

**Downers Grove Township  
SENIOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
February 5, 2024**

**MINUTES**

**A MEETING** of the Downers Grove Township Senior Advisory Committee was held at AgeGuide, 1910 S. Highland Avenue, Lombard, Illinois 60148, on Monday, February 5, 2024.

1. **Call to Order.** Chairperson Gaye Wagner called the meeting to order at 1:33pm.
  
2. **Roundtable Introductions.** Roundtable introductions were made. Following is the meeting attendance:

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

**Supporters:** John Aguzino, Sarah Behrens, Angela Bentson, Julie Cramer, Mark Davis, Deb DiPasquale, Mary Ferguson, Terri Geppner, George Goodwin, LaVon Lenaway, Clare Nass, Phil Painter, Robert Petranek, Kerry Quirin, Dave Ricordati, Karen Spencer, Jillian Spizzirri, Ralph Stompanato, Laurie Tsukuno, Cassie Vanderklok.
  
3. **Review and Approve Minutes.** Board Member Janet Garreau requested that a change to the Minutes from the January 8, 2023 Meeting be made to note Julie Larson be listed as a Member, not a Board Member. Garreau also corrected that Interfaith Community Partners is not celebrating an upcoming 20th Anniversary as noted, and asked that it be removed from the minutes. A Motion to Approve the Amended Minutes of the January 8, 2024 Meeting, as Corrected, was made by Janet Garreau and seconded by Susan Sinderson. 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. Chairperson Gaye Wagner announced that the Senior Advisory Committee Board Members met on January 30, 2024 to discuss the goals of the Committee. She reviewed that the purpose of the Committee is to provide input to Downers Grove Township regarding senior community members. In addition, the Committee will assist with program and service support, communication, and promote resources. Meetings will include case study and focus area discussions. The Board Members also set an attendance guidelines that Board Members will commit to attend nine out of twelve meetings per year. The Board will also meet quarterly and expects attendance at those Board Meetings. Wagner encouraged the Committee to share feedback with Board Members.

Wagner announced that Just Us Seniors forums will be held throughout Downers Grove Township. She encouraged Supporters to attend those forums to represent SAC and to report back to the Committee the discussion points.

Wagner shared that there is a Board Member vacancy, due to the resignation of Ralph Beardsly. Two candidates, Deb DiPasquale and Julie Cramer, expressed interest in the SAC Board Member position. Both individuals shared summaries of their experiences working with older adults and their reasons for wanting to serve as Board Members, and how they can help Downers Grove Township. Board Members will vote in closed session following the meeting. Karen Spencer announced that this vote will fill the vacancy which is up in July 2024. It will not determine the Committee Co-chair. That will be voted on by the Board Members at an upcoming Board meeting. Spencer also announced that an additional Board Member position, currently held by Lisa Rasin, is up for re-election in July of 2024, and that if anyone is interested in running, to speak with Wagner, Spencer or Behrens.

Wagner also shared that the terms for the Board Members currently end in July, a change which was made during COVID. The goal is to have terms revised and realigned to follow the Township fiscal year calendar, ending in March. Wagner also shared that there will be a change to the terminology used to differentiate Board Members from Members and Guests. Karen Spencer announced that the Committee will refer to the nine elected Board Members as Board Members. All others formerly referred to as Members and Guests, will now be designated as Supporters. Pat Klebenow asked if changes needed to be approved by the Township Trustees or in SAC bylaws. Spencer announced that Township Clerk Lorraine Grimsby and Sarah Behrens were collaborating to properly follow guidelines.

Spencer asked if the Committee was willing to hold meetings across Downers Grove Township, not always at the Township Center. There was consensus among the Committee members that holding off-site meetings was agreeable. Spencer also announced that if any Committee members want to lead a guided discussion or give a presentation at future meetings, that would be welcomed.

Wagner shared topics for focus area and case study discussions and asked the Committee to identify topics for upcoming meetings. Mary Fergusson suggested that topics be listed on the agenda so that attendees can bring relevant resources.

- B. (i)** Board Member Linda Rush and Bruce Wright shared an update on the Just Us Seniors forum they attended on February 1, 2024. Rush stated that it was very eye opening and both stated that seniors really felt a sense of community at the Township Senior Center. They reported that seniors were hesitant to attend programs off-site because they want to attend where they are connected to others. Spencer announced that attendance at the senior center has increased significantly and that programs are reaching maximum capacity quickly. She shared that space, staffing, and parking limitations impact the number of people being served. Downers Grove Township is exploring alternate locations in the Township to offer additional programming to meet the needs of more

residents. Spencer shared that it will be important to brand these programs as Township sponsored. Angela Benson added that AgeGuide has recently conducted community listening sessions and reported that seniors who are connected to a senior center feel a great sense of security because they know where to get resources. She shared that senior centers are invaluable to older adults in the community. Lisa Raisin asked if the Township Center basement might be an alternative for programming. Spencer shared that the limited parking is a challenge to run concurrent events. Committee members suggested that maybe a community bus could pick up individuals from an alternate location and offered additional ideas for off-site parking. Spencer shared that in addition to parking limitations, some events fill with over 50 participants so demand is also high.

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

- A.** Township Senior Services Coordinator Karen Spencer announced that Terry Castre has been hired as a part-time program assistant at the senior center. Spencer happily shared that attendance at Community Dining has increased quite a bit in the past few weeks. Spencer shared highlights of recent and upcoming senior center programs. She invited the SAC committee to attend senior center events, when they are able. She also shared that volunteers are helping at the senior center and that she hopes to utilize volunteers more frequently. Spencer shared that she plans for future programming at the senior center to address dementia and education for adult children.
- B.** Township Outreach Coordinator Sarah Behrens shared that she has been busy with promoting township services and programs throughout the community, including the Westmont Illinois READS event and at the Downers Grove branch of Bank Financial. Behrens has been meeting with community partners to discuss collaborations for future programs. Offsite Just Us Seniors forums are being scheduled for the coming months. Supporters shared ideas of possible offsite locations to look into for hosting township programs, such as at faith communities and the American Legion. Behrens shared that additional township marketing materials have been created. She thanked Supporters for their help in distributing the monthly newsletter.

## **8. Member and Guest Updates.**

- A.** Heather Lippe, Village of Downers Grove Social Worker, shared a resident safety concern. Discussion regarding how to handle difficult situations continued amongst those present.
- B.** Lisa Raisin announced that Rotary Grove Fest begins June 20 and that she will be seeking volunteers from local non-profit organizations. Organizations can earn money for each volunteer shift.
- C.** Janet Garreau, Executive Director with Interfaith Community Partners shared that they will be holding a "For the Love of Volunteers" event on February 13, 2024.

- D. Resident Pat Klebenow announced that the DuPage County Recorder's Office has information regarding scams.
- E. Robert Petranek, Friends For Downers Grove Township Seniors President, shared that there will be a fundraiser at 3 Corners Bar and Grill on Thursday, February 29, 2024. He also announced that FFDGTS has increased their monthly donation to Downers Grove Township and recently purchased additional chairs for the senior center.
9. **Adjournment.** Upon a Motion to Adjourn made by Heather Lippe and seconded by Gaye Wagner, the meeting was adjourned at 3:02pm.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, March 4, 2024.

**Respectfully submitted by Karen Spencer**