



Select Committee on Senior Centers Meeting Minutes March 23, 2021

Members Present

Commissioner Gloria Pitchford Nicholas,
Chair
Commissioner John Griffith
Sharon Fitak
Patricia Delmenhorst
David Hoffman
Victoria Jensen
Debra Jupka
Deborah Lewis
Sally Lindner
Dain Maddox
Howard Schneider
Alex Steuck Konkell
M. Kent Mayfield
Gene Guskowski
Cathy Wood

Members Excused

Ruth Bevenue
Leon Davis
Jean Sobon

Milwaukee County Staff

Andrew Bethke
Mary Proctor Brown
Daniel Idzikowski
Jon Janowski
Jill Knight
Carrie Voss Vallejo

Guests

I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Commissioner Pitchford Nicholas called the Senior Center Committee to order on Tuesday, March 23, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. Idzikowski called the roll. There were sufficient members present to constitute a quorum, so the meeting proceeded.

II. WELCOME and INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Pitchford Nicholas invited all members to introduce themselves and their interest on the Committee. All members present did so.

III. REVIEW COMMITTEE CHARGE

Chair Pitchford Nicholas reviewed the charge laid out for the Committee by the Commission on Aging and the Planning Workgroup that set up the committee. That charge is as follows:
The Senior Center Committee will:

1. Evaluate suggestions presented in the Report;
2. Categorize suggestions as long or short term;
3. Review and prioritize programming and infrastructure needs at each Milwaukee County Senior Center;
4. Develop and monitor short and long-term plans for senior centers and programming;
5. Ascertain what resources will be necessary to carry out these plans;
6. Report findings and recommendations back to the Advisory Council.

Chair Pitchford Nicholas also referenced the report: “Envisioning the Future, Milwaukee County Senior Centers: 2020” as a foundational document. Nicholas pointed out the gravity of the charge as well as her optimism and enthusiasm for the work of the Committee.

IV. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE

Chair Pitchford Nicholas called for the election of a vice chair of the Committee.

MOTION: That Dain Maddox serve as Vice Chair of the Select Committee on Senior Centers.

ACTION: Unanimously approved (Schneider, Griffith).

V. OVERVIEW OF SENIOR CENTER DATA & REPORTS

Idzikowski provides a brief overview of the senior center assessment process that took place over the past five years. In Milwaukee County, older adults 65+ constitute more than 172,000 or 16% of the county population. This is expected to increase to 22% by 2040. Notes that there are 5 Milwaukee County owned senior centers: Kelly (1958), Washington Park (1969), McGovern Park (1976), Wilson Park (1982), and Clinton Rose (1984) and approximately 15 other senior centers or community programs for seniors in the County including 2 MPS sites. County Levy funding support the Milwaukee County Senior Centers, except for the Congregate Dining which comes from the Older Americans Act. In 2017 and Phase I assessment of the infrastructure revealed that the full replacement value was \$24 million. Programming was also assessed. Phase II: What is happening outside of Milwaukee County? Wisconsin Policy Forum produced the report: “Young at Heart: Exploring the Future of Senior Centers in Milwaukee County” assessing programming in 5 comparable jurisdictions across the nation. Phase III involved holding community conversations to gather ideas from residents about ideas to renew senior centers and programming in Milwaukee County and resulted in the report: “Envisioning the Future: Milwaukee County Senior Centers: 2020”. Finally, he reported on the difficulty in funding infrastructure and programming, due to the decline in available County levy funds.

Griffith asks for data on usage at Milwaukee County Senior Centers and address why more people are not utilizing the Centers.

Nicholas asked about the funding that is earmarked for the Milwaukee County Justice Center. Idzikowski explained that the Milwaukee County Safety Building needs to be replaced and this is a huge looming expense that will affect available County Levy funding in the future.

Schneider wants to know the demographics of the participants of the Milwaukee County Senior Centers. What about the demographics of participants at the other senior centers in the County? Schneider indicates that the 5 Milwaukee County Senior Centers are a “traditional” model. What might a new model look like and who would they attract?

Nicholas asks what type of partnerships are we looking to develop?

Guszkowski notes that the five senior centers are County-owned and yet, due to their location, most of the participants are from the City of Milwaukee. Is there a way to break down the municipal/jurisdictional boundaries to bring equity across the County and to involve people across the County in considering this issue?

VI. CHANGE IN ENVIRONMENT DUE TO COVID-19

Tabled until next meeting.

VII. NEXT STEPS

Chair Pitchford Nicholas asks that members send any follow-up questions to Idzikowski.

VIII. FUTURE MEETINGS and ANNOUNCEMENTS

The members discussed a regular recurring meeting schedule and decided to meet monthly on the 4th Tuesday of the month.

IX. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at **2:34 p.m.**

MOTION: To adjourn.

ACTION: Approved unanimously (Mayfield, Jensen seconds).

The next Senior Center Committee meeting will be held virtually at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 4, 2021.

Note: All reference Materials and Reports are Located on the Milwaukee County Division on Aging Webpage: "Envisioning Our Senior Centers":
<https://county.milwaukee.gov/EN/Department-on-Aging/Senior-Centers-Dining/Envisioning-Our-Senior-Centers>