

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

Monday, September 18th, 2017

Council Chambers
3 Kirkland Street
Kirkland Lake, ON

Town Planner, Ashley Bilodeau presented the topic of “Civic Participation and Employment” to the Committee. Ashley provided a final draft of the surveys, and stated that Brook-Lynn will be out in the community during the first few weeks of October. Members will be asked to volunteer to assist Brook-Lynn.

Ashley then proceeded on with opening this month’s topic by discussing recent statistics that show a growing population of older females, and the need to focus on this group during the planning stages. In regards to volunteering, a discussion was had relating to the need for a call centre, which would provide a place for people to request volunteers as well as a place for people to state that they are willing to volunteer. Each volunteer can state which tasks they would be willing to help with such as driving or yard work. Many of the members present stated that it is important that volunteers are recognized for their work. It was mentioned that the Temiskaming Shores plan addresses volunteering and that there are local community groups that offer volunteer opportunities. In order to gain more volunteers, it was recommended to engage with existing volunteers on how to connect with new recruits.

When it came to student volunteers, many of the members felt that it is more difficult to get students involved and that those who do volunteer are typically doing so with their parents. The group felt that there is a need to encourage more students to volunteer with seniors. When student volunteers are used, there should always be an adult leader, as students can be more productive with direct requests versus broad requests (eg. cut the grass vs. take care of the yard work). In addition to a leader, every volunteering session or group should have an opening conversation at the beginning of each session to state a clear scope and expectations required. At times volunteering can be difficult as some groups require volunteers to have insurance and a criminal reference check. Insurance is typically covered through whatever group a volunteer is working through, however if it is personal volunteering, this can be an issue should any incident occur since they would then need to rely on personal insurance.

From volunteering, the conversation shifted towards employment. Many seniors who are still employed may be working because they need to earn money (ie. no pension), they enjoy working, they like to keep busy, their spouse is still employed, or they have a part-time opportunity. Those who can no longer work may wish to keep busy by volunteering. Many of the group members felt that those who have recently retired, or are about to retire, could benefit from being educated in volunteering opportunities and topics on how to keep active in the community throughout retirement. For those who wish to continue working, it was suggested that employers should be more open to part-time employment offerings to employees nearing retirement, as this could be beneficial to both the company and the employee. The company would see a highly productive employee with a much lowered cost, and the employee would be keeping active in their field with a semi-retired lifestyle. Although many seniors are still working, there is a perception that “they’ve had their opportunity, why can’t they give it to a young up and comer?”; some may feel that once a senior has earned their pension and are still working, they are seen as “double-dipping”. This may be one reason why seniors are not generally offered employment.

The meeting was wrapped up with a quick conversation about housing, as this is our next topic. Members discussed the need for more assisted living services and how at times the cost of living in a senior style building can be high, but many of the necessary services would be offered, making this type of home more appealing.

The next meeting will be held October 16th, 2017 in Council Chambers at Town Hall from 1:30pm to 3:00pm, and the topic will be “Housing”