

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE OLDER ADULT NEEDS COMMITTEE
CITY OF NOVI
MONDAY, JUNE 26, 2023 AT 5:30 P.M.**

Member Casey called the meeting to order at 5:32 P.M.

ROLL CALL: **PRESENT:** Council Member Casey, Council Member Smith, Council Member Thomas, Kathy Crawford, Kim Nice.
ABSENT: Jay Dooley, Debbie Wrobel.

ALSO PRESENT: Victor Cardenas, Interim City Manager
 Kit Kieser, OAS Manager

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

OAN 23-06-19 Moved by Thomas, seconded by Nice; CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

To approve the Agenda.

**Voice vote on OAN 23-06-19 Yeas: Casey, Smith, Thomas, Crawford, Nice
 Nays: None**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

OAN 23-06-20 Moved by Thomas, seconded by Smith; CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

To approve the June 12, 2023 meeting minutes as presented.

**Voice vote on OAN 23-06-20 Yeas: Casey, Smith, Thomas, Crawford, Nice
 Nays: None**

REMARKS FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON:

Member Casey opened the meeting by explaining her vision of the evening's meeting which would run as an open forum between committee members. She wanted to hear what each member saw as the next steps for the committee and to discuss topics for future investigation and discussion. With no presentations for the committee, Member Casey opened the floor to the members.

PRESENTATIONS: None

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION:

Member Crawford said that because of her research from travelling to Senior Centers around the state with former City Manager Auger and Director Muck and from the Committee findings, she felt comfortable with the information gathered. Member Nice agreed, and said she felt that it was time to identify what is needed in a building based on Novi's needs. Member Thomas commented that the committee needed to decide first if a Senior Center is actually needed. Other communities have a Community Center that can serve the whole community as it changes. She agreed that the City needs space to offer more, but perhaps a building for only Senior activities is not the solution. She wanted to find

a way to provide for the 15% of the population that are Older Adults while still providing for the entire community, such as a Rec or Community Center.

Member Smith said he wanted to know more about aging in place and who was moving into Novi in their late years. He would like to see how the City is helping those who have lived in Novi long term and are staying to age in place, and if they are able to stay. He also wanted to know more about how Oakland County's transit project would affect our older adult community.

Member Crawford said that it had been over a decade since Novi has had a senior center and that most people don't buy into the need for one because they don't know what it could be. She also addressed housing concerns for Seniors, noting the need for more ranch style homes.

Member Nice told the committee that she travels to other communities to find programs she is interested in and would like to discuss ways to partner with these neighboring communities. Member Casey agreed that she would like to see what partnerships could be formed to find new offerings for Novi residents. She feels that a survey would be helpful to see what needs residents feel they have and what volume of residents are looking for more. She would like to gather more information about residents with disabilities and our residents who speak English as a second language. She feels it is time to shift gears and find ways to gather more data. Member Thomas agreed with the need for more data through focus groups or surveys. She wants to find out how happy our seniors are with the current system. If more programs were offered, would they have transportation to attend? Both Members Thomas and Smith wanted to investigate the City's evening transportation offerings and ways to make the current transportation system more accessible. As was found in a previous meeting regarding senior transportation, rides must be booked at least 2 weeks in advance. How much does this hinder participation?

Member Casey offered a chance for audience members to speak. One member said it was embarrassing that a city of our size didn't have a senior center. Another member said she would like the committee to address how to fill in the gaps now. Member Thomas agreed and said the focus should be on filling in the gaps, and work towards a Center down the road if the need is found. Before focusing on building a center, other options for space should be examined. Member Crawford said that the Civic Center does not have a "warm and fuzzy" feel and the parking lot is not helpful. She wants to find space to expand. She wondered what departments within the Civic Center might be able to move to make space for more Senior opportunities.

Member Casey said that it was time to dig deep and compile data to present to Council. Perhaps there should be a combination of the Older Adult Needs committee and Older Adult Services board to get more feedback. She would like to be able to provide recommendations to Council based on resident needs and give Council and City staff time to plan. Member Crawford said that an advisory council would be hard if a senior center wasn't the focus. She wants to look at existing property that could be used to help "beef up" senior offerings. She said it needs to happen soon. She is tired of educating and wants to move forward towards the solution. The next Council (after the November election) might not think the OAN Committee is needed.

City Manager Cardenas spoke on space. He said we are blessed with resources. Perhaps we could look at using neighborhood clubhouses now while bigger options are decided. Member Thomas agreed that clubhouses could be an option that makes attendance more convenient. Member Smith added the suggestion to reach out to local churches to see if

they would be interested in renting space to us. City Manager Cardenas also mentioned the ROAR facility as a possible space to partner with.

Member Casey wrapped up the discussion by stating that she would like to talk about now vs later. What can the City do in the short term to fill in the gaps while the Committee and City works towards the end goal.

Member Crawford shared two handouts with attendees including the history of the Novi Senior Center and another regarding Social Connection.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS: None

ADJOURNMENT – There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 6:25 P.M.

Transcribed by Melissa Morris, Deputy City Clerk

Date approved: July 17, 2023