

SENIORS SERVICES TASK FORCE
Minutes of Meeting
Wednesday, April 22nd 2009
North Fraser Metis Association, 7726 Edmonds St., Burnaby.

In attendance: Marg McKee, Chair; Mariam Larson, SSTF Co-ordinator; Jan Greenhow, Joy Barkwill, Susan Didier, Syl Helmink, David Jones, Diane Murakami, Judi Sofroni, Karen Van der Hoop, Patricia Smith, Kate Rexin, Heather Whiteford, Betty McIntosh, Jim Mair, John Stark, Corey McLaren, Morgan McGrath.

Regrets: Terry Farrell, Gary Weishaar, Lynn Stokes, Bill Zander, Judith Dale, Lynda Brind-Dickson, Alison Marshall, Julie Rogal, Beverley Pitman, Gabriele Scully.

Mariam brought a message from Lynn Osborn who has been representing MLA Puchmayr on the Task Force, to say that she will not be attending future meetings of the Task Force as she is moving to a different position. She thanked the Task Force for its good work.

1. Welcome and Adoption of Agenda.

Marg McKee welcomed those present. Susan Didier moved to adopt the Agenda. Seconded by Karen Van der Hoop. AIF. Carried.

2. Adoption of the Minutes of the meeting of February 25, 2009.

Syl Helmink moved to adopt the Minutes of the February 25 meeting as circulated. Seconded by Dave Jones. AIF. Carried.

3. Introductions.

Marg asked those present to introduce themselves. She thanked Susan for arranging for the task force to meet at the North Fraser Metis Association Hall on this occasion.

4. Panel Presentation & Discussion: “What makes a meeting ‘senior friendly’?”

Panelists: Jan Greenhow (Century House), Syl Helmink (Queensborough), Jim Mair (Dunwood), Patricia Smith (Century House and Dunwood).

The following factors were identified as key to make a meeting ‘senior friendly’:

Environment:

- Good audibility and lighting
- Accessible meeting space with comfortable seating
- Microphones are helpful
- Consider “green” elements, be environmentally friendly

Location:

- Choose a safe, accessible location
- Close to main transit routes and/or with good parking
- There might be value in “outreach” model, going to where groups already meet, in conjunction with a regularly scheduled meeting.

Timing:

- Daytime is preferred
- Avoid long sessions

- Schedule frequent breaks and/or time to stretch
- Keep meetings on time, with clear agenda

Social:

- Friendly atmosphere (hugs matter)
- Positive body language, inclusive
- Provide refreshments during breaks
- The idea that seniors are not listened to must be changed.
- Sensitive, respectful, inclusive language must be used.

Participants:

- Ensure participation of “elite” organizations and agencies to promote social networking and knowledge sharing which is reported back to groups.
- In mixed age groups avoid seniors’ perception of being dismissed, and that their views have no value.

Content:

- Content must be relevant to the target group.
- Meetings should have a fairly narrow focus. i.e. not “age friendly” but “transit in an age-friendly city.”
- Do not focus on the “senior” aspect as it may limit participation
- Avoid jargon and reports composed of acronyms.
- Plan WITH seniors, not FOR seniors (COSCO statement)

Marketing and promotion:

- Local promotion and information about upcoming meetings is crucial.

Morgan requested clarification of the Task Force Mandate. Syl read from the Terms of Reference when the Task Force was established in 2005, as follows:

“That a community of seniors committee be struck by the SSTF whose mandate is to coordinate and communicate the needs of our aging population.”

6. Reports.

A. BUILT ENVIRONMENT & ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION (BEAT Project).

John gave a background on the BEAT Project, explaining that it is a “Wheelability” Assessment of the Uptown and Downtown areas of New Westminster. Funding of \$25,000.00 is provided by a grant from The Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM). This allowed for the hiring of two consultants; Opus Engineering for development of the assessment and mapping tools, and Mariam Larson as Project Facilitator.

The first Working Group Meeting will be May 5, 2009, 12:00 - 2:00 at Century House.

The study will include sending seniors out into the community using a recording template; developing maps to help seniors choose their routes through the city; and setting up dialogues between seniors and those city employees who inform the decision making. The project is open to all ages of people who use mobility aids such as walkers, scooters, or wheelchairs and their support people.

B. SSTF Co-ordinator reports:

i. Code of Conduct: Mariam reported that she had circulated the Code of Conduct Draft 2 and as no changes were requested she will present it as is to the Governance sub-committee for ratification at their May meeting. If it passes, it will go to the full SSTF for ratification at the June 24 meeting.

ii. Funding Opportunities:

Mariam gave a brief report on grants which are available, one being from the Union of BC Municipalities, with an application deadline of May 15, and another from New Horizons with a deadline of June 12. Those interested are asked to contact Mariam for details.

iii. IMBY Fair Options:

Funding from the United Way contract must be used by July 2009. The committee supports having an IMBY Fair in Seniors' Week, which is June 7 to 13, 2009. AIF.

The fair would be at Century House on June 6 or 13. Joy will check available space.

Susan suggested that the Task Force might consider applying for a grant from "Celebrate Canada" perhaps in conjunction with National Aboriginal Day on June 21.

7. Recommendation Action Group Reports:

Mariam gave a brief overview of how the Action Groups were formed, noting that different recommendations topic areas require three types of leadership to ensure progress:

1. Agency: Health and mental health, housing, transportation, personal assistance
2. Community/city: Housing/age friendly environment, safety, recreation
3. Senior/consumer: Education and communication, recreation.

Progress is also influenced by funding timing and criteria, the degree of action orientation of the participants, immediate community needs, and the degree of opportunity for senior involvement.

A. Housing and Built Environment: John Stark

John reported on three elements:

- 1) The city's affordable housing strategy in progress.
- 2) The on-going Age Friendly City initiative/Wheelability.
A report will go back to city and council next month.
Report will highlight findings and recommendations.
- 3) The BEAT Grant as detailed in # 5 above.

B. Security & Safety: Dave Jones

Dave clarified his mandate as Emergency Management for the City. Police, fire and ambulance are handled by the province. Emergency Management means identifying hazards and having plans in place to deal with the situation when an emergency occurs and the aftermath. A hazards risk and vulnerability analysis is being done, and

he will be asking Mayor and Council to endorse a plan for Emergency Management which will include a snow and ice plan. He reported that 57 hazards have been identified within BC. He felt that Emergency Social Services should be a part of the Task Force.

C. Transportation: Susan Didier

Susan reported that her action group is looking at a variety of proposals and grants. There is a grant available of up to \$25,000.00 to develop a transportation advertising campaign which would require a City tie-in.

Mariam suggested Susan let the Governance sub-committee know what grants are available for transportation development. The starting point may be to identify gaps in services and how to fill them.

Susan sought input from the Metis Elders. 10 have already been interviewed on the topic of how they experience the transit system in New Westminster. The results will be documented and will need assessment.

The idea of a 'buddy' system for safety has been suggested. This is thought to be necessary particularly around skytrain stations. It might be possible to partner seniors with youth.

D. Education & Communication: Joanne Robertson

With reference to # 14 in the Recommendations Status Summary 2008, there was discussion around a 24 hour help-line and how it would differ from other help-lines which are already available.

The Seniors Services Database where consumers can find the services they require is still in development. There is a need to increase the training of volunteers to allow them to link consumers to services. Dave said that an online tutorial is in the process of development. This could tie-in with emergency preparedness.

With reference to #15 in the Recommendations Status Summary 2008, Joanne suggested that there is a need to publicize this so that letters can be written to the Premier.

E. Personal assistance, support and recreation: Jan Greenhow, Patricia Smith

The action group presented a report in which they recommended that information pamphlets be distributed to 6 locations in New Westminster. Each of these locations was visited to ascertain if the authorities there would be willing to display such materials. Only two responded as needing further discussion; Royal Square Mall which is under new management and Royal City Mall which would not normally agree to such a display but is willing to talk.

The material displayed would include The Clarion from Century House, and selected pamphlets on available services. Century House volunteers would be available to service the display racks.

The cost of racks is included in the report.

The next steps are:

- a) Confirmation from the Committee as to the proposal.
- b) Which publications to display and the criteria for displaying them.
- c) Funding for the racks, and additional printing costs of The Clarion.

A suggestion was made that the information be put on the Parks & Recreation website, and that a card be installed on the racks which directs the consumer to the website if the pamphlets have run out.

F. Health and Mental Health Services: Karen van der Hoop

Considered Recommendations 18, and 21, Karen reported that the sub-committee met with RCH/QPCC, Home health and Mental Health stakeholders to look at these recommendations. Two meetings were held with a total of 14 persons in attendance.

Their brainstorming resulted in approximately 20 suggestions, which would need to be prioritized at another meeting.

Recommended action for # 18:

That the sub committee and stakeholders above partner with Seniors Services Society for a prioritizing session where each participant would identify their priorities, with the goal of narrowing the focus to the top three or four issues.

Deliverables would be the focus for SSTF, as they would need to decide which can be done with volunteers from Seniors Services. Some of the issues, such as the transition from hospital to home would ordinarily be done by families but many seniors do not have local family or friends to assist.

Recommended action for # 21:

Developing strategies to meet Emergent health and mental health needs is a sweeping recommendation which would have a budget impact as it would mean expanding some services that have been cut back, or do not exist. Fraser Health would not have funds to provide money for initiatives without lobbying the Ministry of Health. Recommend brainstorming with all affected agencies to prioritize the issues is also recommended.

Comment: Syl commended Marg for the efficient way she chaired the meeting.

8. Announcements: Next meeting is Wednesday, June 24, 2009, Location TBD.

9. Adjournment at 3 pm.