



# OAK PARK TOWNSHIP

SENIOR SERVICES

## SENIOR SERVICES COMMITTEE MINUTES FOR OAK PARK AND RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIPS

**Wednesday, February 15, 2023 at 7:00pm**

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone.

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/546328413>

You can also dial in using your phone.

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Access Code: 546-328-413

The purpose of the Committee includes promotion and outreach, strategic planning, evaluation, special projects, and recruitment of committee members. Committee members bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to Senior Services for the benefit of our residents and provide programmatic recommendations to our Board of Trustees.

### CALL TO ORDER

The monthly meeting of the Senior Services Committee of Oak Park and River Forest Townships was held on Wednesday, February 15, 2023, and called to order by Chairperson Ruth Reko at 7:07 PM.

**Present Oak Park Committee:** Pat Koko, Valerie Lester, Sabryna Joi King-Bell, Tim Thomas-Trustee Liaison

**Absent Oak Park Committee:** Drew Roskos, Joy Aaronson

**Present River Forest Committee:** Ruth Reko, Briselda Gjikondi

**Absent River Forest Committee:** Carolyn Foster, Jean Buckley, Lydia Manning, Jim Flanagan, Margaret Rudnik

**Also Present:** Pamela Mahn, Director of Senior Services for Oak Park & River Forest Townships; Yazmin Morales, Information & Resource and Housing Specialist for Senior

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## SENIOR SERVICES

Services of Oak Park & River Forest Townships, Betsy Burton-Kelly, Senior Outreach Coordinator for River Forest Township.

### INTRODUCTIONS

All the attendees had the opportunity to say their names and the Township they represent.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The committee reviewed the minutes from January 18, 2023 meeting. Sabryna Joi King-Bell moved to approve the minutes. Pat Koko seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

### SPECIAL GUEST

Special guest, Marc Blesoff, Chairperson of the Village of Oak Park Aging in Place Commission, presented an overview of the Commission.

- The commission has met two times; the meeting is held on the 2nd Tuesday of every month.
- Seven commissioners have been appointed. Even though the commission is new and new members have been appointed, two of their initial members remain (Barbara and Monica).
- Commission was founded in 2018 and Marc was appointed in August of last year. The commission is putting together a 2023 plan. The plan aims to raise awareness as more older adults are living in the area.
- Sabryna Joi King-Bell elaborated on the HomeSharing program and emphasizing the importance of background checks for the safety of the seniors residing in Oak Park. Sabryna asked to please discuss the ability for seniors to keep their pets as they are a source of comfort and provide mental/physical stability at home. Sabryna also suggested utilizing resident veterans as they are professionally trained observants, and they can help with safety matters.
- The committee invited Marc to return.

### Questions & Answer section:

- Is there a budget?

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- Not sure, things are still being figured out, if a budget is needed the commission is sure the funding will be available.
- Would the new commission work on Dementia Friendly initiatives?
  - There is a possibility in which landlords would be trained on Dementia Friendly initiatives. Marc would like to see an implementation of this.
- Would housing be part of the commission conversation?
  - Initial discussion has been shared regarding the topic of affordable housing in the area.
  - Wednesday Journal published an article on affordable housing but did not talk about seniors. The commission wants seniors to be included in this conversation.
- Celebrating Seniors committee would like to collaborate with the commission, is there a possibility?
  - The commission would like to collaborate and accepted the invitation.
- Is there a certain criteria to join the commission, younger individuals under 60 would like to be considered.
  - Past commission had an age requirement for the representatives, this might be able to change as the commission is open for suggestions. Not sure but it can be discussed.
- Committee members asked Marc to please consider more Oak Park representation in the commission.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments

### **OPT LIAISON'S REPORT**

Oak Park representative Tim Thomas-Trustee Liaison presented the report.

- New construction is happening at the Township creating open space for staff and the Mental Health program is moving to the Recreation Center.

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- Tim acknowledged the work provided by the Township regarding housing and how affordable housing matters.
- During the board meeting there was a nutritional presentation/ Home Delivered Meals, which was very informative.
- General Assistance (GA) aids single clients but would like to implement an emergency General Assistance program that would assist clients that are not single, a onetime assistance of \$1,200 would be provided if approved.

### **RFT LIAISON'S REPORT**

Betsy Burton-Kelly, Senior Outreach Coordinator for River Forest Township presented the report:

- Celebrating Seniors is in its 13<sup>th</sup> year, and the celebration will be May 11<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>. There will be many activities planned for that week.
- Betsy is currently attending California Home Sharing Coalition and is trying to connect with other Home Sharing groups/programs to gather more information to get the River Forest Township Home Sharing Program up and running. R.F. residents would receive a mailing to advertise the HomeSharing program.
- Wellness groups are no longer being offered by Concordia's Counseling Center. Dominican University might offer a Reminiscence group, a pilot program with the university students. Betsy will attend a wellness meeting.
- Coffee Mondays was held, and Age Options had a Benefits presentation.
- Arbor West Neighbor did an Asset Map of the area (O.P. R.F. & Forest Park) a few years back and would like to re-visit. Stakeholders will be meeting in March to talk about changes and additions needed. More information will follow.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Pamela Mahn, Director for Senior Services of Oak Park & River Forest Townships shared a written report and asked the committee for questions or comments. The following items were also reviewed:

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- An Assistant to the Director has been hired and will begin working next week.
- The Township Communications & Engagement Specialist was also hired and will begin working with the Township tomorrow.
- The nutrition program is currently reviewing the job description for the open Outreach and Activity position.
- The Illinois Secretary of State Super Senior event will be happening during Celebrating Seniors Week in May, more information will be provided. Senior Services is planning to host at least six events throughout the week.

## REVIEW OF MEETING SCHEDULE

The meeting schedule was provided and reviewed with the attendees.

## SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATES

### Celebrating Seniors

Celebrating Seniors is in its 13<sup>th</sup> year, and the celebration will be May 11<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>. There will be many activities planned for that week and we may see repeats of some previous work and events such as: scavenger hunt, cookie decorations, yard signs, etc. If anyone is interested in volunteering, please let Lydia or Jim know. The event application is ready Lydia can be emailed for more information.

## OTHER BUSINESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 2023 Legislative Breakfast is Monday, March 13, 2023. A flyer was included in the packet. Please RSVP if interested.
- Val suggested submitting letters to the editor of The Wednesday Journal from the committee. One idea is regarding the Key Box Program – These key boxes allow first responders safe and rapid access for both fire and medical emergencies. The cost of a Knox Home Box is generally less than the cost of replacing a door that may have been damaged by fire personnel needing to gain access. Oak Park Township can provide

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financial assistance for eligible residents to purchase and install this secure key box. Information can be found on the Village of Oak Park website <https://www.oak-park.us/village-services/fire-department>.

- Please encourage more members to attend the next Senior Committee Meeting.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Senior Committee is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, March 15, 2023, at 7:00pm.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Ruth Reko adjourned the meeting at 8:15 PM.

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