

COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Roediger noted that she indicated at the Work Session that Ms. Renee Cortright, Executive Director of the Older Persons' Commission had been invited to attend the Session and provide a view from her perspective about some of the topics being discussed in the Master Plan process in terms of walkability, affordability, community health, and some of those other items that are being looked at. She stated that unfortunately, she forgot to mention that the Work Session started at 5:30 p.m., and Ms. Cortright arrived at 7:00 p.m., right on time for the regular meeting. She commented that she would love to invite her up now to provide some insight from her perspective. She mentioned that Ms. Cortright has a background in planning and is a former City Planner for Springfield, Illinois. She stated that Ms. Cortright has a wealth of knowledge gained directly from the city's seniors and invited her to share some of her insights as the Commission moves forward with the Master Plan.

Ms. Cortright stated that she is always willing to talk about what is happening within the senior community and what OPC is doing. She noted that they have had a huge increase in the use of their facility which goes to show that as the community continues to age in place, the health and other services that they provide to support aging in place in the community are vital. She mentioned that they have seen a 10 percent increase in the individuals needing Meals on Wheels, going from 95,000 last year to 112,000 meals that were served, prepared and delivered in the community. She added that they are definitely seeing this trend throughout the three communities they service. She commented that this need speaks to the cost of living, and noted that the program is for individuals who are not able to shop or prepare a meal for themselves. She stated that the statistics show that those individuals are continuing to try to age in place.

Since the passing of the transportation millage in 2022, she noted that they have also seen a 46 percent increase in rides provided, representing an increase in the need to get individuals to their doctor's appointments, to their dialysis appointments, to grocery stores, to the facility and within their community. She added that they pretty much stay within the three communities because they have found that most individuals do not go more than a five-mile radius from their home. She mentioned that they have expanded their hours which were from 8am to 4pm and are now 6:30am to 8pm. She noted that they have up to 22 buses on the road each day, and have expanded getting people to medical appointments throughout facilities in Troy, and to Royal Oak Beaumont (Corewell).

Ms. Cortright stated that there has been a 16 percent increase in supportive services, which would be individuals looking for information and referral. She mentioned that two facilities, Avon Towers and Danish Village (Samaritas) show that there is a need for low-income housing and those residents also look for supportive services from the Center. She noted that they also look to provide support with minor home repairs, snow removal, and yard cleanup; and stated that they are seeing an increase in those needs within the community.

She stated that she was reviewing some of the information received regarding the Master Plan. She stated that they are talking a lot about the fixed route coming up Rochester Road and over to Oakland University; and commented that they are looking at different avenues to meet and connect with the fixed route to get individuals on that last mile to their home if they are taking the bus. She added that they are looking at a flex service which is currently being offered in Troy and the Pontiac area, and plan to bring it into this area as an Uber-type service. She stated that OPC is a known entity as a transit provider, and she commented that she believes that they provide good customer service. She stated that as such, if they took the lead on the flex service for the community it would be fantastic.

Chairperson Brnabic thanked Ms. Cortright for her comments.