

ST. JOHN'S

Seniors' Advisory Committee - Minutes

September 15, 2020

9:30 a.m.

Virtual

Present: Glenda Reid, Citizen Representative
Lorraine Best, Seniors NL
Devonne Ryan, Public Representative (19-35)
Deanne Stapleton, Council Representative
Judy Tobin, Manager of Housing
Neil Hamilton, CARP
Neil Moores, NLPSPA
Ruby Constantine, Citizen Representative
Sharron Callahan, Chair (CARP)

Regrets: Patsy Yetman, Citizen Representative

Staff: Karen Sherriffs, Manager of Community Development
Robyn Dobbin, Adult & Seniors Co-ordinator
Maureen Harvey, Legislative Assistant

Others: Carla Squires, Manager of Recreational Facilities

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Recommendation

Moved By Neil Hamilton

Seconded By Ruby Constantine

That the agenda be adopted as presented

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

3.1 Adoption of Minutes - June 16, 2020

Recommendation

Moved By Neil Moores

Seconded By Glenda Reid

That the minutes of June 16, 2020 be adopted as presented.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. DELEGATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

4.1 New Design - H.G.R Mews Community Centre

Carla Squires was present for this portion of the meeting and gave an overview of the proposed new H.G.R. Mews Community Centre. Information is as follows:

The City has been planning for the replacement of the H. G. R. Mews Community Centre for the past two years. To date, site reviews have been completed and public engagement has taken place on both the location of the new facility and the needs of the community in relation to amenities and programming. On Monday, Aug 19, 2019, City council voted to locate the new facility in Mundy Pond Park adjacent to other recreation facilities in the area which will also include the new Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities Accessible playground.

Since fall 2019, staff have been working to advance the design of the new building, incorporating what was heard through the engagement processes in 2018 and 2019 and now have something to share with the community. Check out the visuals in the document library including an aerial view showing the placement of both the building and the playground in Mundy Pond Park, the floor plans, and the amenities overview document. Use the quick poll tools below to tell us what you think of the design and use the questions and comments tool to leave your thoughts.

Members of the Seniors Advisory Committee had provided significant input to the design of the other city facilities recently built and would like the opportunity to provide feedback to ensure the older adult population is represented. The advisory committee can also avail and promote the

following opportunities to engage.

The City of St. John's invites the public to visit engagestjohns.ca to review the new concept design of the H.G.R Mews Community Centre replacement facility, to be constructed at Mundy Pond Park.

Public and stakeholder input from the first two rounds of public engagement for this project have influenced the overall design. The Committee was invited to visit engagestjohns.ca to see a rendering of the front view of the facility, a bird's eye view of the building and park amenities, as well as floor plans and layouts for the interior of the facility.

Virtual public meetings to review the concept design and floor plans will take place using Microsoft Teams on September 22nd and September 24th. The committee was encouraged to register online to participate.

It was noted the city is also meeting with key stakeholders and users of the current facility such as sporting and aquatics organizations, the Boys and Girls Club, and the Inclusion Advisory Committee.

Next steps for the project include translating the concept design into detailed design and preparation of a tender package. Award of the tender is anticipated for early 2021 with work on site expected to start in Spring 2021. The new facility will open approximately two years from the start of construction.

Residents unable to participate online can contact Access St. John's at 311 or 754-CITY and ask to speak with someone from the project team, or email engage@stjohns.ca.

The Committee thanked Carla for the presentation and following her departure discussed and agreed as follows:

1. On a broader level of engagement, it was suggested that the Seniors Advisory Committee be contacted for a separate consultation session. This matter was discussed at the previous meeting and a meeting was held with the City Clerk to suggest a more robust engagement on city projects by the Committee. The Committee opined that advisory committees, by the very nature of their interests being important to Council as demonstrated by their creation and appointment, warrants more formal feedback.
2. It was noted that often there are overlapping interests among advisory committees and as such a collaborative session with committees

having mutual interest may be in order. For example: Inclusion Committee and Seniors Committees (considering accessibility and aging) often have similar issues as it relates to projects. It was agreed that staff and Councillor Stapleton would follow up with the City Clerk on how this can be facilitated, particularly as it relates to the MEWS Centre. It was also agreed that Karen would reach out to the lead staff of the Inclusion Committee to collaborate on this engagement.

3. While it is recognized that some engagement initiatives are required by staff on short notice, those, such as the MEWS Centre, warrant more lead time.
4. The Committee asserted that the previous check-in with all advisory committees a few years ago was valuable and a similar check-in is welcomed and would be a good opportunity for engagement discussion.

Councillor Stapleton questioned the process by which the entire Council can be kept apprised of the work happening within the Committee. It was noted this matter is under review by the Office of the City Clerk.

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

5.1 Adult & Seniors Recreation Opportunities for Fall 2020

The Committee was reminded that many older adults during Covid-19 have become socially isolated and their overall wellness has been affected. Following guidance from the City's OHS Division, the Department of Health and the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the City's Recreation Division has developed a plan to resume programming for Adults & Seniors in the Fall 2020 season.

During the regular fall season, many older adult programs are available including, music, dance, art, leisure, events & outings. After review by City management and adult & senior program staff, it was determined that many of the regular programs will be offered with procedures to ensure the required adjustments and modifications have been made to meet the guidelines identified by the Department of Health and that the safety of participants are prioritized.

The Committee was referred to a recent media release for adult and senior programs to increase promotion and awareness and was asked to forward the media release link to any organizations felt would benefit. I

<http://stjohns.ca/media-release/adult-and-senior-recreation-programs>

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.1 COVID-19 Seniors' Working Group Con't

The Committee discussed this matter noting the province had established a Vulnerable Populations Task Group back in May consisting of several working groups looking at various issues from housing to food security to help during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Robyn Dobbin represented the Seniors Advisory Committee on this Seniors working group and continues to receive and forward relevant information to members of the Seniors Advisory Committee as it becomes available.

Meetings have concluded but feedback was given by members of the Seniors Working Group back in August through a Vulnerable Populations Task Group Questionnaire. Below are a few of the questions and responses asked of members:

1. What do you see as the key accomplishment(s) of your working group during the COVID-19 Response?

Identification of systemic issues that have emerged or been highlighted because of COVID-19. Some issues can be managed effectively through emergency response (food security, dispensing fees). However, many of these issues will require broader policy and program development moving forward. This includes the digital divide that adds to social isolation, the financial security, and overall health of older adults.

2. What gaps still exist in the COVID-19 response to support vulnerable populations?

The focus on on-line communications, particularly through social media makes it more challenging for vulnerable populations to access accurate information from trusted sources. The digital divide and financial challenges faced by vulnerable populations are the significant gaps identified by the working group. Finally, the importance access to daily services and supports for seniors and vulnerable persons remains an issue.

3. What initiatives/solutions are key to addressing these gaps?

- Research to identify the roots of issues (what is the role for ARC - NL, NLCHI, and NLCAHR)

- Incorporation of vulnerable persons into government communication

strategies. Low-tech/no-tech approach needs to be used to reach some of these groups

-Knowledge mobilization

The Committee thanked staff for the information and welcomed the continued receipt of information to inform SAC members and City of St. John's Communications Division of most relevant information shared from Government of NL and other group contacts

6.2 Seniors Day 2021

Seniors Day is an event that is coordinated by a sub-committee of the Seniors' Advisory Committee. Seniors Day is an opportunity for the City of St. John's to recognize seniors and provide them with information to improve their quality of life. This is an annual event that attracts members of the public (primarily seniors), community organizations, members of council and the media.

SAC members discussed the following items recognizing the 2021 will take on a different format in light of COVID.

1. Seniors Day Sub-committee members - Ruby Constantine, Neil Hamilton, Devonne Ryan, Sharron Callahan, and staff members Robyn Dobbin and Christine Fitzgerald.
2. Date - to be recommended by subcommittee giving consideration to the date of National Seniors Day of October 1, 2021 but keeping in mind the municipal general election of September 2021.
3. Location - to be recommended by subcommittee - virtual or in-person
4. Covid-19 guidelines and how they will affect such a large event.

6.3 Grant update

Robyn reported that, the \$5K grant received from Government of Canada - United Way, enabled staff to distribute d approximately 150 food hampers to low income seniors. Community gardens were also established and a summer outreach project for seniors met with great success.

The Committee thanked and commended all staff involved.

7. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:00 am. The next meetings were set for November 17, 2020 and February 9, 2021.

CHAIRPERSON, SHARRON CALLAHAN