

**Oakland County Senior Advisory Council
Virtual Meeting
Monday, April 14, 2025
10:00 AM –12:00 PM**

Welcome, Call to Order

Chair Abboud called the meeting to order at 10:05. He welcomed all members to the SAC meeting.

Attendance Matrix:

Dist	RC	Name	Dist	RC	Name	Dist	RC	Name
1	P	Royetta Ealba	2	P	Mark Kelly	3	P	Sue Patton
4	V		5	V		6	P	Bridgette Giampa
7	V		8	P	Robert Ritchie	9	P	Ruth Jordan
10	P	Cameron McClure	11	p	Sylvia Whitmer	12	P	Christopher Peal
13	P	Norene Yuskowatz	14	P	Judy Smiley	15	P	Brenda Anderson
16	V		17	P	Barbara Seldon	18	P	Greg Keeler
19	V		AL	P	Rock Abboud	AL	P	Martha Schlesinger
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

Jim Ellison, Older Adult Services, Oakland County
Danisha Weathersby, Older Adult Services, Oakland County
Melissa Ann Williams-Bowman, Oakland County Health Division
Stephanie Hall, AgeWays

Roll Call:

There is a quorum (16 SAC members present)

Approval of Agenda and Minutes:

The April 2025 Meeting Agenda and the Senior Advisory Council March, 2025 Meeting Minutes were approved.

Health Division Update:

Melissa Ann Williams-Bowman, Epidemiologist, presented information about measles, influenza, and foodborne illness outbreaks. *PowerPoint presentation was emailed by Pat after the meeting.*

Oakland County Update:

Jim Ellison: Chief of Older Adult Services

- Has been remarkably busy with the State-of-the-County business.
- The new Resource Guides are ready for distribution. About 4,000 have been printed. Look for them in late May or early June. There is a phone number error in the Resource Guide. Efforts are being made to correct the error.
- Mr. Ellison and his staff will be meeting with the Public Health and Safety Steering Committee of the Board of Commissioners on May 22, 2025. He will be making a presentation on where they are at and what they are doing. The report will be made available after the presentation is completed.
- The latest edition of the ENCORE magazine will be out in late May or early June.
- Two Senior Expos have been held. Three more are expected: Southfield in August, The “J” in September, and Royal Oak Farmers Market in October.
- Mr. Ellison has received a schedule of Oakland County Parks & Recreation Summertime Events which will be posted to the Senior Website.
- Coffee and Convos have been conducted at the Bowens Senior Citizens Center and the Ruth Peterson Community Center. They are looking at ways to get more people to attend these events.
- As in the past, the DIA has some tremendous programs for the older adult community. He plans to continue to collaborate with them and to get that information out.
- Mr. Ellison is looking into an idea where various centers could put on senior involved interactive theater shows. He will be talking to directors of centers to see if this is something they would be interested in pursuing.
- He will be suggesting to the Board of Commissioners the idea of doing town hall meetings for their districts, and to tap into the SAC members to help them to do this. This would be an effective way to get people out to get information.

Legislative Update:

Stephanie Hall, Director of Planning and Advocacy, AgeWays

Budget

- Federal:
 - A lot has been going on since the last SAC meeting. The Continuing Resolution Budget (CR) has been extended until September 30th. to avoid shutdown. This is not a clean CR budget, meaning there are some funding

adjustments being made. The AgeWays programs were not affected by these adjustments.

- The House passed a resolution that instructs the Energy and Commerce committee (which has authority over Medicaid) to cut eight hundred and eighty billion dollars. They do not care where the cuts will come from and gave them until May 9th for this resolution, but it is not binding. Be sure to contact your members of congress and let them know your thoughts on the cuts.
- AgeWays is continuing to advocate on the Federal level for Medicaid, long term. There has been no talk about cutting OA Act funding, but AgeWays continues to advocate indicating any cuts in OA act and Medicaid would be detrimental to our senior's long term.
- State:
 - Fiscal year 2026 there is a Republican-led House, a Democrat-led Senate, and a Democrat Governorship. For the last few years, we have accomplished a full budget by June 1st. It is not likely that we will go over the September 1st. deadline. The education budget should be put together by July 1st.

Legislative

- Federal
 - OAA Reauthorization
 - The Older Americans Act has to be reauthorized every few years. Reauthorization only updates the language as long as funding is approved.
 - AgeWays continues to advocate for the OAA.
- State
 - Guardianship Bills
 - The guardianship bill will be reintroduced in the house and the senate with changes to the initial bill. We do not know what that bill will look like. Stephanie will report to SAC once she hears.
 - AgeWays continues its process of putting together the annual AgeWays plan that is required by the State to show their services for the upcoming year. It includes their goals. There will be a hearing on May 19th about the AgeWays plan. She will send information to our coordinator. The plan will be on AgeWays website next week.
 - Older Michiganians Day is on May 7th. It is AgeWays' big event on Capital Hill to voice their thoughts on older American's services. She will get the materials to our coordinator to be sent to all SAC members. If you wish to attend, you are more than welcome. Just reach out to Stephanie Hall. If you cannot, there will be a virtual showing. She will be sure SAC coordinator will get the link. There will also be a letter that you may sign.

There will be electronic links if you wish to sign. She will put the letter in the chat and send it to the coordinator.

- She will also share the AgeWays monthly newsletter that covers all the things that she has presented.

Oakland County Food Policy Council Update:

- Chair Abboud serves on the County's Food Policy Council on behalf of SAC.
- It is a collaborating organization that works to improve local food systems and promote healthy eating in Oakland County.
- It brings together food providers, social service workers, local health departments, community organizations and local governmental organizations including farmers, businesses, policymakers, health professionals, food banks, Oakland County local government representatives and community organizations to address issues related to food access, sustainability, and economic development.
- Mary Imre is the new director. She will address the action plan on how to implement the County's strategic plan to improve access to nutrition for Oakland County's residents.
- A May meeting is planned, and Rock will bring back more information to the next SAC meeting.

Coordinator Updates:

- Pat Zawadzki, SAC coordinator, reminded the SAC members that the May meeting will be in person at Lookout Lodge – part of Waterford Parks and Recreation, and Waterford Parks P&R will be the featured presenter.
- All SAC members must apply for an identification card for clearance to enter Oakland County buildings. You will be receiving by e-mail an application from the Oakland County Sheriff's office building safety department requesting clearance. The form must include a copy of your driver's license.
- Election results:
 - Recording Secretary Barbara Seldon
 - Second Vice-Chairperson Sylvia Whitmer
 - First Vice-Chairperson Martha Schlesinger
 - Chairperson Cameron McClure for 2025-2026.
 - Pat thanked everyone and especially Rock Abboud for his service as 2023-2024 SAC Chairperson.

SAC Community Updates:

Royetta Ealba (District 1)

- No report at this time.

Mark Kelly (District 2)

- Visited Jim Ellison's office and picked up and distributed the Resource Guides to his 3 senior centers.
- Visited the Troy Senior Center and spoke with Bill Rhoads of the Friends of Troy, who are sponsoring the AARP Senior tax preparation program. He also tried to get a report which detailed how the \$250,000 Senior Center Grant Award was used.
- Visited the Clawson Center and was invited to lunch with Senior Coordinator Lisa Ball. They discussed the Meals on Wheels Program and how it works. Clawson, however, does not participate in the Meals on Wheels Program; instead, they prepare their food on site.
- Royal Oak: The Senior Center Grant Award funded a small mini exercise room for seniors. They are looking to purchase more equipment. It has its own lunchroom and chef. There is no Meals-on-Wheels program.

Suzanne Patton (District 3)

- Madison Heights: the seniors visited the Michigan Central Train Station in March, they had a St. Patrick's Day party, in April they are going to the Guardian Building, the exercise classes are ongoing. Has been busy at the center with the AARP Tax Preparation Program.
- Nothing to report on Hazel Park at this time.

Bridget Giampa (District 6)

- Things are going well in Lake Orion, continues to work toward the change of facilities to the Great Lakes Athletic Club, the club continues to be active with senior trips.
- They have gone on the opening day to the Tigers, historical boat tours planned throughout the summer, continues to take applications for the CHORE program for low-income seniors.

Ronald Ritchie (District 8)

- New member - looking forward to getting more involved and will be with you next month.

Ruth Jordan (District 9)

- Both Pontiac centers are highly active, they print out a monthly activity calendar.
- There is a new initiative where they are using seniors as senior researchers, trying to find out why seniors do not use the centers. They have been holding focus groups interviewing non-participating seniors.
- There is a monthly diabetes class sponsored by Henry Ford Health.
- There was also a presentation by McClaren Health.
- They have cooking, nutrition and hustle dancing classes for seniors at both centers.

- The Kappas sponsored a fish fry with music for both centers.

Cam McClure (District 10)

- Responsible for the “J” and The Lifelong Recreation and Senior Service Center - Legget Campus.
- Part of the former OCC Campus has been purchased due to a recently passed Waterford Township Millage. The Plan is to combine the operations of the Waterford Senior Center and the Lifelong Recreation and Senior Services Center and move the services to a renovated building on the former OCC Campus. The Waterford Senior Center has been renamed the Lifelong Recreation and Senior Services – Leggett Campus. Their websites have been combined and Candace Tucker, Senior Coordinator oversees both buildings. The renovations and final relocations will take approximately two years to complete.
- In the interim Ronald Ritchie will continue to have responsibility for the Lifelong Recreation and Senior Services Center located on Williams Lake Road and Cam McClure will continue have responsibility for the Leggett Campus Center on Pontiac Lake Road.

Sylvia Whitmer (District 11)

- Represents West Bloomfield. Her center is called West Bloomfield CONNECT. A \$25 Million Bond was passed allowing West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation to build the West Bloomfield Community Center on the West Bloomfield Municipal Campus. The existing Senior Center Operations will be moved to the new building. It will take about three years to get the center completed. The existing West Bloomfield Connect Senior Center membership continues to grow. There are senior diverse activities scheduled both at the center and the West Bloomfield Park facilities.

Christopher Peal (District 12)

- Dublin Senior Center, Richardson, Commerce Township, and White Lake.
- Attended the State of the County Address and was glad to see that other SAC members were present.
- Visited the Dublin center and was able to meet with the Meals-on-Wheels coordinator.
- Has been doing research about social isolation. He has a great concern about children and seniors being socially isolated. Having face-to-face connections with other people is important; research shows that one in four seniors over 65 are experiencing social isolationism. He is exploring ideas about how to beat isolationism by getting seniors involved. The #1 use of generative AI has been for therapy and companionship. This is a cause of concern

Norene Yuskowatz (District 13)

- Highland, Milford, and South Lyon
- South Lyon has hired Susan McCoy for fill their Senior Center Director position. Norene met with Susan and was quite impressed by how Susan sees her new role as the new director. There will be no tax preparations done for seniors this year. Hopefully, Senior Tax Preparation Services will be reimplement next year.

Judy Smiley (District 14)

- Responsible for Walled Lake, Wixom.
- Does volunteer work at St. Joes hospital in Pontiac. She collaborates with seniors that have lost a loved one. SAC will be a fantastic resource to pass on information about what is going on in some of the districts.

Brenda Anderson (15)

- Responsible for Northville Adult Services Center.
- Also providing SAC coverage for the Farmington Hills Costic Center located in District 16.
- Will be having a meeting to catch up with both senior centers.
- Wants to know if there is a speaker bureau. Jim Ellison could help.
- There may be consideration for the idea of “Bring Your Parent to a Senior Center Day” to increase growth and interest in getting senior participation.

Barbara Seldon (District 17)

- Responsible for Oak Park and Southfield.
- Had a lunch meeting with the Chaldean Foundation’s Sharkey Haddad (Special Projects Manager), Farah Shammami (Program Coordinator) and Commissioner Yoland Smith-Charles. It was highly informative. The Foundation wanted to know more about diversity and inclusion in the Southfield P&R senior activities.
 - The essence of the meeting was to develop a survey to determine why the Chaldean communities do not participate in Southfield senior activities at the senior centers. What can be done to make Chaldeans feel welcome and want to participate? Have any community districts looked into speaking to them and including them in their activities? Most importantly, what are specific ideas from the centers, of activities that may be included in the new Chaldean community center. Many suggestions were made to include designing a survey, SAC members going out and speaking to them, and Commissioner Charles Introducing certain ideas to the Board of Commissioners.
- The City of Southfield administrators continue to prepare to meet with the seniors on best use for the \$250,000 Senior Center Grant Award. Their plans are to adjust the first plans that the seniors suggested and to come prepared to show the design changes and to get additional opinions and suggestions.

Gregory Keeler (District 17 & 18)

- The seniors call themselves “Seasoned Citizens.”

- Some of the Seasoned Citizen Groups are growing faster than the current space allows. The card players do not have enough space to hold their events.
- Other seasoned citizens are interested in going to the DIA and are interested in going on other trips.
- They are interested in SAC. They want to know who we are, what we do, and how we function.
- At the State of the County Address, a number of Ferndale residents and the Mayor of Ferndale spoke to Greg about their senior programming and getting it back on track. He suggested partnering with Royal Oak Township since they are side by side.
- The Chores program is going well. They continue to have computer classes, diabetes workshops, and a pancake breakfast. For Mother's Day they will have a Luncheon, and the last trip to the DIA is also coming up. They are happy with the new exercise equipment.
- Southfield is planning a day to discuss the re-design and the consideration of two things: Are they using the funds for post-COVID and for Seniors? What are they doing with the Senior Center Grant Award?
- Southfield seasoned citizens are looking for a place to call their own.

Rock Abboud – (Chairperson and Member At-Large)

- Responsible for Birmingham NEXT.
- There is an architectural program for the new facility, a lobby, a dedicated fitness room, space for administrative offices, a large gym with an elevated track, commercial kitchen, and six multipurpose rooms. Birmingham will need a bond that will go out in August. It may cost about \$38,000 dollars.
- He shared that he has earned the prestigious Level 4 Ambassador Award with the Michigan Municipal League's (MML) Elected Officials Academy (EOA).
- Chairperson Abboud thanked everyone for allowing him to serve as Chair and asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Adjournment

Chair Abboud called for adjournment and announced the next meeting date and time. The meeting was adjourned at 12:34 PM.

NEXT MEETING
Monday, May 12th, 2025
10 AM – 12 noon
Lookout Lodge - Waterford Parks and Recreation
1702 Scott Lake Road, Waterford, MI