

## **Age-Friendly Steering Committee**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019**

**Present:** Maria Benjamins, Member  
Barbara Moore, Member  
Sharon Tinkler, Member  
Anne Learn-Sharpe, Member  
Yvon Lalande, Member  
Teresa Jazwinski, Member  
Susan Makepeace, Member

**Also Present:**

Matthew Graystone, Ryerson Student  
Madalene Albano, Ryerson Student  
Diana Guida, Ryerson Student  
Anneliese Gembus, Ryerson Student  
Tom Ostler, Instructor – Ryerson University  
Liam Munnoch, Junior Planner  
Elizabeth Davis, Building and Planning Coordinator

#### **1. Welcome & Introductions:**

L. Munnoch began the meeting with introductions and opening remarks. The Ryerson Student Team introduced themselves, followed by the Committee Members.

#### **2. Review of Package Materials:**

M. Graystone verbally walked the Committee Members through each item.

Committee Member, M. Benjamins noted that the Committee should identify the assets of the community, further stating that if you build off of the assets that already exist you can find solutions to barriers. It is when you have not identified your assets, you will

struggle to overcome barriers. M. Benjamins also suggested that the Ryerson Student Team explore Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) and use this approach to help guide the Committee going forward.

Committee Members agreed that other members of the community who may have an interest in this Committee, but may not be seniors themselves should be invited to meetings to provide their insight.

Committee Members examined the question of how to represent people with accessibility needs, or who otherwise are unable to attend these meetings.

M. Graystone suggested that the Committee may conduct a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Constraints (SWOT) exercise in future meetings.

Committee Member, M. Benjamins noted that the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit website may be helpful in providing local statistics and information.

### **3. Future Meeting Dates and Topics Discussion:**

It was noted that the Age-Friendly Steering Committee Meeting will be held on Thursdays from 5:00PM to 7:00PM. Meetings will be held on the following dates:

- October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019;
- October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019;
- November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019; and
- November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019.

A link to the Township of Essa's Procedural Order By-law and Code of Conduct is being circulated to all Committee Members via email.

### **4. Activity and World Health Organization (WHO) Discussion:**

The Ryerson Student Team introduced the WHO Age-Friendly Dimensions.

Committee Members discussed the WHO Age-Friendly Dimension of Housing. It was noted that it takes two people with pensions to carry a household, single people, or those who have lot spouses struggle to afford housing.

Committee Member, Y. Lalande stated that housing affordability was based on the individual what they could afford. He felt that others might be penalized if Township/Government money was spent on affordable housing initiatives.

Committee Member, M. Benjamins stated that the Committee should be careful about putting people in boxes and making general statements. She identified that the health unit has the stats to back up that minimum wage workers do not make enough, many still require assistance from the food bank. She noted that 1 in 8 families are living in

poverty and in all of Simcoe-Muskoka 70,000 people are living in poverty. She identified that Simcoe County considers affordable housing to be 75% of the market value. Affordability does not address poverty and she identified that she is part of a group advocating for a guaranteed income supplement. When you address poverty it becomes easier to deal with other issues.

Committee Members discussed the Angus Gardens Senior Citizens Complex, one Committee Member informed the group that her father built the complex. Originally the sale of units was to be geared towards the buyer's income. This may no longer be the case and the Ryerson Student Team has been asked to research this. It was identified that this complex has a long waiting list and there might be another senior housing building located at 40 Margaret Street.

Committee Members discussed the strengths of housing within Essa Township. It was noted by Members that taxes are low and there is a good variety of housing typologies such as bungalows, trailers, townhomes, etc. It was brought up that housing costs must also consider property taxes, utilities fees, etc.

T. Ostler recommended that the Ryerson Student Team bring information on what programs are available in regards to affordable housing.

M. Benjamins would like to be provided a population breakdown between the urban and rural areas of Essa, including how many people live within the major towns of Angus, Baxter and Thornton.

Committee Members noted that the bus service might not be profitable, but was a community asset. There are no retirement or assisted living facilities within Essa Township. One Member asked if sustainable building options/practices could cut the costs of utilities, and if so, by how much? Members noted that having to move out of Essa to live in a retirement home or with assistance is isolating for seniors.

M. Benjamins asked the Ryerson Student Team to conduct research ahead of meetings and provide reports for future topics so that the Committee can build off of research in its discussion.

## **5. Needs Assessment Survey**

The Ryerson Student Team introduced the Needs Assessment Survey to the Committee Members. Members then completed these survey questionnaires with the remaining allotted time.

## **6. Adjournment**

The next Age-Friendly Steering Committee Meeting will be held at the Township Administrative Centre, in Council Chambers, beginning at 4:30PM so that the Ryerson Student Team might present their interim presentation to the Committee Members.

The discussion surrounding the WHO Age-Friendly Dimension was deferred to the Oct. 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

The Mental Mapping Exercise was deferred to the Oct. 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00PM.