

**Senior Services | Aging in Place Task Force
Housing Working Group Minutes
March 23, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.
Meeting 5**

1. Call to Order

The chair calls the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

2. Roll Call

Present: Richard Schmitt, Susan Clark, Cynthia DeMan, Jerry Amber, Carol Windorf, James Downing, Melinda Loftin
Absent: Nancy Robinson, Jim Schneider
Also in attendance: Rachel Bush, Renee Cortright (Director of the Rochester/Rochester Hills/Oakland Township Senior Center)

3. Approval of Minutes from last meeting(s)

A) Regular Meeting March 9th, 2022

Motion to approve: Carol

Second: James

Cynthia abstains due to her absence at the last meeting. The motion carries.

4. Approval of Agenda for tonight's meeting

Two additional meeting dates were added for the month of May. Renee Cortright is in attendance tonight to speak about the Rochester/Rochester Hills/Oakland Township OPC. Richard reached out to Mr. Murphy to discuss CDBG funding and infill development/non-conforming zoning. Would like to finalize some goals tonight so the next meeting is spent forming recommendations to meet those goals.

Motion to approve: Cynthia

Second: James

All in favor. The motion carries.

5. Meeting Dates (Virtual), Key Results and Objectives:

- a. January 5th, 2022 – get to know each, review mission/vision and data
- b. January 26th, 2022 – establish what we heard from data, special report from Planning Director (master Plan Update, Housing Rehab Program and R.O.S.E.S. funding), and submit proposed Vision statements for Special meeting
- c. February 3rd, 2022 – Establish ‘We Envision’ Statement and start thinking about goals for next Regular Meeting and any other ideas of external reports needed.

- d. February 16th, 2022 – establish Goals for our domain (Housing) and listen to any other external presentations and think about recommendations to achieve our goals.
- e. March 9th, 2022 - start to establish recommendations to achieve our goals
- f. March 23rd, 2022- continue to work on recommendations and start to finalize our report
- g. April 13th, 2022- continue to work on recommendations and metrics
- h. May 4th, 2022 – continue to finalize our report to Task Force if needed
- i. May 18th, 2022 – finalize our report to the Task Force

6. Discuss results of reach out to Rochester OPC, Troy Community Center and Royal Oak's Planning Director, Joseph Murphy. Also try to finalize our goals and start recommendations.

To get Renee up to speed:

Two specific needs of Royal Oak seniors identified through surveys and focus groups: housing improvements and home maintenance assistance

- ROSES and the home rehab program (both funded by CDBG) try to fill these gaps in Royal Oak
- For the last 4 or 5 years, \$200,000 - \$300,000 left unspent by home rehab program
- ROSES did best in 2017 – 2018: had a budget of \$33,000 and spend over that each year. Other years spent slightly under, and the target was lower for pandemic spending too.
- Ultimately there is money that isn't being spent through these programs

Renee Cortright, Rochester OPC

- SEMCOG: 6,276 households that are 65+ years and older in Royal Oak
 - There's also a lot of young people in the community! (25-40 years specifically) Identify ways to appeal to the younger population, donating their time to provide services for seniors
- OPC has a Senior Resource Department that facilitates several programs
 - Rochester OPC is funded by a 0.32 operational millage
 - Fees for services/classes
 - Increase in millage was passed in 2020 (was previously 0.25)
 - Two coordinators (one 3 days/week, the other 2 days/week, so someone is there essentially full-time)
 - Field calls for information and referral (independent living, health needs, classes, support groups)
 - Also facilitate several low-income scholarship programs for art classes
 - Vision support, CDBG, Ask-the-Attorney, counselors on-site, Medicare/Medicaid assistance
 - Volunteers give tours of the facility and operate the different desks in the senior center
 - A volunteer coordinator might be integral to really get the word out and make connections with different organizations
- CDBG funds for minor home repairs, this goes really fast
- Act of Kindness (AoK) in partnership with a non-denominational organization that put in the sweat equity for minor home repairs
 - This reduces contractor costs

- The org's board of directors fundraises to offset costs, and partners with [Neighborhood House](#) in the Rochester Hills area to do minor home repairs for those under the age of 60
- Snow removal for income-qualifying households in all three communities
 - Costs are high, vendors are charging more for their services
 - Gas prices also pose challenges
- Yard care volunteer sources: schools, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, DTE, Comcast, Rochester Hills DPW, houses of worship
 - Between 60-80 houses taken care of in fall 2021
 - Mostly, these groups reach out for opportunities to volunteer. This creates a synergy within their company and is marketing collateral. But there are resources like Volunteer Match to post calls for volunteers for larger clean-ups.
- [AgeWave](#) – statistics show the 50+ population has economic fortitude. 79% of the US' total net worth – 51% of all groceries bought, 56% of travel, 71% of all money in the banks, 77% of prescription drugs.
- Marketing materials - print newsletter, online newsletter
- No list of preferred contractors to avoid portraying favoritism - people should do their own research, be careful, and use resources that are already out there (Better Business Bureau, Angie's List)

To the work group: What does the Royal Oak Senior Center need to accomplish something like Rochester's OPC?

- Better marketing of the housing rehab program – maybe then less money would be left unspent
- More funding to ROSES to take care of more seniors, paying ROSES workers more money (\$15/hour? More?)
- Involvement with the schools, National Honors Society students at Royal Oak High School
- Other community service opportunities – who would coordinate all of this? Is the City invested enough to create an office for senior citizens?
- Henry Ford has a downtown presence, they could contribute to the community service
- Presence at City Hall, coordinating with the Senior Center
- Distinct Senior Commission? Separate from the [RO Parks, Recreation, and Senior Services Advisory Board](#)
- Identify how to better utilize the resources RO has access to now and recommend getting City departments more actively involved to address the needs that have been expressed during surveys and focus groups

Underutilized properties in Royal Oak – potential redevelopment into housing opportunities

- CDBG-consolidated plan that identifies several of the community's need priorities and objectives
- 'Neighborhood investment' or the redevelopment of blighted properties – to eliminate individual instances of blight and create economic job opportunities or below market-rate multi-family housing

- There is not an inventory of these properties. Most of these properties are too small to develop into housing

Goals

- There is already a goal that states the need for a paid staff member to be a spokesperson for seniors that need services and information
 - The group should find out as much as possible about the number of paid staff at the Senior Center, how they are paid (general fund?)
 - Is there potential for a millage in Royal Oak like in Rochester?
- Develop a list of current housing options in Royal Oak – someone will have to maintain this list
 - Could be the same staff, could be multiple staff roles
 - Internship opportunities, Graduate City Management Fellow to support
- Cynthia will take a first crack at drafting the goal to add a paid position to City Hall or the Senior Center with the task of coordinating activities, similar to Rochester's OPC
- Brainstorm ideas for expansion of ROSES program, paying employees more, etc.
- Richard will follow up re: the Troy community center to understand their services, funding, and staff organization.

7. Public Comments

None submitted.

8. Adjourn

The group adjourned at 8:20 PM.