

**Oakland County Senior Advisory Council
Virtual Meeting
Monday, March 16, 2026
10:00 AM –12:00 PM**

WELCOME, CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Cam McClure called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. He welcomed all members to the SAC meeting and accomplished the attendance matrix.

Attendance Matrix:

Dist	RC	Name	Dist.	RC	Name	Dist.	RC	Name
1	A	Royetta Ealba	2	A	Mark Kelly	3	P	Suzanne Patton
4	P	Tim Soave	5	P	Mary Spearman	6	A	Bridget Giampa
7	V		8	A	Ron Ritchie	9	A	Ruth Jordan
10	P	Cameron McClure	11	p	Sylvia Whitmer	12	P	Christopher Peal
13	P	Norene Yuskowatz	14	P	Judy Smiley	15	P	Brenda Anderson
16	P	Anita Wagoner	17	P	Barbara Seldon	18	P	Greg Keeler
19	A	Karen Plants	AL	P	Rock Abboud	AL	P	Martha Schlesinger
SR	P	Pat Zawadzki						
SR	P	Emily Hubbard						

Key: District# (AL- Member-at-Large, SR – Staff Rep); RC=Attendance P-present; E - Excused; A – Absent; V – Vacant; Name = District Council Member

OTHERS PRESENT:

Julie Ruffin, Oakland County Water Resource Commission
Lee Anne Stafford, Oakland County Health Department
Karen Faith Gordon, Licensed Clinical Social Worker
Commissioner Kristen Nelson, Oakland County Commissioner
Penny Luebs, Oakland County Commissioner
Meagan Sellers, Deputy Oakland County Executive
Jim Ellison, Oakland County Older Adult Services

ROLL CALL:

There is a quorum (13 SAC members and 7 visitors)

AGENDA APPROVAL:

The agenda was approved with changes.

APPROVAL OF JANUARY MINUTES:

Senior Advisory Council January minutes were sent out to SAC. Corrections to the minutes were made for the names of Ron Ritchie and Norene Yuskowatz. The minutes were approved with corrections.

Lee Anne Stafford:

Provided SAC with additional general health information regarding measles / rabies and mental health assistance.

Measles:

- There are 2 cases confirmed in Washtenaw County
- If you are an infant, it is recommended the first vaccine occur between the sixth month and the twelfth month.
- If you are born before 1957 or if you had Measles, you are considered immune.
- If you have been vaccinated between 1963 and 1967, it is recommended you get a booster.
- Anyone born between 1957 and 1989, it is recommended to get a booster.
- Call Oakland Connects Health and Hotline 1-800-848-5533 for more information.

Rabies:

- Stay away from stray squirrels, rabbits, cats and dogs, and other wild animals.
- Mental Health Assistance
- There is mental health assistance at Temple Isreal there is mental health assistance available. 988 line is available.
- Oakland 360 Care Center would love a walk-through to talk with senior centers.

Primary care and behavioral health

- Oakland 360 Care clinic has a conference center. Wishing the SAC members of SAC would come out, visit and take the information to your districts. The address is 48980 Woodward in Pontiac.
- Cam recommends a monthly SAC meeting location possibility at 360 Center and a tour.

**PRESENTATION: Karen Faith Gordon: Licensed Clinical Social Worker
“Impact on Size of Possible Intervention Regarding Older Adult Social Isolation”**

There are three categories emphasized in the presentation that impact social isolation.

- Older seniors in their eighties and nineties have diagnoses and need care.
- Younger older adults who are in their sixties and seventies and are experiencing diagnoses and are caring partners.

- Adults in their thirties to fifties are sandwiched between child rearing and caring for parents and grandparents.

The impact of social isolationism includes living with diagnoses, living with grief, living as the caregiver, all of which can lead to a sense of aloneness. The experience can be so challenging and intense that no one else will be able to understand what it feels like. Especially as we care for others and ourselves, our world often shrinks, we isolate ourselves and withdraw inward. The person does not want to be a burden. The person feels like they are taking up other people's time and others are not interested in what they are feeling. It is easy to slip into social isolation. The feelings are so intense that the person stays at home, will not make that phone call, the person talks themselves out of things and this feeds the isolation.

She has created groups online that are meant to create connections in communities for those who have access to internet, in April, May and June a new session will be started. It is a new series of groups. She will send information to SAC by e-mail. The in-person groups will be for care givers, care partners who are receivers and givers, grief support, and ask the expert. One of the most important parts of the group sessions is when they show up the participants discover they are walking along the path with other people; they are not alone.

Patricia asked, how can we get them to take that first step.

- Reframe failure as opportunity.
- Work with professionals to collaborate and create avenues to bridge the gap in accessing services.
- Access to telehealth for those that are in a caregiver role.
- Countywide push to make senior centers more visible.

Patricia asked how do you beat the feeling of being a burden?

- Accept and acknowledge those being there for us as a reciprocal gift.
- Contact Information: <https://karenfaith.llc/>, karen@karenfaith.llc

OLDER ADULT SERVICES, Jim Ellison: Oakland County Older Adult Services

Jim Ellison mentioned the social isolation topic is important to him as he has just had six months convalescing after a fall. He announced his series of town hall meetings in communities and wants to connect with Karen Faith Gordon. He will be at the "J" in West Bloomfield Public Library on March 2, 2026, at 11am. He also mentioned that a digital copy of Encore would be beneficial especially for commissioners.

Commissioner Kristen Nelson wanted to be sure she received information about the town hall meetings, especially in her district. Meagan Sellers, Deputy County Executive, indicated that all of the information is distributed to the commissioners from her office through a bi-weekly newsletter tailored to the commissioners.

WATER RESOURCES, Julia Ruffins: Oakland County Water Resource Commission

One of the goals of water resources is to bridge the communication gap, so SAC knows what they are doing. She is hoping Water resources can partner with you where appropriate. There are programs such as the WRAP program, the water residential assistance program, the Emergency relief Fund, (which gives relief for the water and sewer bills). The issue of well water and sewer issues will be addressed when Julia Ruffin comes back to SAC as a presenter.

COORDINATORS' REMARKS: Patricia Zawadzki

April will be the last virtual meeting. May will be first in-person meeting. The meeting will be held in Building 34, the Health Department on the second floor, executive conference meeting room. June 15th. Will be the meeting before summer break. It is our report out meeting and programs from Oakland County Parks and recreation. They will talk about the senior programming and activities they are doing. Sandy Dory has invited the SAC to stay a little later and provide pontoon rides on the lake.

DISTRICT UPDATES:

Rock Abboud: Liaison to Birmingham NEXT, Franklin, Beverly Hills, Birmingham and Bingham farms

- Legislative programs and policies
 - Homestead property tax relief program: for seniors, whose income is under \$71,500 to help offset property taxes.
 - State income tax rollback: rolling back taxes on retirement at \$1,000.00 annually.
 - Michigan home heating credit: Helps low-income households with heating bills.
 - Transportation program for seniors who cannot drive: Rides, senior shuttles, para-transit services for the ADA compliance, etc.
 - Michigan savings program: Medicaid and health programs help seniors afford care.
 - Senior services funding through AgeWays: Provides meals on wheels, caregivers support, senior transportation, and dementia services.
 - Housing and home programs: Helps seniors stay in their homes. Aging in place encourages independence.
 - Disabled veterans' property tax exemption: All property tax exemptions for disabled veterans and their spouses in Oakland County.

Rock will send the information to Patricia.

Birmingham NEXT will be moving to 400 Lincoln St.

Suzanne Patton

- Encouraging seniors to use walking pads
- Hazel Park just opened the Longfellow Community center. Encouraging seniors to use the walking path. wants to collaborate with other senior centers for more programs for seniors.
- No feedback yet on goals and objectives package

Sylvia Whitmer

- West Bloomfield has lost their senior chair, currently being taken over by parks and recreation.
- Lack of professional experience or preparation for this job makes it hard to find qualified people for the position SAC may want to work on this.
- No new report on building community center, next meeting will be March 28th.
- No feedback on Bloomfield Twp. Senior center.

Chris Peal

- Richardson center has received copies of reports and are reading it. It is well received so far. They are happy to see their concerns are included.

Judy Smiley

- Wixom senior director was having a bus situation but has been resolved.
- Visited Walled Lake and Commerce centers.

Brenda Anderson

- Met with commissioner at senior center and delivered copy of goals.

Anita Wagoner

- Give money to the city engineers to see if they can build a senior center on the current recreation center.
- Seniors want to just build it on current Costick center land.
- Connected with assistant city manager
- Ad-hoc committee is being put together to input on what should be put into senior center.

Due to time constraints the SAC meeting had to end. All SAC members who did not have their chance to present on today will be first at the March meeting. Districts 1 and 18 will be first on the April agenda.

Cam McClure called for adjournment and announced the next meeting date and time.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 PM.

**NEXT MEETING
VIRTUAL
Monday April 20, 2026
10 AM – 12 PM**