

Minutes – Draft
Senior Services | Aging in Place Task Force
Community Engagement and Inclusion Working Group
Tuesday, January 11, 2022, at 6:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

2. Roll Call/ Introduction

Community Engagement and Inclusion Working Group roll call:

Present: Sarah Kindinger Chair; Ellen Kehoe;Carolynn Moore; Christina Clarke; Sandy Irwin; Deb Soverinsky; Howard Collens

Absent: None

Others Present: Susan Barkman, Assistant to the City Manager; Peter Young, City Manager Fellow

Group member introductions:

Deb Soverinsky: I've lived in Royal Oak for 32 years and like to volunteer for groups; I'm one of the founding members of Commission for the Arts. Interested in this work group because she's been a caregiver for many years and knows the difficulties that seniors face.

Sandy Irwing: Has moved around the country but moved to Royal Oak last October. Royal Oak Public Library Director. I work with older adults all the time though the library and would like to gain more insight into how libraries can serve older adults. Interested in aging in place.

Howard Collens: I'm an attorney and focuses on estate planning, estate management, and elder representation. From Huntington Woods, town next door to Royal Oak. Board member of Area Agency on Aging 1B; also interested because parents are getting get up there in age.

Carolynn Moore: I've lived 6 years in Royal Oak and from Farmington previously. Interested in aging in place and engagement and inclusion. Recently retired from a career in IT. Interested in starting programs for young seniors.

Christina Clarke: Bought a home in Royal Oak last summer; From Michigan but husband is in Navy so had to move often. Moved back home and would like to volunteer and be a part of the community.

Ellen Kehoe: Young retiree and lifelong resident. I love royal oak and would like to get people involved in the things to do in Royal Oak. I'm interested in housing for seniors.

Peter Young: I'm a Graduate City Manager Fellow--basically the intern. I'm also the Staff liaison for the Royal Oak Commission for the Arts. I'm Here to take notes and help however I can.

Susan Barkman: Staff liaison for aging in place; grew up in Michigan; spent last 16 years in CO. Technical host for the meeting.

Sarah: Chair of the Community Engagement and Inclusion Working Group. Also on the Parks Rec advisory board and functioning as the Parks and Rec liaison on this board. Interested in creating a livable community for all.

Questions and discussion:

Over the next 6 months charged to create action items

What is community engagement? The community engagement domain is: Civic participation, social partition, and respect and social inclusion.

We're going to have 6 meetings. There may be homework. Start thinking about the other groups we may want to hear from. Today we will talk about our goals for this group.

Deb: How many in this group are over 62? We have a different viewpoint than people are younger than us.

Sarah: We have different perspectives. We want to keep in mind people of different age groups present and future.

Deb: Not sure what the set goals are. I've seen a lot of changes and not sure if I'm happy about it. The things we're focusing on now we should have focused on 20 years ago. City focuses on the wrong things that aren't for older people.

Sarah: Focus on the things we can look forward to and see how we can impact future change.

3. Elect co-chair

Motion: Elect Howard Collens as co-chair

Motion by: Sarah Kindinger

Aye: All

Nay: None

Passes Unanimously.

4. Setting ground rules

What are some of our ground rules?

Assume best intentions.

Respect people's opinions.

Don't interrupt when people are speaking.

Raise a hand when you want to talk.

Try to be openminded.

Be honest and open.

5. Summary of domain data

Discussion about community engagement and inclusion data:

- Deb: Didn't realize parking was such a big deal. Wish more people had participated in the survey. Liked that people's comments were in it.
- Carolynn: Survey didn't really point to major issues to address.

- Howard: 27% felt not connected to community. Not sure if that a large number or small number and is it reflective of the general population. It could be a larger percent when considering the people that aren't involved.
- Sarah: I think it comes down to right fit and where they get information. There could be difficulty in finding information.
- Howard: If this percent is true, then this should be a motivating factor for the work group. It struck me as the most negative data point.
- Deb: Many of the replies came from before the pandemic and spread into last year. The city had a lot of engaging things; summer concerts and other events stopped because of pandemic. The pandemic makes it hard.
- Sarah: Question 19 on page 32 is where the community connection data point is found.
- Carolynn: The survey could have detailed feelings prior to the pandemic.
- Sandy: Goal—identify revive and revitalize popular senior activities. Find out what seniors were doing and bring those back.
- Howard: The survey page 17 lays out areas of focus.
- Christina: Look at existing events and asking if they're accessible because of mobility issues
- Carolynn: Senior category has a wide range; better to consider different interests over ages because of the wide range.
- Howard: "Go-go", "slow-go", and "no-go" are helpful ways to group people that include more than seniors.
- Deb: Concerned about seniors that don't get out of their homes; no one comes to see them. Agree that each group of seniors has different needs and perspectives.
- Sarah: I like Howard's idea.
- Ellen: Agrees with Howard.
- Sandy: Agrees with all of that. Also concerned about people being homebound. It is important to build social infrastructure to care for people aging in place.
- Deb: Has conversations with friends about aging with them in a communal home.
- Carolynn: Neighbors don't know neighbors anymore. Not sure what building social infrastructure would look like.
- Sandy: Part of it what cities provide for residents. Government provided spaces are areas people can meet and congregate. We can identify what kind of activities can bring people out of their homes. We identify strategies, tools, and actions to build social infrastructure.
- Christina: Would love to have a neighbor-to-neighbor program.
- Carolynn: Build things in parks for a wider age range and not just for children.

- Deb: Older people like a variety of social activities catered to their personal needs. We must engage people to facilitate these social activities.
- Howard: We need to set some goals for employment.
- Sarah: We can come back to employment.
- Sandy: There was an attempt to the survey to homebound with little success.
- Howard: Grandparents raising grandchildren should be discussed.
- Carolynn: Create 'ready when you are' programs. Reach out to caregivers to reach seniors.
- Sandy: We should engage with Inter-Club Counsel. Lots of opportunity to connect seniors with jobs.
- Carolynn: Consider cooperating with other communities for employment opportunities. Boston gave \$1000 off their taxes for a reduction of taxes for work.
- Deb: Westbourne market had older workers. Work took them longer, but it may work if we get used to older workers who sometimes work slower.
- Sarah: Goal--Identify and promote ways for volunteering/employment application.
- Howard: Only 2% are looking for employment, so I'm not sure if this is important. It's hard to tease apart employment and volunteer opportunities from the data. Employment issues may not be our best use of energy.
- Sarah: Focus group was looking more at volunteer opportunities.

6. Vision statement

Vision statement was not discussed at this meeting.

7. Next meeting format

Next meeting will meet virtually online.

8. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn at 8:06 p.m.

Motion by: Sarah Kindinger

Aye: All

Nay: None.

Passes Unanimously.