



Commission on Senior Issues

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Meeting Minutes – University City Commission on Senior Issues

October 16, 2017

Location: Heman Park Community Center
Attendees Present: Mary Hart, Sue Slater, Margie Diekemper, Wayne Flesch, Elaine Henton, Marcia Mermelstein (Staff Liaison), Paulette Carr (Council Liaison)
Excused:
Absent:
Guest: Adam Brown, Community Development Specialist, Andrea Riganti Director of Community Development

Ms. Mary Hart called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.
Roll call was done by Ms. Marcia Mermelstein

Ms. Hart let Commission members know that a condolence card had been sent on behalf of the Senior Commission by Ms. Mermelstein to the family of Bill Thomas, expressing our appreciation for his commitment to the Commission and our sadness for his passing.

Approval of Minutes

It was pointed out that there was some confusion of dates on the July and September minutes. Ms. Mermelstein said that she would re-send the minutes tomorrow, with corrections made. She also apologized for leaving hard copies of the September minutes at her office tonight, and said she would bring them to the next meeting in order for them to be approved.

Unfinished Business

- Older Adult Survey Update---Mr. Brown said that he appreciated feedback he had received from Commission members concerning survey questions and focus. He announced that a practicum student from UMSL who will be getting a Masters degree in gerontology is working with him on this project. Their plan is to have the survey questions finalized by early November, and he would like to do a test sample with the survey before doing the larger-scale version in the spring. He also announced that he is collaborating with Professor Tom Meuser, Director of UMSL's graduate Gerontology program and Professor Larry Irons, who is a professor of sociology at UMSL. The students in one of Professor Irons' classes will be involved in administering the survey and summarizing the data. Both professors will be assisting him with input concerning the questions on the survey. Professor Irons would also like his students to be able to do follow-up more in-depth interviews with people who indicate while taking the survey that they would be interested in doing that. Mr. Brown has received permission from Kara at the library to be able to use the Story Corps recording equipment for those longer interviews. He invited Commission members to consider participating in the test sample of the survey, and encouraged them to consider becoming interviewers. He will continue to keep the Senior Commission informed, and said that Commission members should feel free to contact him if they questions or suggestions regarding the survey, at 314-505-8522 or at abrown@ucitymo.org.

- Commission Members' Term Appointments/Terminations – Ms. Hart announced that Ms. Gloria Nickerson from Ward 2 will take the place formerly held by Bill Thomas. She has been appointed by Ms. Carr, and will be invited to attend the next Commission meeting. Ms. Hart mentioned that Ms. Linda Peoples may be interested in becoming a Commission member when Ms. Hart's term expires. Ms. Diekemper mentioned that one of her neighbors, a man, might also be interested--Mr. Flesch said it would be fine to share his telephone number with him, if he would like to talk to him about the Commission.

Ms. Diekemper raised the question of how long Dorothy Merritt can continue to serve on the Commission after having had a large number of consecutive excused absences. Ms. Henton said that she would talk with Ms. Merritt's god-daughter, Roz Turner, tonight to find out what Dorothy wants to do. It was suggested that a letter be sent to Ms. Merritt thanking her for her service, and letting her know that the Commission feels it needs to fill her position and encouraging her to re-apply to become a member in the future if her health allows. It was also suggested that Ms. Hart, as chairperson, call Ms. Merritt to discuss this decision, and then follow up with the letter. A final suggestion was to develop a standard "thank you" letter when someone has finished their term on the Commission.

Because Ms. Hart's term is coming to an end, a new Chairperson needs to be elected by the Commission. And a new Vice-Chair also needs to be elected, due to Mr. Thomas' death. None of the Commission members attending indicated an interest in either of these positions. The November meeting will be the last one chaired by Ms. Hart--if no one steps forward to become the new chair, a suggestion was that there could be a monthly rotation with a different Commission member chairing each month until someone comes forward to volunteer more permanently. Ms. Diekemper said that she would be willing to become the Vice Chair if someone else decides to be the new Chairperson.

Neither Mr. Flesch or Ms. Merritt were officially re-appointed to the Commission in November. Ms. Carr said she would check into this matter with LaRette Reese, because she knows that she has not herself re-appointed either of them.

- Frequency of Commission Meetings – Discussion was held concerning possibly changing to an every-other-month meeting schedule. Consensus was to continue meeting monthly (without a meeting in December because of the Christmas holiday), and re-visit this topic in the spring.
- Input concerning Ms. Diekemper's document, *"Responses to Inaccuracies Regarding Support of the University City Commission on Senior Issues ITN Gateway & FY2018 Budget Proposal"* –

Ms. Diekemper wants this document shared with City Council members in order to have inaccuracies corrected for the record. She would like it to come from the Senior Commission, rather than from herself, since one of the inaccuracies was the idea that she herself works for ITN. There was a lengthy discussion concerning the document, and Ms. Hart suggested that parts of the document be reworded in more neutral language. She agrees with the idea of clarifying the information, but felt that taking out specific names of who said what as well as removing the more editorial comments and just stating the facts would be a better way of conveying the information to the members of City Council. She indicated that she had emailed a version of the letter to Ms. Diekemper earlier in the day, and Ms. Diekemper said she will take Ms. Hart's edits into consideration to re-work the document. She will send out the document to Commission members before the next meeting so that they can read it over and take a final vote on sending it out at the next meeting.

New Business

Senior Coordinator Report – Ms. Mermelstein reported that 37 houses will be involved in the upcoming Make a Difference Day program. There will also be participating this year from All Nations Church, the Men of Valor program from University City High School, and Habitat for Humanity. She said that 14 people attended a program at the Brentmoor in October about avoiding financial

scamming, and that a driver safety program had been canceled due to no registration. University City Senior Services will be co-sponsoring two programs with OASIS in May, both of which will be held at the Senior Center. Coffee Talk program will no longer be meeting due to low participation. There are now 512 names in the senior database.

Council Liaison Report – Ms. Carr reported that MSD is holding two meetings in the coming week concerning the possibility of installing an underground sewage holding tank. A Storm Water Task Force will be meeting on October 24. Within the next 18 months, there should be an inventory of what is going on in University City, and the end result will be to come up with a storm water master plan.

Ms. Diekemper moved to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Flesch seconded. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Next Meeting: Monday, November 20, 2017 at 6:00 PM. – Heman Park Community Center