

Type of Decision									
Meeting Date	Friday, January 30, 2015				Report Date	Friday, January-23-15			
Decision Required	X	Yes		No	Priority	X	High		Low
Direction	X	Information Only			Type of Meeting	X	Open		Closed

Age Friendly Communities - Report #30/01/15/801-A

Subject:

Update on the Province’s focus on Age Friendly Communities and a missed funding opportunity.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council adopt the following resolution agreeing to contact its neighbours about a potential joint project.

WHEREAS the health and welfare of area seniors is paramount in maintaining the population base in our aging communities;

AND WHEREAS providing transportation, housing alternatives, social inclusion and other benefits would assist in allowing seniors to “age in place” and remain in our communities;

AND WHEREAS the provincial government is focusing on and funding “Age Friendly Communities”;

AND WHEREAS with working together synergies can be created with much more achieved than by working alone;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the United Townships of Head, Clara & Maria does hereby agree to contact the remaining three local councils, health care agencies and other stakeholders to discuss the potential for a coordinated committee whose focus would be to develop an Age Friendly Community encompassing Head, Clara & Maria, the Town of Deep River, the Town of Laurentian Hills and Rapides des Joachims.

BACKGROUND/EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The links to this funding opportunity were forwarded back in November to members of our community, council and the Recreation Committee to determine if there was funding available within this program to supplement the focus of the Rec Committee. Due to the detail and extend of this project there was no response.

The provincial Liberal government has created a focus on Age Friendly Communities and has sponsored a funding program for the 2015-2017 years. Although we are not in a position to apply for that funding, with the Liberal government just obtaining a new mandate, it is likely that there will be additional future funding for these projects.

The focus for this round of funding was on long-term strategy and plans to create age-friendly communities. It is my opinion that this is beyond the focus of a recreation committee or our municipality on its own; in effect, Age-Friendly Community programming is an entire committee of its own and might be better addressed through a joint effort.

Perhaps this might be better focused on an area basis? Something for joint council? The potential is incredible, opportunity for financing exists. Each of the 8 “dimensions” listed below are important. Specifically for HCM residents would be those which address the ability of residents to either remain in their home – age in place; or move to care facilities within their own community. The other areas are important but HCM through its Recreation Committee are attempting to address social inclusion, respect and social participation through its programming.

It is beyond my experience or expertise to begin this process but in the past a municipally sponsored seniors housing complex has been discussed. It is a lofty but worthwhile goal. Might the neighbouring municipalities work together with health care providers and other partners to address some of these issues?

Options/Discussion:

The focus on the Age Friendly Communities Funding for the January 30, 2015 deadline is as follows....In brief, the WHO's eight dimensions include:

- **Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings:** When people view a neighbourhood as safe and accessible it encourages outdoor activities or engagement with the community. Accessibility involves removing barriers that limit opportunities for people with disabilities, including older adults with age-related impairments, and allowing older adults to participate in social activities or to access important health and social services and businesses.
- **Transportation:** The condition and design of transportation-related infrastructure such as signage, traffic lights and sidewalks affects personal mobility. Access to reliable, affordable public transit becomes increasingly important when driving becomes stressful or challenging.
- **Housing:** For many older adults, aging in place is desirable. The availability of appropriate, affordable housing with a choice of styles and locations and that incorporates flexibility through adaptive features is essential for age-friendly communities.
- **Social Participation:** Interacting with family and friends is an important part of positive mental health and community awareness. Social participation involves the level of interaction that older adults have with other members of their community and the extent that the community itself makes this interaction possible.
- **Respect and Social Inclusion:** Community attitudes, such as a general feeling of respect and recognizing the role that older adults play in our society, are critical factors for

establishing an age-friendly community. Age-friendly communities foster positive images of aging and intergenerational understanding to challenge negative attitudes.

• **Civic Participation and Employment:** Civic engagement includes older adults' desire to be involved in aspects of community life that extend beyond their day-to-day activities, such as volunteering, becoming politically active, voting or working on committees. Economic security is important for many older adults, particularly those with low and fixed incomes. The ability of an older adult to remain employed or find new employment provides economic security, and it benefits employers who recognize the experience and commitment that older employees bring to the workplace.

• **Communication and Information:** Age-friendly communities make sure that information about community events or important services is both readily accessible and in formats that are appropriate for older adults. Moreover, an age-friendly community recognizes the diversity within the older adult population and promotes outreach initiatives to non-traditional families, ethno-cultural minorities, newcomers and aboriginal communities.

• **Community Support and Health Services:** Good mental and physical health contributes to quality of life and age-friendliness. When evaluating age-friendliness, consider access to community-related services that support physical or mental well-being and the availability of health promotion or awareness services that promote and support healthy behaviours and life choices.

The first steps in establishing an AFC process involve working with community stakeholders to define the terms of reference for your initiative. This may include developing guiding principles, a vision and goals for your community, roles and responsibilities, timelines and deliverables.

Community stakeholders include older residents, business owners, municipal staff, council members, service providers, volunteers, members of postsecondary institutions and others who share a commitment to make their community better for all.

Financial Considerations/Budget Impact:

Policy Impact:

Others Consulted:

Recreation Committee

Approved and Recommended by the Clerk

Melinda Reith,
Municipal Clerk