

TOWN OF KIRKLAND LAKE
AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY PLANNING
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Monday, November 20th, 2017

Council Chambers
3 Kirkland Street
Kirkland Lake, ON

Planning Intern, Brook-Lynn Rozon began the meeting by reminding everyone that there are only two public meetings left to discuss the remaining Age-Friendly topics. It was also mentioned that some members may be called on to review the data collected from the Age-Friendly Community Survey.

The topic of the meeting was “Community Support and Health Services”. Brook-Lynn began the conversation by describing examples of what other communities are doing. Examples included partnering with the Canadian Mental Health Association or other organizations to offer various workshops, assistance with food preparation or grocery delivery for those who do not require meals on wheels, connecting isolated seniors with other isolated seniors, fall prevention programs, and even regular check-ins at senior’s apartment buildings from paramedics or nursing students.

It was advised that the Canadian Mental Health Association does offer presentations on mental health; however these are on a request only basis. Also, paramedics that are on modified work duty may do home visits or visits to senior complexes to answer questions. It was also mentioned that EMS personnel who attend non-emergency calls, where issues such as mental health or poor hygiene are noted, will forward these cases to an outreach worker from DTSSAB.

Members present at the meeting discussed the difficulty of finding service providers, as the majority of them are accessed via telephone. One member described a recent experience where they had difficulties navigating through an automated phone system, just to find out they called the wrong provider and that person could not direct them to the proper number to call. It was noted that there should be better communication between service providers in order to better direct people to the services they require. Another issue mentioned was by a worker who had called a particular service provider to get information for a client, and it took weeks to get a reply. By that time, the worker had forgotten why they had called in the first place. The existing system is not only difficult for seniors to navigate, but also for the caregivers assisting these

seniors. Unfortunately, many people get discouraged and simply give up trying to get in contact with anyone. There are many programs available through various providers, yet no one knows where to contact in order to qualify or access them. Members present mentioned that the integration of the Child and Family Services was a great move as it acts as a “one-stop shopping” centre and that a similar service for seniors would be ideal. In addition to the frustrations of telephone systems, other programs require access to a computer and the internet. Many seniors either do not have access, or do not have the experience required to navigate through an online portal/system.

Various different service providers were then discussed in regards to what they do and do not offer. For example, The Canadian Mental Health Association doesn't have any funding or staff to support seniors with dementia; things such as dental care and muscular health is not covered through OHIP; the hospital has a palliative care service; the Family Health Team no longer offers a “no-family” doctor clinic day, as you must be registered with a doctor in order to see the Physician Assistant; additional requirements needed for post discharge/post surgery care; and specialist visits and conversations at the hospital through OTN. Members present indicated that there has been an increase of medical care services in the area, with the addition of new doctors and the availability of nurse practitioners. Some members thought it would be ideal to have a social worker available to assist patients during medical appointments; however it is up to family doctors or nurse practitioners to refer a patient to a social worker.

The Centre de Santé is also a medical health clinic and, despite misconceptions, also offers service in English. It was explained that when you arrive at the Centre, you see a triage nurse prior to seeing a doctor or nurse practitioner, as the triage nurse can refer you to the best provider available; and in many cases you may not even need to see a doctor. In addition to the medical services, the Centre offers community gatherings for cooking and exercising classes and more.

Additional discussions were had regarding the Community Care Access Centre (CCAC). Members stated that better information on how to access the CCAC is needed, and that their process is too slow for assisting seniors. It was also mentioned that when family members or care providers are seeking assistance from CCAC, sometimes the process can fail during the assessment of the senior. Many seniors may tell an assessor that they do not require aid despite living in dirty or unhygienic conditions simply because they do not realize how bad their situation is. Because the assessment happens over the phone, the assessor is only taking their word for it, and when a senior says they do not require help, the conversation ends there. Things such as housework and personal hygiene cannot be assessed over the telephone and these can sometimes be the main reason for a family member or care provider requesting CCAC assistance. It was then mentioned that after an assessment, if a senior is advised to be placed in a long-term care home, it should be explained to them in detail how the transition will proceed, how the home operates and how money is exchanged. These topics can cause anxiety and stress

for many older adults, and it is important that more emphasis is placed on explaining these processes in more detail to seniors.

Members then discussed the need for an affordable transportation option for out of town medical appointments. Although Timiskaming Home Support offers an inexpensive transportation service, it is not always available due to a lack of volunteers and because the majority of their vehicles are located in Temiskaming Shores. There are some private individuals who assist with transportation, however many seniors can be paranoid about providing personal information to private companies or individuals.

Before finishing up the meeting, Brook-Lynn advised the group that a Community Calendar will be up and running on the municipal website. Some members felt that this may not necessarily be a suitable platform for seniors, and that transportation services are sometimes required for seniors to attend events. Brook-Lynn also told the group that there has been a good return on the surveys and that the final submission date in order to be eligible for the draw prize is December 1st. She mentioned that surveys will still be accepted for a time after that date.

The next meeting will be held December 18th, 2017 in Council Chambers at Town Hall from 1:30pm to 3:00pm, and the topic will be “Social Participation”