

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

**Monday, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

Council Chambers  
3 Kirkland Street  
Kirkland Lake, ON

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Planning Intern, Brook-Lynn Rozon presented the topic of “Housing” to the Committee. She explained that many seniors wish to age in their own home and that there is a need for proper services being available to these seniors living at home. She stated that there are opportunities and funding available for upgrades to existing homes to transition the home to a more accessible set-up.

The group discussed reasons why seniors may leave their home, such as stairs and housekeeping. One member asked whether or not there are statistics on how many residents leave Kirkland Lake. Brook-Lynn advised that the Age-Friendly community survey does ask whether or not people plan on remaining in the community as they age. The information gathered from the survey will hopefully assist in determining what seniors require in order to comfortably remain in the community. Members expressed an appreciation of having a company like Mobility in Motion located in Town, as they allow seniors to create more suitable living spaces and remain in their own homes for longer. In addition, DTSSAB offers a housing retrofit program, however concerns were raised that the program is not well promoted and many people remain unaware it exists. DTSSAB also offers assistance with paying bills through the preventing homelessness program. There seems to be a discrepancy between a pension income and the actual cost of living. Census data may show the average income for specific age groups which would help gain a better understanding of what people are able to pay for services. Many seniors require assistance for getting to out of town appointments. This may result in seniors leaving the municipality to be closer to family and health services.

The group felt that it would be beneficial for a senior to have a “transitional” style of living, such as private residences that provide basic services as well as assisted living services. This would allow a senior to remain in the same residence while aging, minimizing the hardships and stress of moving or changing one’s lifestyle. The biggest reason for a senior to leave their own home is the need for assisted living services, and the increasing costs for this service. The group felt that volunteers should be allowed to assist seniors with tasks that PSW’s may not be permitted or

may not have the time to complete, such as laundry, or simple housecleaning. Family members are typically the best assistance for a senior; however this can be burdensome on the family member and there is a lack of compensation for families taking care of older adults. The group discussed an idea of having a younger senior and an older senior living together. This would allow for them to share tasks, provide companionship for one another, and allow the older individual to remain in their home for longer. DTSSAB offers low-income apartment units to families and the group felt that these units could also be well-suited for shared senior living.

The group then discussed the need for more incentive programs to keep seniors in the community and to get them more involved. Currently the community complex offers free fitness classes, which promotes health and well being; the Library offers computer assistance and training, and there are buses that pick up seniors to go grocery shopping. Although these ideas are great, some felt that there is a strong need for community/social rooms within residential buildings. Members from the Fifth Street apartment units stated they used to have a social room, but it has been converted into an office space. Now they use furniture placed in the hallways which can only accommodate a few people at a time. They also stated that there are no health services available within the building, and that a seniors building should have some sort of in-house services available to those who may need it.

The group then shifted the discussion to Community Events. There is a need for Community Events to be advertised in one central location. Members have noticed that many events tend to occur all in the same week, and then nothing will be scheduled for a month or two. If a community calendar of events were available, it would help to prevent overlapping events. The group felt that since the municipality is small, and there are not very many events for seniors to begin with, it would be nice to have the opportunity to attend as many events as possible. There may be a cost associated, and the group agreed that the municipality, more specifically the Recreation or Economic Development Departments could have a community event calendar online, allowing the opportunity for members of the public to advertise their event for free.

When it comes to updating or renovating a home to become more senior friendly, the group agreed that private investors can be very costly. Although there is a push to keep seniors in their homes, there appears to be little to no funding from the government bodies to assist seniors with the upgrades. The funding opportunities tend to force one to work with the private landlords versus working with DTSSAB or a Non-Profit. It would be beneficial for the seniors in town to have a list of “handymen” that can be called to assist with small upgrades such as replacing door handles, or help with yard work. The major concern with a list such as this is the quality of work and the trust one would have with a stranger completing the work.

Teck Pioneer Residence used to be an aging home in its old location on Fourth Street. Since it moved to Government Road West it is more of an institution. Residents are placed at this

residence based on lists, which means people from out of town may be placed there. For example if there is an emergency placement, a resident could come from another location until their first choice becomes available, and vice versa for local residents. The group felt there is a big gap between leaving your family home and entering a long term care home. There is a long wait list for the two senior buildings in town which can be anywhere from 5 to 10 years. It was stated that the geared to income houses in town are for young families, and there is a strong need for these dwellings to upgrade their accessibility for seniors instead of young families.

Brook-Lynn advised the group that there is a funding opportunity available for projects which would help seniors. She presented a few ideas and opened the floor for discussion. One member expressed their concern that when funding is received it does not last, so the chosen project should have minimal cost for maintaining once funding runs out. One idea mentioned was creating a community kitchen. This would not only assist with seniors, but also many others in the community. A group would purchase groceries together, prepare meals and could dine together or portion the meals to take home. The kitchen could potentially be funded through sponsors and volunteers. The Salvation Army currently offers a 'soup kitchen' twice per week during the morning and early afternoons. The representative from the Canadian Mental Health Association stated she was not aware of this program, and that if it was better advertised, they may see more people taking advantage of the service. It was also recommended that this program obtain a transportation service to assist those in need to get to the Salvation Army as it isn't centrally located and especially during the winter months. There was a mention of a Diner's club which is run by Timiskaming Home Support, where members gather at different restaurants in order to socialize. It was also suggested that the old pool area be converted into a senior community centre. This could include a social space, a dedicated room for fitness rather than using the "Blue Line" room, and it could even include a community kitchen. Another idea was the creation of a community guide which would highlight the various services available to seniors in the area. This could be created and produced with the funding and easily updated electronically and made available for print upon request.

The meeting was wrapped up with a quick conversation about the distribution of surveys. Brook-Lynn advised that the distribution is going well, and completed surveys are being received. The surveys can be accessed online or hard copies from municipal buildings. A few members then offered assistance with reviewing survey data.

The next meeting will be held November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017 in Council Chambers at Town Hall from 1:30pm to 3:00pm, and the topic will be "Community Support and Health Services"