

Rothesay Age Friendly Advisory Committee

Final Report

February 2019



Introduction

In the summer of 2016 the newly elected Rothesay Town Council set its priorities. One priority established was to become an Age Friendly community and achieve the provincial designation. 31% of Rothesay residents are 55 years of age and older, with that number projected to increase. New Brunswick has the second highest percentage of people aged 65 and older in Canada. The objective of Rothesay Council is to allow Rothesay seniors to “age in place”.

The following steps had to be done to achieve the Age Friendly Designation:

1. Pass a resolution of Council
2. Establish an Age Friendly Steering Committee
3. Conduct an assessment (survey)
4. Create an action plan based on assessment results

Committee work

Councillor Miriam Wells, Mayor Nancy Grant and Town Manager Jarvie spent the next several months speaking to provincial representatives, including Minister for Seniors Lisa Harris and Laurie Young, a consultant for the Wellness Branch of the Department of Social Development. A call for interested residents was issued and meetings were held with these residents in an effort to establish a path forward beginning in March, 2017.

The first meeting of the Age Friendly Advisory Committee occurred on October 18, 2017. The Age Friendly Advisory Committee met on a monthly basis and identified the following objectives:

1. Receive recommendations from the Information Sub-Committee regarding where to place electronic and traditional signs. Make a recommendation to Rothesay Town Council
2. Receive recommendations from the Information Sub-Committee regarding recommended content for both electronic and traditional signs. The Sub-Committee will also advise how this information will be managed.
3. Authorize the recommendation from the Survey Sub-Committee for the survey to be used and the ways it will be completed by as many residents in Rothesay as possible.
4. Receive, disseminate and discuss the results of the survey and make recommendations to Rothesay Council for an action plan to make Rothesay a more Age Friendly community.
5. Present the action plan to the citizens of Rothesay
6. Recommend the formation of sub-committees as needed to implement the action plan.
7. Apply for the Age Friendly designation by March 31, 2018.

In response Rothesay Council adopted the following resolution on 14 November 2017:

Whereas the Town of Rothesay has realized the importance of providing our seniors with a good quality of life;

Whereas the Town of Rothesay seeks to engage our citizens in making our community a better, healthier and safer place for seniors to live and thrive;

Whereas the Town of Rothesay would like to build on the momentum of the Canadian and global movement of Age Friendly Communities, originally initiated by the World Health Organization (WHO), to meet the needs of our aging population, promote the active participation and wellness of seniors in our community, and develop a more inclusive community.

*It is therefore moved by: Councillor Bill McGuire
And seconded by: Deputy Mayor Matt Alexander*

Be it resolved that the Town of Rothesay is committed to:

Engage in an Age Friendly Community approach, which is designed to improve the well-being of all of our citizens, and to share our experiences with other communities; and

Endorse the formation of the Age Friendly Advisory Committee that will be accountable to Rothesay Town Council to coordinate the Age Friendly Community approach. This Committee will be responsible for implementing an approach leading to an action plan, shaped by the community's reality, to improve the quality of life of seniors.

Working committees were formed to meet the objectives required for Rothesay to apply for the Age Friendly designation. These sub-committees included the following:

1. Survey Sub-Committee
2. Information Sub-Committee
3. Housing Sub-Committee
4. Seniors Forum Sub-Committee
5. Outreach Sub-Committee
6. Seniors Resource Centre Sub-Committee

Survey Sub-Committee

The Survey Sub-Committee assessed the surveys used around the province and ultimately customized a survey for Rothesay. The committee worked diligently to prepare the survey and distribution began in December 2017. The survey was circulated until mid-January 2018 and 289 surveys were completed. In partnership with the YMCA, analysis of the data resulted in five action items:

1. Create a Seniors Resource Centre.
2. Form a sub-committee to examine housing options for seniors and propose recommendations for modifications to the municipal plan.
3. Ask the Parks and Recreation Committee to look at the number and location of benches and washrooms where residents walk and coordinate with the Information Sub-Committee on how to inform residents of the placement of benches and washrooms and how they can notify the Town of any concerns they may have.
4. Plan and execute a Seniors Forum and publicize the results of the survey.
5. Establish an outreach program.

Information Sub-Committee

The Information Sub-Committee was initiated in order to assess how the Town might better communicate with its residents, in particular those over 55 years of age. An application was successfully made for a Canada 150 grant to purchase for three electronic kiosks as well as money to construct two traditional bulletin boards. The Information Sub-Committee discussed at length what information should be shared and the best way to do so and established terms of reference. The biggest challenge has been the electronic kiosks. Ideally they would allow for residents to use the touch screen to access information on the Town web page. Unfortunately, inappropriate sites have been accessed so it was decided to make the kiosks static without accessing links to information. The Town will continue to monitor the kiosks. This committee has met periodically since its inception in November 2017 and is now finished its mandate. It was agreed that senior specific information can now be distributed via the Rothesay Hive as well as the other sources of information available at the Town.

Housing Sub-Committee

The Housing Committee met over the course of nine months before presenting their findings. Ultimately it found that the information gleaned from the Age Friendly Housing Background Study done by Square Peg Consulting, a group of four graduate students from Dalhousie University, best summarized what needs to be considered as Rothesay updates its municipal plan.

Seniors Forum Sub-Committee

After the results of the survey were compiled, a Seniors Forum Sub-Committee planned three open house events. The open houses occurred on April 12/19/26, 2019 at various locations in Rothesay. An overview of Rothesay's Age Friendly efforts and a summary of the questionnaire results were presented and followed by an opportunity for residents to ask questions.

Outreach Sub-Committee

The survey results indicated that the majority of seniors feel safe in Rothesay. The Age Friendly Advisory Committee believed there was an opportunity to reach out to more vulnerable residents. Committee members from Kennebecasis Valley Fire Department, Kennebecasis Regional Police Force and the Canadian Red Cross worked together to find a way to connect with residents in a coordinated way, provide education for improved safety and an opportunity to check in with residents who do not leave their homes easily. This process is still underway. When the program is unveiled, it will be a unique offering in the province. The Outreach Sub-Committee will report to and work with the Rothesay Hive Committee.

Senior Resource Centre Sub-Committee

The Senior Resource Centre Sub-Committee has worked tirelessly since April 2018. It will become a standing committee of Council that will oversee operation of the Rothesay Hive (the Age Friendly Resource Centre) that will open in the spring of 2019 at its location at Rothesay Town Hall. The space was renovated thanks to a Federal grant under the New Horizons for Seniors program and the Enabling Accessibility Fund provided a grant to allow for construction of accessible washrooms for public use at Rothesay Town Hall.

The Rothesay Hive will operate in partnership with the YMCA. It will be open every day with scheduled activities, speakers and social events overseen by a staff person hired by the YMCA. The Mission Statement for the Rothesay Hive is to nurture the well-being of seniors in Rothesay through intergenerational communication, outreach, activities and education. The mandate for the Rothesay Hive is as follows:

Rothesay Hive provides a variety of activities that foster senior well-being. These activities will be a mixture of socialization and connection, health and wellness, arts, crafts, culture and music.

Rothesay Hive values a partnership with YMCA of Greater Saint John (Y) to help manage and deliver services to the citizens of Rothesay.

Rothesay Hive provides education to seniors by hosting periodic information sessions from local experts and organizations.

Rothesay Hive promotes intergenerational socialization by asking students from local schools to provide expertise in learnings like computers, partnership in activities such as storytelling, and being welcome to social visits.

Rothesay Hive is a resource center for seniors by compiling and updating a list of service providers. These providers may be private businesses that offer fee for service, government agencies for all aspects of senior care, volunteer organizations that provide a range of activities for seniors and individual volunteers willing to help seniors at home.

The Rothesay Hive supports initiatives that reach out to seniors in their homes to prevent isolation. The Kennebecasis Valley Fire Department and Kennebecasis Regional Police Force provide programs that support seniors living in their homes and the Canadian Red Cross Community Check-in Program provides seniors with friendly check-in phone calls from local volunteers. These programs present an opportunity to share the Rothesay Hive as a resource and encourage seniors to get involved in events and activities.

Rothesay Hive offers support to caregivers and families of seniors by offering adult day care programs.

Rothesay Hive is a welcoming place for newcomers by hosting newcomer events, invitations to all activities, and providing practical information through advice and literature.

Parks and Recreation

The final action item identified from the survey was to add to the Town's complement of benches and washrooms along the main walking arteries in Rothesay. This has been achieved with new washrooms located in the pumping station building on Rothesay Road and two seasonal toilets added to the Hillside Trail and Jordan Miller Park. Seven new benches are in the budget for 2019 and will be added in the spring by Parks and Recreation staff.

Six months after establishing the Age Friendly Advisory Committee an application for the Age Friendly designation was submitted to the provincial government. In August 2018 the Town was notified that they had attained the designation. The designation is an incredible achievement in a relatively short time frame that was made possible by the hard work of the Age Friendly Advisory Committee, the many sub-committees and Town staff.

Thank you~

Councillor Miriam Wells
Chair – Rothesay Age Friendly Advisory Committee

