. The event seeks to give family caregivers a day that is all about them, where their needs will be recognized and addressed.
 - It is planned for October 5, 2024, from 9:30AM until 2:00PM. It will take place at the Suburban Selection Showplace Legacy Ballroom in Novi, Michigan. Pat is asking for SAC members to volunteer. Please confirm your participation.
- Addressed the changing demographics of the Senior Advisor Council. SAC members are challenged as care givers to attend in person meetings, many continue to work and cannot give the ½ day commitment. She is suggesting that virtual meetings should be the norm and not the exception, especially in the winter.

Adjournment

Rock Abboud announced the next meeting date and time.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 PM

**NEXT MEETING
VIRTUAL
Monday, OCTOBER 21, 2024
10 AM – 12 PM**