

SENIOR ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of the September 22, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 9:36 a.m. in an online format by Chairperson Pat Gengozian. The meeting was live streamed and was available for view within 48 hours at <http://orrecparks.oakridgetn.gov/elder-citizens-advisory-board-agendas-and-minutes/>.

SAB members present onsite: Pat Gengozian and Jackie Nichols.

SAB members present online: Marty Adler-Jasny, Linda Rose, Elaine Bunick, Robert Smallridge, Susan Asbury, and David Vudragovich.

SAB members absent: Gene Dunaway, Lisa Plante and Al Skyberg.

Also present: Linda McGhee, Recreation Manager, Oak Ridge Senior Center and Tim Cochran Recreation Program Coordinator.

VISITORS: None.

MINUTES APPROVAL: Minutes of the March 2, 2020 meeting were approved.

APPEARANCE OF CITIZENS

No comments were emailed by the Friday, September 18th deadline.

REPORTS

SENIOR CENTER RECREATION MANAGER REPORT

Linda McGhee reported the following:

- 1.) Since the Senior Center was closed on March 16, 2020, the staff has been working hard to connect with the seniors in our database. We have call lists broken down into age ranges with our oldest seniors (90 +) getting the most frequent calls and then moving down to the 80 – 89 year olds list for the next most calls. We have also phone lists for 65 – 79 year olds and 50 – 64 year olds as well but they do not get called as frequently. These calls have helped us to provide important services to our seniors. We have added at least 4-5 people to the home delivered meal program with ETHRA. We have provided information about how to get their taxes done, how to get food delivered from the grocery store if needed and other information to them as well as just being a friendly voice to keep them from being lonely.
- 2.) Also the closure of the building meant that the congregate meal program had to close as well. We worked with ETHRA to start a frozen meal pick up program. Each Monday a senior who has signed up can pick up a box with bread, milk and juice along with 5 frozen meals. At the beginning of April, we had around 10 people coming to pick up the boxes and now we have around 49 coming on a regular

basis. We have also worked with the St. Andrews Society to deliver boxes of fresh vegetables donated from the USDA to our seniors as well.

- 3.) Staff has also been working on the implementation of a new software system that will allow for us to better track our participants and activities. The system will allow us to have a way to track participants in the event that we do have a positive COVID-19 case once the Senior Center is able to reopen.
- 4.) At the present, all Senior Centers are closed through the end of September by Executive Order 59. This order refers back to previous orders and the full text can be seen by looking at Executive Order 49. The order does, however, allow for Senior Centers to do virtual programming for their senior citizens. One good example to look at is Knox County Senior Centers. They have put out a catalog with 15-20 virtual programs that seniors can register for and participate in. The Oak Ridge Senior Center staff has come up with some good ideas as well. We are looking at some programs like "Recipes with Robin" where Robin shows seniors how to use pantry staples to make nutritious and interesting meals. Also we are look at a "Travels with Tim" segment that will allow our Recreation Program Coordinator to take recorded hikes from trails in our area to encourage people to get out and get some exercise on their own while social distancing. We are also looking to do some "Lunch and Learn" type programs via Zoom to get important information out to our seniors as well. Because of a small staff size, these and other programs will need help from volunteers. Also with the focus on virtual programming there will be a great need for technology help for our seniors both on how to use the devices they already have and also on how and what to purchase if they don't have them already.
- 5.) The manager also discussed a gradual reopening plan for the Senior Center when it is allowed by Governor Lee. The Senior Center has been working on a reopening plan since the beginning of the closure. The plan provides for a gradual reopening with limited activities and pre-scheduling of time slots to begin. There will also be limited hours to provide time for extra cleaning and disinfecting during the day.

RECENT ACTIONS OF CITY COUNCIL

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Election of the Senior Advisory Board Offices was discussed by the board members present. The current Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, Pat Gengozian and Robert Smallridge graciously accepted a nomination to be re-appointed to their respective offices for the remaining few months of the current year. Their election passed unanimously by board members present.

NEW BUSINESS

Board Chairperson Pat Gengozian began the discussion of agenda items with a short mention of virtual programs as well as a possible soft reopening of the Senior Center if the Governor allows it on October 1st. Pat said that we would go into more detail of both of these agenda items during the Senior Center Managers report. She then asked the board for some ideas regarding transportation options for our seniors since the MyRide Program is no longer in

operation. Board Member Elaine Bunick brought up the Oak Ridge Transit Program which is operated by ETHRA as being a cost effective option for seniors since it is only \$2 per way. Pat mentioned that some seniors can and do take advantage of this program but it has limitations with days and times available and also with the ability to give one on one service that many seniors need. Board Member Lynda Rose mentioned possibly creating a program that would help to raise awareness for the cab company and also provide help for seniors. Board Member Marty Adler-Jasny mentioned a program several years ago in Knoxville that provided training to taxi drivers on the special needs of seniors and how to better help them as well. Senior Center Manager Linda McGhee said she could check with some contacts at Knox Volunteer Assisted Transportation to find out more information on the program. Board Member David Vudragovich also mentioned that certain low income Medicare recipients qualify for reimbursement for 36 one way medical trips. There was also discussion between board members about how pickup and delivery programs could be modified to assist seniors with some of their needs as well. Chairperson Pat Gengozian then turned over the floor for the Senior Center Managers Report.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Board Member David Vudragovich mentioned he would be speaking at Roane State on September 30th about the difference between scammers and telemarketers.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:11 a.m.

Submitted by

Linda McGhee, Recreation Manager

Pat Gengozian, Board Chairperson