

**Downers Grove Township  
SENIOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
January 8, 2024**

**MINUTES**

A **MEETING** of the Downers Grove Township Senior Advisory Committee was held at the Township Center, 4341 Saratoga Avenue, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515, on Monday, January 8, 2024.

1. **Call to Order.** Chairperson Gaye Wagner called the meeting to order at 1:34pm.
2. **Roundtable Introductions.** Roundtable introductions were made. Following is the meeting attendance:

**Board Members:** Janet Garreau, Heather Lippe, Lisa Rasin, Linda Rush, Susan Sinderson, Gaye Wagner, and Bruce Wright.

**Members:** Paul Coultrap, Mark Davis, Terri Geppner, Julie Larson, Susan Mistretta, Teresa Mrozik, Kerry Quirin, Dave Ricordati, Karen Spencer, Jillian Spizzirri, Cassie Vanderklok, and Dave Zalesiak.

**Guests:** John Aguzino from FISH Food Pantry, Jane Johnson from Magnolia Senior Living, Julie Kramer, a Downers Grove Township senior, LaVon Lenaway from Dragonfly Senior Navigation Services, and Lori Tsukuno, a Downers Grove Township senior.

3. **Review and Approve Minutes.** Board Member Julie Larson requested that a change to the Minutes from the December 4, 2023 Meeting be made in Line 14 of Paragraph 7 on Page 2: "income-based" should be changed to "asset-based". A Motion to Approve the Minutes of the December 4, 2023 Meeting, as Corrected, was made by Lisa Rasin and seconded by Janet Garreau. After a unanimous vote by all Board Members present, the Motion was approved.
4. **Public Comment.** There was no public comment.
5. **SAC Board Member Updates.**
  - A. (i) Chairperson Gaye Wagner announced the resignation of Board Member and Vice-Chairman Ralph Beardsley, effective immediately. Wagner went on to say that Beardsley had faithfully served on the SAC for the past several years and has made tremendous contributions both to the senior community and the SAC. Beardsley's resignation leaves a vacancy on the Board. Any parties interested in filling that vacancy should notify Chairperson Wagner.
  - (ii) Wagner pointed out that there is a sign-up sheet for Members to attend a meeting of "Just Us Seniors". The group meets on the first Thursday of each month at 9:00am at the Township Center. Wagner further indicated that it is time well spent and encouraged all interested people to sign up.
  - (iii) Chairperson Wagner announced that there will be an SAC Board meeting on Tuesday, January 30, from 12:00 to 2:00pm. Lunch will be served. The purpose of the

meeting is to discuss 2023 goals, if they have been met, what are the goals for 2024, and a schedule of future meetings.

(iv) Wagner asked that all Members review the 2024 calendar of meetings because holidays may result in meetings not being on the first Monday.

(v) Chairperson Wagner announced that future meetings will have presentations on Member specialties. See Ms. Wagner to set a date for a presentation.

(vi) Finally, if any Board Member is interested in hosting a meeting offsite, please see Chairperson Wagner to set the date.

**B.** (i) Board Member Linda Rush announced that she is a member of the Westmont Model T Club. If anyone is interested, the club has volunteers that can bring one of their cars to an offsite location for seniors to view and ask questions.

(ii) Rush also indicated that she has received questions and complaints about the election process. She was interested to know if the SAC can sponsor a program explaining the various polling places, how new residents can register to vote, programs available to drive seniors to the polling places, etc. Guest Julie Kramer offered that the State hosts a Zoom meeting dealing with State election processes. Anyone interested can contact the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman.

(iv) Finally, Rush indicated a lack of availability of tax forms and instructions at local libraries.

**C.** Board Member Janet Garreau announced that Interfaith Community Partners will be celebrating their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary soon. The organization is always looking for more volunteers. Their 2024 plans include a name change to attract more clients and volunteers.

**D.** Board Member Susan Sinderson reported that 2023 saw CADC moving out of COVID, although they are still restricted by the State to no more than 10 guests at a time. They see a growing need for adult day care. CADC is looking forward to their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in two years. 2024 goals include how to expand, and do they want to expand? Their current challenge is finding places for those who do not have the finances for long-term care facilities.

## **6. Township Officials Update.**

**A.** (i) Township Supervisor Paul Coultrap noted that 8,204 people attended events at the Township Center in 2023.

(ii) Coultrap also announced that the Township Supervisor's Office took just under 10,000 telephone calls and appointments in 2023.

(iii) Finally, Coultrap reminded everyone that the Township now has a medical lending closet open.

**B.** (i) Township Senior Services Coordinator Karen Spencer announced that she is looking for partners for offsite programs because several programs are being held to lower participation levels due to the lack of parking available at the Township Center.

(ii) Spencer went on to announce new classes becoming available at the Township Center. A product of the musical jam sessions, a dance class will now be offered. Also being offered is a "Tell Your Story" session where participants have ten minutes to talk about a life experience, teach a skill, or describe travel taken.

(iii) During the last week of each month, Township Human Services Outreach Coordinator Sarah Behrens will be contacting all SAC liaisons delivering newsletters to determine how many newsletters they will need.

(iv) Spencer talked about the continued low enrollment in the Memory Café program. She asked for all Members' assistance in getting the word out. Chairperson Wagner suggested sending out a flyer only about Memory Café.

(v) Spencer is asking all Members to "Like" DGT programs on Facebook. Teresa Mrozik suggested including a Facebook link on a mass email. Heather Lippe suggested creating a 10-15 second reel. Spencer asked for any other PR suggestions.

(vi) Spencer reported that Community Dining attendance is increasing. Acting on past suggestions, a certificate good for one meal was awarded. Furthermore, a new exercise class will be starting just prior to Community Dining on Wednesdays. Finally, quiet "dining" music is now being played. All SAC Members are encouraged to attend so that seniors can put a name with an SAC face.

(vii) Spencer sent out thanks to the DuPage Senior Citizens Council for including the DGT newsletter and outlining the services DGT provides.

(viii) Finally, Spencer announced that the Westmont Chamber of Commerce is hosting a senior seminar aimed only at business organizations. The Senior Resource Group Expo will be held on Thursday evening, April 25, and Friday morning, April 26.

**7. Focus Area Discussion.** Today's discussion focused on what Members are seeing as needs in the various communities. A deeper discussion ensued regarding memory care. Susan Sinderson suggested hosting a Memory Care in a restaurant so Members can witness what it is like to share a meal with someone with dementia. Mark Davis was asked how to market dementia friendly relationships.

**8. Member and Guest Updates.**

- A.** Member Jillian Spizzirri reported that The Community House is hosting a seminar on April 16, 2024 for all things senior-related. There will be a lunch 'n learn seminar for seniors. Another program will be directed at caregivers along. The Community House is partnering with The Birches for this program. Anyone interested in having a table at the event should contact Jillian directly.
- B.** Guest LaVon Lenaway of Dragonfly Senior Navigation Services is a private senior care consultant and acts as a resource for seniors. She specializes in dementia and family care and offers individual consultations with families and caregivers from the beginning stages to the end-of-life stages. Her class, "What If It Is Dementia" is well-received.
- C.** Guest John Aguzino is the President of the FISH Food Pantry. He reported that during 2022-2023, FISH served 6600 families. In the 2023-2024 year, 10,000 families were served. Aguzino boasted of having great volunteers, who fill orders every minute, as one of the reasons the food pantry is doing so well. He opined that the recent decrease in SNAP benefits may be responsible for the increase in families served.
- D.** Guest Julie Kramer is a senior resident who goes to the "Just Us Seniors" meetings. She said she finds the Township Center to be very welcoming. She also informed the meeting that she works with the Alzheimer's Association as a certified volunteer and is concerned about the 80+ senior population, who often suffer from social isolation and mobility challenges. She recently worked on legislation which would permit families to visit seniors in the event of another pandemic or similar situation.

- E. Member Teresa Mrozik of the Village of Willowbrook provides various recreational activities for seniors but has noticed that the seniors do not do anything between the activities. The Village's plans for 2024 include fostering more socialization opportunities for seniors and creating more depth for those activities.
9. **Adjournment.** Upon a Motion to Adjourn made by Heather Lippe and seconded by Gaye Wagner, the meeting was adjourned at 3:06.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, February 5, 2024.

**Respectfully submitted by Susan R. Mistretta**