

AGING FRIENDLY COMMUNITY MEETING
FEBRUARY 27, 2018
5:00 p.m.

ATTENDEES: Co-Chairs: Leroy Walker and Belinda Gerry, Jan Biron, Frank Pippin, Mike Davis (Walton School), Larry Pelletier, Barry Schmieks, Kim Taylor (Sherwood Heights School), Alfreda Fournier, Ginger Levasseur, Jim Horn (ELHS) and Mamie Ney (APL)

Leroy brought the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m., by welcoming everyone.

We are here to listen to the community and find out what they want. We want to get more involved in the community as well. Make the city more walkable, remove barriers, utilize the senior center more, have kids help seniors with running errands or doing some raking, mowing, shoveling, etc., and having seniors help kids with homework, or just get to know each other like grandparent and grandchild.

Belinda suggested that we make power available at various locations for handicapped people to recharge their motorized wheelchairs. Barry suggested that we get the city electrician set up a charging station.

Jan suggested setting up a way to connect seniors with students from the high school who would be able to help them to do odd jobs, similar to Care.com which services people who are home-bound and can't do things for themselves. This would be a good opportunity for ELHS students to fulfill their community service hours by volunteering to help seniors.

There is a state-wide foster grandparent program named Penquis (Maria Staples, contact person.) Training is required for the elderly going into the schools. The volunteers read with the kids, listen to their problems, etc.

Kim mentioned that the Franco Center has a program (CLC) where people go to the school to teach them the French language.

Kim suggested that some of the grammar school kids could go to seniors' homes to deliver cards or sing carols at Christmas time. The police department could check on seniors who haven't been around for a while. No one has seen them. Just report it to the PD and they will "Knock for Seniors."

Barry said that one of the goals of this group is to identify where the seniors are located so that we can focus on where the greatest need is.

Mr. Horn stated that the high school has a community service day and they look for things to do in the community. Kids should be able to do this year-round. The child labor laws would prohibit high school kids from working with some equipment, but they would be able to do many jobs that are not dangerous.

Mamie said that the library had the “I Need” program. They purchased some tablets that could be used by seniors. They still have 4 or 5 of them. They want volunteers to go to nursing homes and use the tablets to skype with the relatives of people in nursing homes. These tablets have been sitting in the office for 2 years and should be being used to bring families together. She also suggested having seniors come into the video lab and make recordings of their voices for their families. Audio and video applications are available. They do not have the staff to do this but would love to have volunteers come in and offer it. This history would be lost if we don’t get it all on record now. Once this generation is lost, the history will be gone.

Alfreda suggested adopting a veteran. Have students get in touch with veterans and listen to their stories. A volunteer could write down a journal and keep a record for his/her loved ones.

Mr. Horn stated that the high school has television capabilities that could be used to record things as well. Students know how to do these things and it would bring the students and the seniors together, as well as families.

Kim suggested reaching out to the local colleges to include them in community service. There are a lot of students who could use their expertise to help in the community.

Ginger would like to put a transportation program into effect. A lot of seniors don’t have transportation to get to Bingo, doctor appointments, etc. She would like to have a special bus to go to all the local senior housing locations so they could get on the bus and get to the weekly seniors meeting at Sacred Heart. Mr. Horn is going to check into getting some help with this.

Leroy Walker said that in order for us to accomplish all of this, we have to all be on the same page. Leroy and Belinda are excited about where this group is heading. Kudos to Mayor Levesque for initiating this group. We hope to bring forth appointments in May for this committee.

Adjournment: 6:05 p.m.