

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE OLDER ADULT NEEDS COMMITTEE  
CITY OF NOVI  
MONDAY, March 25, 2024, AT 5:30 P.M.**

**Member Casey called the meeting to order at 5:34 P.M.**

**ROLL CALL:**               **PRESENT:** Council Member Casey, Council Member Smith, Council Member Thomas, Kathy Crawford  
**ABSENT:** Jay Dooley (Excused), Kim Nice (Excused), Debbie Wrobel (Excused)

**ALSO PRESENT:**       Jeff Muck, PRCS Director  
                                  Kit Kieser, OAS Manager

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

**OAN 24-03-11       Moved by Thomas, seconded by Smith; CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**  
  
**To approve the Agenda.**

**Voice vote on OAN 24-03-11                       Yeas: Casey, Smith, Thomas, Crawford,  
  Nays: None  
  Absent: Dooley, Nice, Wrobel**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**OAN 24-03-12       Moved by Thomas, seconded by Crawford; CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**  
  
**To approve the March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024, meeting minutes.**

**Voice vote on OAN 24-03-12                       Yeas: Casey, Smith, Thomas, Crawford,  
  Nays: None  
  Absent: Dooley, Nice, Wrobel**

**REMARKS FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON:**

Mayor Pro Tem Casey said that the committee had done investigations, and it was time to write and finalize a report for the community and talk about how to condense it into a report for the Council. She suggested the committee add April 15<sup>th</sup> and April 29<sup>th</sup> to the meeting calendar for additional time to review. She noted that sections to write included Housing Advocacy and a Senior Facility.

**MATTERS FOR COMMITTEE DISCUSSION:**

**1. Communications Update – S. Walsh**

Mayor Pro Tem Casey said that the committee needed to decide what the naming culture was, and what was age friendly. Sheryl Walsh, Director of Communications said that there needed to be some kind of brand for the services for this specific group. Some ways of

finding out what people want, and communicating with this specific range of people include:

- Emailing the specific demographic and highlighting all volunteer opportunities, services, parks, exercise equipment, the neighbor of the month, etc.
- Have people opt-in for email communications.
- Targeted communication for specific ranges of age.
- Opportunity to highlight the programs with the brand-new studio for the seniors possibly once a month when there is an update on a park, the Older Adults Loan Closet, or the opportunities available.
- Surveys that went out and focus groups had great information, and the info should be there to draw a conclusion and move toward a good productive direction.
- Tailored messaging, E-newsletter, TV, and video channels

Member Thomas mentioned that in the focus group, the committee heard that when residents get the Engage Magazine, an event could be 3 months out, and the residents possibly forget about them. She mentioned doing weekly updates. She also mentioned that they may need more consolidated information as some classes are only sign-up and register before the event, if people walk in, they could be full.

Kit Kieser, OAS Manager, said residents who are signed up on a list get the E-Engage every 2 weeks, and it is possible some people are not on that list.

Member Crawford reminded the committee that residents ages 80-90 are different than residents ages 50-70. She noted that people age in place in Novi, and some don't use technology. She added that the oldest generations want a flyer or physical piece of paper to refer to. Member Crawford also added that one month is too far out for sign ups and registration. She said people need to look at and keep something as a reminder of an event. She added that maybe something on the local TV station would be helpful.

One resource a lot of the seniors use to get flyers is the carousel in front of the Older Adult Services office. It was mentioned to make these flyers more accessible at the places seniors congregate such as:

- Churches
- Doctors Offices
- The Library
- The Post Office
- Local Grocery Stores

Member Crawford said that when seniors go out, the trips are short and they don't like to make many stops. She said there should be an effort made to coordinate and get these flyers out right before an event.

Mayor Pro Tem Casey said the responses on the survey, by age, were remarkably consistent. The amount of people over the age of 75 was large. She said it was well balanced. She also declared that the contract proposed to Council regarding transportation had passed. There was a discussion on the number of people that may want to utilize the public transportation and whether or not it would be subsidized for seniors. Director Jeff Muck added that the People's Express is used in other communities

and offered to all over the age of 14 and yet is still 90% senior transportation. Mayor Pro Tem Casey added that the original recommendation to the Council didn't address subsidies, but it can be a further recommendation for City Council. Member Crawford added that she worries about the residents needing medical care and also affording rides as it could create a hardship. Member Smith mentioned that would be worth telling City Manager Cardenas. Director Muck said that the company is very flexible and can be given direction as to the parameters for a subsidy. He said it is very customizable. Member Thomas, said a county statistic said free rides cause an increase of "No-Shows". Mayor Pro Tem Casey offered that it might possibly be worth doing a survey to ask residents what they think. She said they can reach out to Flashvote. Manager Keiser said the survey could be as simple as getting demographic information and asking "Do you have concerns about paying for this service?" The Committee set a goal to craft a recommendation for Council on the Transit Service by April 15<sup>th</sup>.

The committee began to focus on the question, "What does advocacy look like?" and drafted a few ideas:

- Housing
  - Senior Living
  - Aging in place
- Transportation and Mobility
- Communications and Community Connections
  - Socialization
  - Volunteer
- Spaces and facilities
- Recreational activities
- Safety and security
- Health and wellness
- Emerging trends

Mayor Pro Tem Casey asked the group if this list is an accurate account on what the committee has talked about, and if there were any holes. The group did not have anything further to add.

There was a discussion that began about whether a Commission or Committee should be designated to stay focused on the goals of the current body. Crawford said that the committees and commissions that we have now would work if they focus more on these ideas and focus a bit more on seniors. It was mentioned to have the Parks and Recreation team and committee be delegated the task. Member Thomas said she views it differently, that senior services don't fit in Parks and Recreation. The discussion continued to find ways to structure the work of this committee for the future. Some of the ideas included:

- Having existing members of this body continue to serve on a future body.

- Having a new and completely separate body from Parks and Recreation, but having an appointed member from Parks and Recreation on the new body to provide guidance.
- Having the Parks and Recreation team absorb these responsibilities, but go more into depth with senior considerations.
- Creating a Subcommittee of the Parks and Recreation Committee that is solely focused on Older Adults.
- Work with an existing body, but task them with supporting older adults a lot more.
- Older Adult Advisory Board can be better represented on the Parks Committee.
- Possibly update the Older Adults Advisory Board Charter to give them these responsibilities.
- Encourage a call to action, give a budget, community budgeting.

#### **ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION:**

Mayor Pro Tem Casey said the group has done an excellent job today, and will need to continue to find answers to the following questions:

- What are the actions we see in the list of spaces?
- What are the things that need to be focused on, and what does the structure look like?

#### **AUDIENCE COMMENTS:**

Member of audience – Said there need to be something age friendly. They said to keep it as a subcommittee, or keep age friendly lenses within each board. They said to have the City built for 8 and 80 year olds. Maybe it would be worth it to do more outreach with other communities. Building a network of connections with organizations in the city that deals with older adults.

Member of audience – There are not many people of minorities or members of the public that show up to the meeting. They said people that have a particular interest show up. The resident said they think that the communication and effort is there, but could be better. A possible idea to get seniors involved is to shore up the ambassador program

**ADJOURNMENT** – There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 7:08 P.M.