

SENIORS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Monday January 26, 2015
Angela Morris – Chair
Gail Leet – Vice Chair

Purpose

- To inform General Committee of the outcome of the first Seniors' Forum hosted by the Seniors Advisory Committee on September 16, 2014.

Background

- The City provided a budget of \$2,848 in April 2014 to the Seniors' Advisory Committee (mainly utilized for a Seniors' section in the Markham Life magazine and for the 2014 Seniors' Forum).
- The Seniors' Advisory Committee held their first Seniors' Forum on September 16, 2014 at the Centennial Community Centre
- The event was sponsored by:
 - Revera- Glynwood Retirement Living Residence.
 - Chartwell- Rouge Valley Retirement Residence.
 - The City of Markham.
- Information booths were set up by the following organizations: CHATS, Alzheimer Society of York Region, MEDICHAIR Markham, Revera, Chartwell and Seniors Aid.

Attendees

- Invitations were extended to various Senior organizations within the City of Markham
- There were approximately 40 attendees
- 14 organizations were represented

Questions

The Members of the Senior Advisory Committee developed four questions to be considered.

1. From your (groups) perspective, what are the needs of Seniors living in the City of Markham (i.e. housing, transportation, isolation, health, recreation, safety, etc.)
2. How does your organization serve the needs of Markham Seniors/enhance their lives?
3. What challenges does your organization face in meeting these needs?
4. What assistance/supports would be helpful to your organization in addressing the needs of the Seniors that you serve?

MAIN ISSUES which were derived from Questions 3 and 4

- Transportation
- Available Space
- Funding
- Volunteerism
- Communication

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

Transportation

- As outlined in the attached document this subject was considered and “it is now felt that it is not within the scope of this Committee- that change sits squarely with the Municipal, Provincial and Federal governments”
- Transportation might be improved by initiating sponsorships, engaging younger Seniors, advertising and by approaching Service Clubs within the area
- School buses might also be utilized during off-periods
- A shuttle bus should be considered. A pilot project could be put in place to test one or more of the suggestions put forward

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

Available space

- That the City of Markham consider dedicating a percentage of all future infrastructure to be utilized for Senior space
- That the City of Markham consider providing subsidized available space at various City owned facilities
- That the City of Markham develop a policy to ensure that the fees are consistent throughout the City

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

Funding

- Guidelines for available grants should be clearly documented and available for all
- a need for standardization in both areas of rental and fees
- the creation of non-profit organizations might alleviate some of the issues
- Markham Council join with the numerous developers to include a Senior Centre instead of the proverbial school, park or strip mall

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

Volunteerism

- The idea of a “volunteer fair” similar to a job fair
- Younger adults could be encouraged to assist with Internet and specific web design. The Mayor’s Youth Task Force might provide an avenue
- Markham citizens need to be educated about giving back to the Community
- Residents need to be educated and informed about “what is a volunteer”
- The benefits of volunteerism need to be promoted. The Mayor’s Seniors Hall of Fame Committee should be an avenue for this

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS **Communication**

- City has not and does not take a lead role in identifying Senior concerns, ideas or recognizing the role of Seniors in our Community.
- The City must co-ordinate resources and help organizations to promote their identity and activities, social structure and fees
- City initiatives for Seniors and Seniors groups should be better defined. Suggestions pointed towards websites, bulletin boards, Senior and Awareness Days being held in various locations to minimize transportation but also to capture a maximum audience.
- The Seniors Forum was declared a success and recommended as a vehicle for further dialogue
- It was recommended that the Seniors Advisory Committee play a role in the area of communication

In Conclusion

- Several associated issues were derived from the Forum and they are well documented at the conclusion of the attached report submitted by the Seniors Advisory Committee.
- The Committee would hope that the recommendations made during this presentation will find merit and be viewed as a basis for ongoing dialogue and resolution between the City and their growing Senior population. We would also ask that representative(s) of this Committee be assigned to follow the progress during the necessary steps that are to follow.
- Further, that a staff representative in all instances should report to the Seniors Advisory Committee any activities or progress resulting from this presentation on an immediate basis
- We thank you for this opportunity to express our findings to you today