

St. Joseph County COA

Senior Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

February 20th, 2018

Meeting called to order at 9:06am.

Members Present: Mable Dillingham, Donna Dick, Thelma James, Rosemary Reed, Byron & Bea Folk, Paul & Mike Ballard, Lester Brunner, and Sue Fellows.

Staff Present: Executive Director Tim Stoll, In-Home Services Manager Sherry Swartz, Marketing & Life Enrichment Manager Ruth Mancina, and Life Enrichment Coordinator Kelsey Larsh.

Marketing & Life Enrichment Manager, Ruth Mancina, thanked members for providing suggestions of names for the new Three Rivers center. Executive Director, Tim Stoll, reported that he has looked over the suggestions and that the COA Advisory Board will vote on a name at the meeting on 2/21/18.

Ruth reminded members that the COA Satisfaction Survey is still available on the COA website and in the newsletter until the end of the month.

A new activity called Laughter Yoga is set to begin next week on the 26th in Three Rivers and the 28th in Sturgis. The class in Three Rivers will be held on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month at 9:30am.

Beginning in March, the Life Enrichment department will begin offering a quarterly history talk to replace what was formerly known as the Rise & Shine Breakfast. A professor from Glen Oaks Community College will be coming to both centers to speak about Hiroshima.

The Howardsville Christian School students have given the COA each of the stories written by students who participated in the St. Joseph County Legacy Project. Those stories have been compiled into a binder so that all COA members can view them.

Ruth discussed that members who plan to attend the Dinner Night Out program need to begin paying at the time of ticket purchase or they will not be placed on the list.

Ruth shared a picture of a table-top bingo machine that bingo players would like to purchase with the remains of the money in the 701 funds. Mike and Paula Ballard reported that they are having issues with the same balls being called twice and the same people winning multiple times due to this. Ruth also mentioned the possibility of bingo being held on Monday afternoons at the George Washington Carver center in the near future.

In-Home Services Manager, Sherry Swartz introduced herself to the members present and explained the scope of in-home services care. She reported hopes of beginning to involve recipients of in-home services in the Senior Advisory Council meetings so that the department can receive feedback and input on services received. Member Rosemary Reed asked what qualifications an individual must meet to receive in-home services. Sherry explained that a person can qualify for a number of reasons based on various needs. Ruth suggested that a person whom is isolated within their home may benefit from the friendly reassurance program.

Member Sue Fellows asked if there is a financial limit in order to qualify for meals on wheels services. Sherry explained that meals on wheels is available regardless of financial situation. Each quarter meals on wheels recipients receive a donation statement where they may make a donation to the program, but this is not required. Tim reminded members that the meals on wheels programs and many other COA programs are funded and made possible by the senior millage.

Executive Director Tim Stoll asked for input on the 2018 changes to the restaurant program. Member Mike Ballard reported that he has noticed a decreased in portion sizes at numerous restaurants following the program changes. Member Byron Folk reported that at the Country Table he was unable to order milk as his beverage of choice. Member Sue Fellows reported that she is hearing many people have confusion over when to use breakfast tickets versus using lunch & dinner tickets.

Concern was raised over whether the restaurants were required to provide coffee. Tim explained that the restaurants are no longer under any requirements and that each restaurant has the choice to provide coffee or not.

By a show of hands, the majority of group felt as though they were receiving less food after the changes to the restaurant program.

Tim provided an update on progress of the new COA center in Three Rivers. He reported that the bidding for sub-contractors should begin next week and that currently the COA is working on finding appropriate financing to complete the project. After bids for sub-contractors take place, the COA will have a more complete idea of cost estimate.

Members asked questions regarding the number of rooms that will be designated for activities in the new center. Tim reported that there will be a room for exercise classes which will also hold the exercise equipment. There will not be a designated room for board & card games, but most games can be accommodated in the atrium area of the new building. Tim informed the group that the existing pool will not be salvageable or rebuilt due to high cost. The plan is to fill in the existing pool for added floor space.

Member Donna Dick asked if the COA plans to see increased participation in the COA activities and programs when the new building is finished. Ruth reported that they believe curiosity of the new building will lead to increased membership and participation. Tim also stated that he believes participation will increase due to the high number of people who will be living within the facility in the senior apartments. Tim reported that an estimate for monthly rent has been set, but is subject to change. Utilities will be included in this monthly cost with the exception of cable and internet. Those who rent the apartments will probably be allowed to have pets, but no policies have been written for this yet. Donna inquired as to whether storage areas will be incorporated for various groups to store items. Storage areas will be available for frequently utilized items and those used infrequently.

A question was raised as to whether people who live out of the county can be COA members. Because the COA receives both federal and state funding, any person over the age of 60 can be a member of the COA regardless of where they live.

The next meeting in Three Rivers will be held on April 17th at 9am.

Meeting adjourned at 9:58am.

