

SENIORS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

2020 YEAR END REPORT

The 2020 Seniors Advisory Committee (SAC) consisting of 8 members from the community voted Jeff Saunders as Chair and Val Ganske as Vice-Chair.

2020 SAC Members: Jeff Saunders – Chair, Val Ganske – Vice Chair, Sandyne Beach-McCutcheon, Ruby Olson, Elizabeth Hurley, Barbara Hahn, Patricia MacGregor and Douwe Vanderwel

Highlights of 2020:

1. SAC members attended the February 6, 2020 Council Meeting:
 - R. Olson spoke to the impact and rationale of reduced dog license costs for Seniors 65+.
 - P. MacGregor spoke to the impact and rationale for free local transit for Seniors 65+.
 - 15 Mission Hill Village residents attended the Council Meeting to show their support for both motions by wearing the following stickers:



FREE TRANSIT

FOR SENIORS 65+



REDUCED

Dog Licence Fees for Seniors 65+



- Council voted 4-3 in favor for a one-year pilot beginning in 2021 whereby dog licensing fees for spayed or neutered dogs be reduced by 50% for St. Albert residents 65 years and older. The pilot was later cancelled in efforts to reduce costs in 2021.
- The motion that St. Albert residents 65 years and older be provided free local transit including the Handibus for a trial period of one year was defeated by Council.
- Instead, Council approved a motion that St. Albert residents 65 years and older that qualify for the "All Aboard Program", be provided free local transit, including on the Handibus for a trial period of one year.

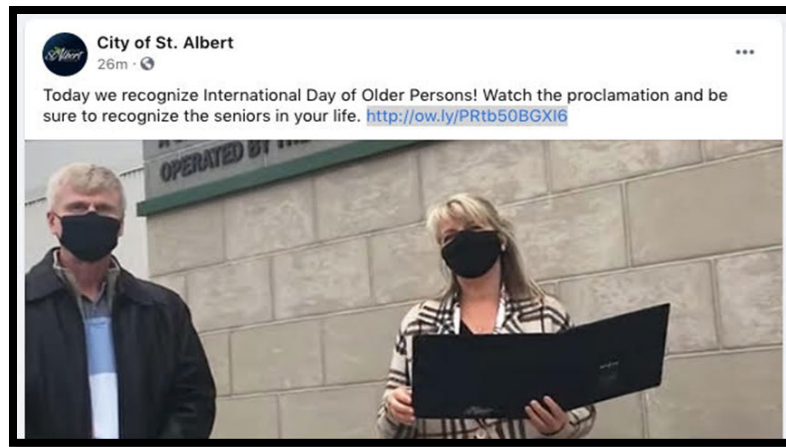
- At the council meeting we learned that St. Albert Transit had implemented a new bus fare effective February 1, 2020 for St. Albert residents on the AISH program and for lower income households. The “All Aboard Pass” provides free local transit passes and lower cost commuter transit passes for eligible recipients.
2. Continuing with priorities from 2019 on Accessing Information, Cory Sinclair, the City of St. Albert’s Manager of Corporate Communications and Design attended the February SAC meeting and provided information and answered questions related to the City’s website including navigation, design and needs from a Senior’s perspective.
 3. On March 11, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic as the coronavirus illness had spread to over 110 countries and territories around the world with the sustained risk of further global spread. The SAC meetings were cancelled in March and April due to precautions taken by the City of St. Albert to avoid the spread of COVID-19.
 4. SAC meetings resumed in May remotely using the ZOOM platform. Committee members discussed the following topics between May to November:
 - **Municipal Development Plan** – Members reviewed the MDP from a Senior’s perspective and provided feedback for consideration by the Flourish Committee.
 - **Priorities for 2020** – It was decided that this year’s focus should be on the impact of COVID-19 on Seniors.
 - **COVID-19 Current & Future Impacts / concerns for Seniors** -
 - SAC members wrote a letter to Councilor Watkins outlining the continued need for Curbside Pickup & Designated Seniors Shopping Hours at local businesses. The letter was forwarded to the City COA, Economic Development and Chamber of Commerce.
 - SAC members asked City administration to complete an awareness campaign about the sharing of trails and sidewalks for the safety of both pedestrians and cyclists as a few seniors were almost struck by cyclists as so many residents are outside using the same trails and sidewalks for walking, running, and enjoying bicycles, scooters, and skateboards.
 - SAC members asked if the City would consider implementing Seniors Hours at its facilities when they reopen.
 - SAC members agreed that the City needs to advocate for an AHS COVID-19 testing site for residents exhibiting symptoms of the coronavirus as Seniors are having to travel to either South Edmonton or Sherwood Park for testing.
 - SAC members approved a motion to support Council’s decision to have the Mask Bylaw continue until the end of 2020. Committee members later supported a 3- month extension to the Mask Bylaw until March 31, 2021.
 - SAC members suggested the City’s COVID-19 Recovery Task Force include a member of the Youth Advisory Committee.
 - **International Day of Older Persons, October 1, 2020:** - SAC members approved a motion recommending the City of St. Albert declare October 1, 2020 the International Day of Older Persons in St. Albert.

- **Joint Meeting with YAC** – Committee members agreed to participate in a joint meeting with the Youth Advisory Committee on October 21, 2020.

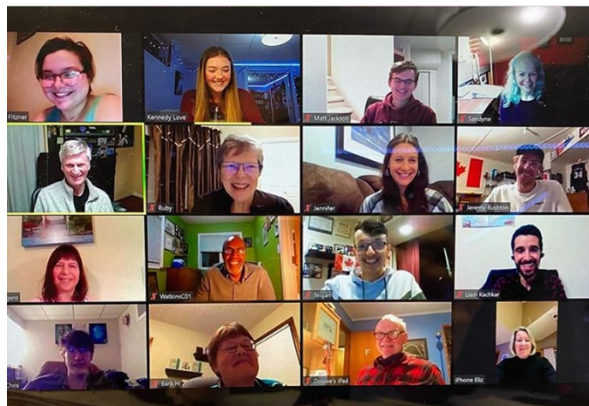
5. In May, a SAC member attended a virtual town hall presented by Josephine Pon, Minister of Seniors and Housing and Dr. Deena Hinshaw, Chief Medical Officer, discussing the latest information regarding COVID-19 and its impact on Seniors.
6. In June, SAC members attended the following meetings:
- Flourish Project Team meeting to provide SAC's comments on the Municipal Development Plan.
 - Community Living Standing Committee meeting to watch the presentation of the "Housing Affordability & Accessibility Project Update" by city staff.
 - On-line presentation by the St. Albert Housing Coalition on "HomeSharing" a shared living arrangement and affordable housing initiative being considered for St. Albert.
7. In September, SAC members attended the following meetings:
- Focus group meeting to discuss the proposed changes to St. Albert's Traffic Bylaw.
 - Interagency Meeting for community-based organizations providing services to seniors and youths in St. Albert. Attendees shared issues, community trends and impacts of COVID-19 on seniors and youths. Learned that 2-1-1 is now available in St. Albert.
 - Participated in the "Universal Accessibility Assessment" of Servus Place by providing City Staff and Consultants with feedback on accessibility within the facility, parking lot and entrances from a Senior's perspective. SAC also shared accessibility concerns residents shared about St. Albert Place in the 2019 Seniors Survey.



8. The Mayor proclaimed October 1, 2020 as the **International Day of Older Persons in St. Albert**. SAC Chair, J. Saunders attended the ceremony and accepted the proclamation on behalf of SAC. The proclamation will be permanently displayed at the St. Albert Seniors Centre.



9. **SAC and YAC Joint Meeting** was held remotely on October 21, 2020. Committee members discussed Transit, low-income issues and accessing city services, affordable housing, mental health, and COVID-19 impacts on both seniors and youths. Members approved the following motions:
- Request Council for the addition of a direct North to South Transit Route in St. Albert to ease travel from one end of the City to the other.
 - Request Council to amend the Terms of Reference for both Committees to allow for the scheduling of an annual joint meeting since committee members concluded there are many benefits to having future meetings since we have so much in common.



10. In November, Jonna Grad, Executive Director of the St. Albert Seniors Association attended the SAC meeting and provided information on their services, products, program offerings and shared the impact COVID-19 is having on their organization. They are conducting a survey asking St. Albert residents 50+ to share how COVID-19 has impacted them. Survey results are expected to provide a better understanding of what supports are needed for Seniors in the future. Jonna asked for our help to spread the word about the Survey. Survey results will be shared with SAC in 2021.

Challenges & Opportunities in 2020

- COVID-19 - SAC members were able to adjust from in-person meetings to meeting remotely using ZOOM after the pandemic was declared. SAC members were still able to provide feedback on City related issues, attend on-line and in person events and make recommendations to Council on ways to keep our Seniors safe during these unprecedented times.
- Lack of reliable Wi-Fi resulted in one SAC member's resignation.
- Established a good working relationship with Youth Advisory Committee which will make civic life better for both Seniors and Youths in St. Albert in the coming years.

AND THAT'S A WRAP FOR 2020

