

**SPAN: Seniors (50+) Planning and Action Network of
New Westminster
Minutes of Meeting
Wednesday, September 21, 2011 1:00 – 3:00 pm
Century House Birch/Cedar Rooms**

In attendance: Annette Oakes, Patricia Smith, Mariam Larson (co-ordinator), Dianne Clark, Marg McKee, Lesley Cole, Krista Frazee, Lorraine Logan, Diane Murakami, Jagtar Sangha, Syl Helmink, Freda D'Souza, Brian D'Souza, Betty MacIntosh, John Stark.

Regrets: Pat Dunnett, Judi Sofroni, Gabriele Scully, Julie Rogal, Stephanie Davis.

Chairperson: Annette Oakes. **Recorder:** Patricia Smith.

Welcome and Adoption of Agenda

Moved by Syl, Seconded by Dianne to adopt the Agenda as presented.
AIF. Carried.

Minutes of June 15, 2011

Moved by Freda, Seconded by Jagtar to adopt as circulated. AIF. Carried.

Correspondence:

Letter of resignation from the SPAN committee received from Jan Greenhow, Past Chair of the Committee, for health reasons.

Letter will be sent to Jan to thank her for her work on the committee.

Letter has been sent to Lesley and the Staff of Century House thanking them for their support in providing space for the SPAN committee to meet at Century House.

1. Presentation: Vancouver Foundation Community Session.

Annette attended the Vancouver Foundation Community Conversation, Vital Signs, Session, on June 23 2011 at the Centennial Centre. She reported that through small table discussion there was an opportunity to share what matters in your community.

2. Business.

2.1 Seniors Services Society report: Krista thanked the SPAN committee and members for their letters of support for Seniors Services Society's application for a Grant from New Horizons for Seniors. The money being asked for is to launch a new programme to train volunteers to assist clients in completing forms to access benefits.

Krista reported that Seniors Services Society staff had completed a week of brainstorming to assist them in re-focusing on the work which is in their mandate to undertake that is Housing, Nutrition and Social Programmes.

2.2 Co-ordinators Report: Mariam presented a summary of the United Way Seniors Planning Table Co-ordinators' Meeting.

Margaret Mahan for BEST (Better Environmentally Sound Transportation) asked for support for two applications they are making for money for their initiatives.

Notice was given of a Petition to provide public washrooms at Skytrain stations and bus loops. This is a regional transit issue.

October 1st is International Day for Seniors. Mariam will be drafting a Press Release about SPAN to tie in with that day.

United Way Seniors Forum "Aging with Dignity-Making it Happen for Everyone", is to be held on November 16 at the Hilton Vancouver Metrotown, 6083 McKay Avenue, Burnaby. It will include a Report on the Environmental Scan on Vulnerable Seniors. Register online at www.uwim.ca/seniorsforum. Or contact Cindy Cassidy at cindyc@uwim.ca or 604-294-8929 Ext. 2256

If there is enough local interest it may be possible to request the Seniors Services Society bus to take participants from New Westminster with a pick-up in Burnaby.

2.3 Projects

a. **Agency Networking Event.** Dianne reported that meetings were held on May 27 and August 23, and that the organizing group will meet again on October 4.

She noted that the total of invitees to this year's event was 67. However, there has been no response to the email invitations. It is thought that there must have been a glitch in the system to account for this, and Mariam will be resending the emails.

Due to space restrictions the maximum number of agencies which can be accommodated is 30. The last day to register is October 7.

As soon as the number of participants is known donations for refreshments will be requested.

The banner is made.

b. **Directory of Services for Seniors 2012.** Barry continues his work updating the online Directory of Services for Seniors, which is on target. The hope has been expressed that it will be possible to produce a print version in the New Year.

c. **Seniors Engagement Toolkit 2011.** John reported that the Toolkit is now complete and ready to be distributed to City staff with a covering letter. He suggested a fun get-together to take place possibly in mid-October of key staff and seniors, particularly those who were involved in working on the Toolkit, at which the participants might form into groups to come up with ideas for an Age Friendly Event.

The guide (Toolkit) will also be posted online on the City Page.

d. **Adaptable Housing Policy.** John informed the committee that of new multi-family housing (apartments) 40% must be adaptable. This is now mandatory in New Westminster.

3. SPAN VISION FOR 2011-2014.

The original 8 topics decided upon by the Seniors Services Society Task Force in 2008 were:

1. Housing and Built Environment
2. Security & Safety
3. Transportation
4. Financial & Legal
5. Personal Assistance & Support
6. Health & Mental Health
7. Education & Communication
8. Recreation/Support

Mariam asked the committee to consider how SPAN might go forward in achieving the required results hoped for when these topics were identified as being issues of importance to New Westminster's senior population.

Examples:

4 Financial & Legal.

Some seniors find it difficult to complete official forms for benefits to which they are entitled. Seniors Services Society has identified this as a problem and has applied for a New Horizons for Seniors Program Grant to train volunteers to assist those seniors in completing their forms.

Can SPAN assist with this if the Grant is approved?

Would it be practical to hold Information Sessions at such centres as Queensborough and Sapperton OAP?

Service Canada has an Outreach programme and will send an outreach speaker if requested.

Can the legal programme at Century house be taken into the community?

One of the Home Health modules is an Adult Guardianship Presentation.

Mariam will get the contact name for this Presentation from Diane Murakami.

#3 Transportation.

The City has engaged a consultant to look into transportation issues and has developed a 6 phase "Master Plan" for one year. Mariam will get further information from Betty.

#1 Housing

It was commented that seniors are reluctant to talk about the restrictions affecting them in their homes, such as the hazards which contribute to falls. There are good programmes in fall prevention around the communities but are they being accessed by seniors?

It was agreed that peer to peer counselling is more effective.

Activity:

Mariam distributed Post-It notes and asked committee members to identify those issues they believe affect seniors the most.

The results were as follows:

- Nutrition: Seniors need healthy, culturally appropriate food as they age. The activity level reduces, and lifestyles change, but the diet does not and can cause health issues. With some ethnic groups language is an obstacle.
- Loneliness/isolation.
- Transportation: Those who do not drive find difficulty in getting to appointments, and doing their grocery shopping. It was suggested that Seniors Services Society might expand their shopping programme. Krista

mentioned that Seniors Services Society had done a profile and found that lack of family support and/or family instability led to many of the problems that their clients suffered.

- Housing: Where can vulnerable seniors find a reliable contractor to do work for them, and to undertake small home repairs?
- Due to the increase in the value of houses/homes some seniors are unable to pay the property taxes. It was noted that property tax can be deferred but seniors may be reluctant to due so.
- Krista mentioned that Seniors Services Society has lost the funding for NoMESS, which offered non-medical home support for seniors.

- Accessing Services: To aid seniors in accessing the services available it was suggested that information on how to do this be integrated into the Seniors Services Directory.
- The information could also be taken to the target seniors through an outreach programme.

- Volunteers: How to attract them.

4. Announcements: Baby Boomer Focus Group Community Meeting, Tuesday, October 11, 6:00 – 7:30 pm. At either Queensborough Community Centre, 920 Ewen Avenue, or Centennial Community Centre, 65 East 6th Avenue.

5. Next Meeting: Wednesday, November 23, 2011, 1 - 3 pm, Century House.

6. Adjournment: 3:15 pm.