

**Senior Services | Aging in Place Task Force
Housing Working Group
May 4, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.
Meeting Minutes**

1. Call to Order

The chair calls the meeting to order at 7:03

2. Roll Call

Present: Richard Schmitt, Chair; Cynthia DeMan; Jerry Amber; Jim Schneider; Carol Windorf

Absent: James Downing; Melinda Loftin; Nancy Robinson; Susan Clark

Also in attendance: Peter Young

3. Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting April 13

Motion by Jim Schneider

Second by Cynthia DeMan

Aye: all

No: none

Approved Unanimously

4. Regular Meeting April 13th, 2022

Approval of Agenda for tonight's meeting

Amendments: check in meeting in mid-June; hybrid meeting

Motion by Cynthia DeMan

Second by Jim Schneider

Aye: All

No: None

Motion is approved with amendment.

5. Next Meeting Dates (Virtual):

a) May 18th, 2022 – finalize our report to the Task force

b) There will probably be a check in meeting in mid-june, probably June 15

6. Review and discuss feedback from Richard Schmitt's visit with Yolanda Botello of the M/M Senior Center on 4/18/22 sent by email 4/19/22.

Met with Yolanda Botello, the new director of the Senior Center. Yolanda was interested in expanding the outreach the group had talked about. They have a core group of seniors using ROSES, they are very open to serving more seniors than currently serving. The senior center is to an ombudsmen type coordinator for volunteer. The housing group was looking with the rehab program and ROSES, but they suggested viewing the position more broadly, not limited to rehab and ROSES. The senior center is under the parks and rec department; very willing to do things; shared conversations with OPC and try; They have 5 halftime employees around the senior center and ROSES, and another three driver employees.

Many places have a service coordinator; did you get the sense that they want to have this?

- They have a half time people for the roses and delivery.

- Other places have a general service coordinator, who has general knowledge about senior programs and their needs. Troy has a person that is knowledgeable about general senior service programs.

Royal Oak has part time people that have little connection. They don't have a meals on wheels; The senior center has someone that coordinate programs within the senior center. Yolanda would like to provide more.

The communications group is suggesting a communications coordinator for city services.

Royal Oak has a limited period of 5 to 6 hours a day to provide services; The senior center has 3 halftime people that provide services.

Has anybody identified that there's a need for housing for people in Royal Oak?

- We have identified a need; James Downing provided some of that information; almost all are waitlisted; 650 total units of senior coop or senior only housing.

Is there a need for affordable senior housing vs market rate? Data on what product will be missing in the market.

- That is something we are going to suggest. We have talked about the need to inventory potential senior housing.

Royal Oak is mostly infill with some under used properties. There's some city owned properties like parking lots that could be put to use. The data shows that we could have a 30% increase or 35% senior population growth and the need for living accommodations that are senior friendly could grow proportionately.

New apartments are easily converted to senior friendly housing. That could add to the senior friendly housing percent. We can write in our report that there is an inventory but not identified as strictly senior housing.

The planning apartment talked about the rental market over 500 rentals in Royal Oak (probably more); when they want to rent something all they have to do is file for a permit; The Community Development director Tim Thwing said they can't do any reports out of rental database. We are suggesting that they could make a rental database

The senior housing market took a hit because of covid and has not gotten back to what it is pre-pandemic.

The group talked about offering up city property to nonprofit or for-profit senior housing developers. There is information on property that the city wants to sell.

7. Review and discuss Senior Living accommodations available in Royal Oak that meet our goals of Senior Livability (Zero step, one floor, etc.) from James Downing.

Richard talked with James Downing from CSA at Barton Towers. Richard the conversation details are added to a document used to track senior residences in the area. Sent the group the Royal Oak strategic plan. And has been tracking group progress.

8. Review latest Royal Oak Strategic Plan approved by City Commission dated 4/11/22 sent by email 4/19/22.

This is a three-to-five-year plan for the city. This will become the goals for each department. The group discussed what is going into the Royal Oak Age-Friendly Royal Oak senior plan and how the Housing document is part of the plan.

The senior support person could increase outreach to churches businesses service groups etcetera ; Develop better online and in print resources and contractors; Vetting contractors;

The city needs to be more proactive in developing opportunities for developers.

The group discussed James Downing's report.

There's a cannabis grower being developed in the industrial area near Meijer, couldn't that be used for senior housing

- That was a private developer and the city can't force developers to build something. However, they can have influence over city owned land.
- The properties financing doesn't score high enough to develop senior housing so they rely on MSHDA tax credits. That is the vehicle that provides affordable housing because it makes it worthwhile for a developer to build

It all depends on what we define as senior housing.

We aren't just focusing on below market rate housing. We have a need for it but it's not the total focus. We ought to be focusing on what we talked about and flesh out our recommendations.

The group should focus on building up the housing rehab program for seniors. There was money left on the table for that rehab program. The group discussed the rehab loan program.

I am not sure of city involvement in a database. Concerned about it being a recommendation.

There could be potential senior housing locations owned by the city in the city master plan.

There is a group of people that don't want any multiunit housing in their neighborhood.

Rezoning should be one of the goals of the master plan.

There should be a discussion about multi-unit housing and accessory dwelling units.

- We will look into ADUs and current policies.
- Royal Oak was very adamant against living units over a garage. Encouraging new garages with living spaces would be practical.

There was a discussion about warranty programs.

9. Review and discuss summary document updated by Richard Schmitt on our results to date.

Richard will summarize what was talked about during the meeting. The group will research the master plan and multi-unit housing policies.

10. Finalize Goals and work on recommendations and metrics.

The group worked on recommendations and metrics throughout the body of this meeting and the group will finalize goals in later meetings. **Attachment 1** is the working group's vision, we heard, and recommendations as they are at the time of this meeting.

11. Public Comments

None

12. Meeting Adjournment

A motion is made for meeting adjournment.

Motion by Cynthia DeMan

Second by Carol Windorf

Aye: All

No: None

Approved Unanimously

Attachment 1.

Vision Statement:

We envision a city that identifies opportunities, ideas, and direction for a diversity of housing solutions for the Royal Oak community.

We Heard Statement:

We heard from 697 respondents to our community surveys and 135 participants in our seven focus groups conducted from April 2019 through January 2020 with 67% of them were in the over 60 age group.

92% of the respondents say they currently live in single family detached housing. In order to safely “Age in Place,” 64% believe they need to make modifications to their homes. Such modifications include adding grab bars, handrails, and non-slip tiles. The next most popular modification was to add/relocate a bedroom, bathroom and/or laundry on the first floor of their current home.

83% of our respondents said that trustworthy and affordable home repair contractors were very important. 75% of respondents stated a need for home maintenance support is very or somewhat important to them and 64% stated that seasonal services like leaf removal and snow removal for low- and moderate-income older adults as well as for older adults of any income.

Overall, the respondents from the focus groups expressed aspirations for more single floor housing options, without stairs, that are affordable or exclusive senior or senior assisted living options.

Our Goals and Recommendations:

Based upon the latest data from SEMCOG, the City of Royal Oak will experience an increase in population of Seniors aged 65 to 84 of 34.8% (+1184) from 2019 to 2045 and a larger increase over 85 aged population of 179.4% (+1189) in the same period. To support this forecast in our Senior populations, we need the City of Royal Oak to significantly improve both the existing programs administered out of the Administration at the Senior Center or the Planning Department. The existing programs and services such as R.O.S.E.S and Housing Rehab that are funded by CDBGs would need to grow to support the growing population.

Over the past seven years (2014 to 2020) the funds budgeted for the ROSES program have mostly been expended, however, the recent Pandemic in 2019 and 2020 reversed that trend and continues to lag due to low unemployment and low wages being paid. During the same period the Housing Rehab program left significant funds unspent despite past marketing plans.

The city needs to do something different to support these existing programs and we believe that the biggest improvement would be to support a full-time budgeted position to

support our growing number of Seniors and better coordinate these services to that population by:

- 1) Increase outreach to local churches, business, schools, service groups to support volunteerism to our senior community for seasonal tasks like leaf raking, snow shoveling/plowing, spring yard clean ups (i.e., Earth Day, Arbor Day, etc.)
- 2) Better maintenance of both print and online senior friendly resources and contractors previously used for minor home tasks (i.e., grab bars, handrails, etc.)
- 3) Better maintain lists of contractors previously used or vetted for home modifications that might be more expensive or don't meet the criteria of CDBGs that support moderate to low-income seniors (i.e., relocating bedrooms and laundry facilities to main floors, bathroom modifications and opening doors to be ADA compliant, etc.)
- 4) Assist current staff for the R.O.S.E.S and Home ReHab programs

In addition, the data shows that our Seniors will want to "Age in Place" with necessary modifications to existing homes or relocate to senior friendly housing in the existing inventory in Royal Oak or into new inventory of senior friendly housing that the city should aggressively market to developers as development sites become available. To support these activities we feel the City needs to provide resources to our growing Senior population of the existing inventory of Senior Housing in our close by to Royal Oak:

- 1) Barton Towers Co-Op Apartments (210 units) at 333 N Troy St
- 2) Royal Oak Manor Co-Op Apartments (240 units) at Williams St
- 3) Village of Royal Oak (147 units) at 3442 Devon Rd
- 4) Clawson Manor (259 units) at 255 W 14 Mile Rd, Clawson
- 5) Madison Heights Co-Op Apartments (151 units) at 500 E Irving Ave, Madison Heights
- 6) New Horizon Co-Op Apartments (126 units) at 31101 Edward Ave, Madison Heights

The City should also work with existing rental property owners to create an inventory of rental units in our city that meet to criteria for being senior friendly as per the AARP guidelines

In addition, the City of Royal Oak should facilitate the construction of additional dedicated senior and/or senior friendly housing by:

- 1) Identifying underutilized city owned land or land available for strategic acquisition.
- 2) Making that land available to private and non-profit developers through an RFP process for redevelopment as dedicated senior or senior friendly housing
- 3) Work with successful developers to rezone property to facilitate redevelopment to meet future senior or senior-friendly housing.