

**MUNICIPALITY OF CHATHAM-KENT**

**HEALTH & FAMILY SERVICES**

**SENIORS SERVICES**

**INFORMATION REPORT**

**TO:** Mayor and Members of Council

**FROM:** Colleen Wilson  
Director, Seniors Services

**DATE:** August 11, 2008

**SUBJECT:** Senior Advisory Committee

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This report is for the information of Council.

**BACKGROUND**

There are twelve (12) Senior Centres located throughout the Municipality of Chatham-Kent, all providing similar services for seniors located in their communities. They serve adults over 50 years of age and their services may include recreational programs, social activities, etc. These centres have become well established meeting places for seniors and act as an ideal venue for conveying information and provision of various services throughout the local community and creating a valuable supportive resource for seniors. The twelve senior centres include:

- Blenheim Community Senior Citizens Group
- Bothwell Senior Citizens Centre
- Chatham Active Lifestyle Centre
- Dresden Leisure Hours Centre
- Merlin Senior Citizens Friendship Club
- Morpeth Heritage Club
- Le Club de l'Amitie (Friendship Club)
- Ridgetown & Area Adult Activity Centre
- Tilbury & District Leisure Centre
- Thamesville Happy Club
- Wallaceburg Senior Citizens Club Inc.
- Wheatley & District Friendship Club

Grande Pointe Senior Centre is no longer deemed a Senior Centre and is now an informal club only. This Centre will no longer be sending a representative to the Senior Advisory Committee (SAC).

All of the centres have been operating prior to amalgamation and have a membership of approximately 3,000 seniors as of July 2008. For the past several years, representatives from each senior centre have been meeting quarterly with the Director of Seniors Services. The attendance at these quarterly meetings has increased over the past several months. The Committee felt it was prudent to establish a Seniors Advisory Committee that could provide recommendations and advice to Council on the needs of the seniors in their communities. This Committee was formalized July 2007 and holds meetings quarterly.

## **COMMENTS**

The executive consists of: Walter Spence as Chairperson, Homer Vandervecht as First Vice Chair and George Darnley as the Treasurer and Second Vice Chair. Ms. Anne Gilbert is the Council representative.

On June 24, 2008 the SAC formed a partnership with a group of interested family members from Riverview Gardens and seniors from our local community with the intention of raising the awareness within the community about Riverview Gardens, the Senior Centres and the senior games. This was discussed and agreed by both groups that it would be beneficial to join resources on this project and create a public document that could serve as a “directory of services” outlining all of the services at Riverview Gardens and the twelve Senior Centres. The intent of this directory is to include approximately twelve (12) pages consisting of the services provided by these areas. This directory will outline the services provided by Riverview Gardens and a half page each will be dedicated to each senior centre and one page on the Chatham-Kent Senior Games. A letter requesting financial assistance to produce this document was sent to over 54 companies and suppliers to cover the cost of the directory.

A Job Creation Position (JCP) position has been approved by the Federal government (Employment Action Centre) for nine months.

This position will have three main tasks:

- Support the SAC - help collect information for the “Directory of Services”.
- Provide support if required to the Chatham-Kent Senior Games Committee
- Collect, review and revise policies and procedures, job descriptions and by-laws for each senior centre to ensure consistency.
- Assist the Senior Centres in the application of available grants.

On June 9, 2008 SAC discussed the importance of the Ontario Senior Games and the benefits of hosting the games in Chatham in 2011. As a result, the Director of Senior Services submitted a request for a grant for \$30,000 under the “Aging at Home Strategy” which was publicized by the Local Health Integrated Systems Network. On August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008, Riverview Gardens administration received notification that the LHIN did not have any money to allocate to the Chatham-Kent Senior Games.

The Senior Advisory Committee also voted against assisting in the coordination of the Chatham-Kent Senior Games and the monies approved by Council for the senior

games is being maintained and monitored separately by the Chatham-Kent Senior Games Committee and the Director of Senior Services. A report will be forthcoming on the 2008-09 Chatham- Kent Senior Games. The SAC was initially involved in the selection of a part-time contract employee to coordinate the games and conduct some fund raising.

The Senior Advisory Committee is actively forming partnerships with “Meals on Wheels” and “VON foot care” and are assisting in arranging educational sessions at each centre on topics such as security for seniors, estate and will planning, hearing aides and assistive devices, etc. as well as other services to enrich our seniors’ quality of life.

The SAC had their first meeting on July 11, 2007 and they have met 8 times since its establishment by Council on September 30, 2007. The Committee feel that their main issues include: (1) Directory of Services available for seniors and how to access these services; (2) Affordable and accessible transportation for the elderly; (3) Security.

### **CONSULTATION**

There has been consultation with each Senior Centre and the representatives believe that collecting information regarding services provided within their community for seniors needs to be readily accessible. Each centre is gathering information for the “information handbook for seniors” and plans to distribute the booklet in September or early October 2008.

This Committee will continue to form partnerships with community groups that are focused on the importance of aging at home and seniors being active and healthy during their retirement years.

It has been agreed that as seniors age, transportation continues to be an important issue and this committee will be meeting with the Accessible Transportation Committee coordinator to review possibilities. CHAPS has been considered as a reliable form of transportation however, seniors feel that this mode of transportation is sometimes too costly for some seniors within our Municipality.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications.

Prepared by:

Reviewed by:

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