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**Nackawic and Area
Age-Friendly Ad Hoc Committee**

**Community Assessment & Recommendations
January, 2019**



Preamble:

In a report by the Age Friendly Association of New Brunswick, 44% of the residents in Nackawic and Area are 50 years old and older. This is a very different situation from the 1970's when the average age of citizens in the town was 28 years of age.

In recognition of this changing demographic, the Nackawic Wellness Committee approached the Town Council in Nackawic to initiate action(s) to support the aging population in Nackawic and the surrounding areas. As a result, an ad hoc Age Friendly Committee was formed. Their mandate was to review information provided by the Age Friendly Association of New Brunswick and the World Health Organization (WHO) to find out what constitutes an Age Friendly Community and to gather information on how Nackawic and Area could become one.

According to the World Health Organization, an age-friendly community is one that has an inclusive and accessible environment that retains its population by promoting healthy, safe and active living. An Age-Friendly Community is a place where seniors can age actively, live in security and enjoy good health - actions that will improve the quality of life for all citizens well into the future. When a community undertakes age-friendly initiatives, they're creating a supportive environment where seniors are respected for the valuable contributions they make and where seniors are given a chance to let their strengths shine. This doesn't just enhance the quality of life for individuals as they get older - it builds a community that's more inclusive for everyone!

In order to ensure that Nackawic and Area will become an age-friendly place to live, a fact-finding project was developed to gain as much information as possible about how citizens feel about their living conditions at this point in time. It was also important to find out what the citizens feel they need for the future.

To gain this vital information, several initiatives were carried out to engage with the residents of the area and to identify the means by which seniors can be assisted to live safe, healthy lives and participate fully in their communities.

- Informal discussions took place at Wellness Committee meetings as well as at events that were hosted by the Committee.
- Information was gathered from other communities in the province who were interested in becoming more Age-Friendly as well as from the World Health Organization and the New Brunswick Age-Friendly Association.
- A focus group was formed to discuss Nackawic and Area –its assets and needs. The focus group consisted of invited residents of the town of Nackawic and the 5 outlying communities of Millville, Dumfries, Rossville, Pokiok and Southampton. It was held in May of 2017 and was facilitated by Kathy Sherwood Orser, Regional Wellness Coordinator and Janet Gee, GoAhead Seniors Coordinator – Western Valley. The information from that meeting was distributed to those in attendance.
- An Age-Friendly Committee, chaired by Councillor Gail Farnsworth was then established. Members of the committee represented the areas listed above and consisted of:

Bev Jacobson – NB Senior Ambassador for Western Valley –Southampton

Barb Lackie – Representative of NB Housing Senior’s Residence
Nackawic

Julie Stone, Retired Educator, Rossville

Gert Wilson, Retired Educational Assistant, Nackawic

Marina Hull – Retired X-ray Technician, Millville

Tina Leger – Wellness Committee Member – Nackawic

Rebecca Crofts– Vice President, New Brunswick Library Association –
Nackawic

Mike Crofts – Past Master Granite Lodge# 54, Knight Templar, Shriner,
Financial Analyst – Nackawic

Joyce Gordon – Retired Business Owner, Nackawic

Alice Fynamore – Psychologist, United Church Minister – Scotch Lake



The committee's challenge was to determine how information from individuals in the communities could be attained and how to make that information available to Town Council and other concerned stakeholders

- The committee used a survey to collect the information from seniors. It was circulated to approximately 250 senior residents (those over 50 years of age) in Nackawic and Area in the late spring and over the summer months. Members of the committee delivered the surveys to senior gatherings, such as the sewing guild, the quilter's group, the bowling leagues, shuffleboard players and door to door. Approximately 78% of the surveys distributed were completed and returned to the Town Office. The results of the survey were tabulated by members of the committee and the Town of Nackawic summer student. Some of the statistical information taken from the survey is listed below.

Survey Statistics:
67% of respondents were Female
90% of respondents born English speaking- 10 % were born French speaking and 10% of all respondents spoke both languages.
67% of respondents were married – 19% were Widowed
75% of respondents were over 65
75% of respondents were retired
41% of respondents had University or College educations
47% of respondents would not reveal their income. Of those who did, \$20–49000 was the average income.

Recommendations based on survey findings will be submitted to Council along with a proposed action plan to be carried out over a period of 36 months. The recommendations made in this report are grouped according to the eight domains which influence the health and quality of life of older people as identified by the World Health Organization (WHO). The 8 domains are in no particular order and are as follows:

1. Housing
2. Transportation
3. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
4. Social Participation
5. Respect and Social Inclusion
6. Communication and Information
7. Community Support and Health Services
8. Civic Participation

Housing

“The living environment has a great influence on how people age. Finding the services and supports that meet every day needs in their immediate environment makes it easier for people to stay at home longer. Communities should offer a range of independent and assisted living options. The ability to live independently in one’s home depends on good health, finances, and the availability of support services such as medical and personal care.” (AFC)

Goal:

Ensure that housing is affordable, safe and well-designed for seniors

Most seniors in Nackawic and Area own their own homes and live with partners or spouses. They want to remain in their own homes and do not wish to move to nursing homes and special care homes outside their own neighbourhoods. As one respondent put it, *“I love living in the Nackawic Area – I’m healthy, independent and happy.”* The forum, focus groups and surveys did note a critical lack of appropriate housing options for seniors in Nackawic and Area.

Seniors feel there is not enough available spaces for those who will need to leave their homes in the future or for those who have lost their spouses and now live alone. Their fear is that poor health, cost of property upkeep and a lower income may force them to leave their homes. *“I have concerns about the elderly who cannot drive, are lonely–no family, we need apartments, senior homes with both independent living facilities and assisted care,”* a respondent wrote.

Respondents are unsure how to get financial help for home repairs and/or renovations and where to get other services such as lawn mowing, snowplowing and the like –services that would allow them to stay in their own homes longer. 33% of respondents feel that if they are forced by the above circumstances to leave their homes, they would choose to live in an apartment complex.

Recommendations:

- Initiate dialogue with developers and contractors to identify impediments and improve relationships that may have caused a lack of interest in developing suitable housing options in the past.
- Undertake research and hold public meetings to determine what types of housing best suits citizens in Nackawic and Area.



Transportation

“Transportation is a fundamental need associated with people’s autonomy and quality of life. Access to and the affordable cost of transportation are major issues for seniors. Seniors, including those with mobility issues and disabilities, must be able to get around in their living environment in an appropriate and safe manner.” (AFC)

Goal:

Ensure accessible and affordable transportation for seniors

Nackawic and area is primarily rural and most seniors use their own vehicle for transportation. They are satisfied with parking, traffic and snow removal but have some concern about the condition of the roads and streets. This is mainly true for seniors living outside the town limits. Lack of public transportation was not an issue for the majority of respondents, although some stated they would use a taxi service if it were available. Many mentioned that they use the Wheels to Wellness program currently in existence in Nackawic and feel it is an essential component for them to remain in their communities.

Recommendations:

- Plan an initiative to enlist more drivers for the Wheels to Wellness service for all communities in Nackawic and the 5 surrounding areas.
- Continue to expend and promote the Wheels to Wellness program.



Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

“Security (social, financial and physical) is the primary condition for people to live in dignity. Society must help and support seniors who are no longer able to protect themselves.” (WHO)

Goal:

Ensure that outdoor spaces and public buildings are safe and well designed for seniors

Most seniors in Nackawic and Area are satisfied with the public buildings and the accessible parking spaces currently provided. Accessible washrooms in public buildings are considered adequate. However, the lack of public washrooms in the downtown area was mentioned as a concern for 35% of respondents. Seniors require easily accessible and easily located facilities when they are spending time in the shopping area. Although there are washrooms in the stores and banks, they are not for public use and a few have signs advising that these washrooms are not Public.

Most seniors in the Nackawic and Area are satisfied with the safety of the crosswalks and sidewalks. They are also satisfied with the lighting provided for the safety of the community.

However, half of the respondents do not feel they are entirely safe from abuse, vandalism and crime. They feel there is a need for more police presence and more information about crime prevention programs and personal safety. One respondent commented, *“Where are the RCMP? Are they still in town? Do they still patrol?”* Respondents also feel they need more information about safety and prevention.

Overwhelmingly, seniors in Nackawic and Area are happy to live in the area and consider themselves to be safe and well served.



Recommendations:

- Work with the owners of the Shopping Centre to install public washrooms. These washrooms must be safe and accessible from the sidewalk, eliminating the necessity of walking through a business to access them. Signage would need to be part of the initiative and seeking a key should not be necessary for use. Responsibility for upkeep would need to be identified and funded.
- Host a public forum to address concerns about public safety, RCMP, and Neighbourhood Watch.
- Provide local businesses with information about Universal Design. This model includes the need for automatic doors in all businesses and public buildings in Nackawic and Area. They are necessary not only for seniors but for the general public. Encourage businesses to make their properties more accessible by doing cut away curbs and installing lifts for those requiring traffic to an upper level.
- Encourage businesses to have designated senior parking spaces close to their buildings.

- Ensure that any developments connected to the Waterfront Project are age-friendly, safe, accessible, well-lit and consider those with visual and physical limitations. (Universal Design)

(Universal Design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.)



Social Participation

"It is important that participation of seniors is visible in all spheres of society: social, cultural, spiritual, and economic. Participation in society is seeing seniors as being included in their environment. Seniors will continue to contribute to activities that are meaningful for them and meaningful for society." (WHO)

Goal:

Ensure that opportunities are available for seniors to be socially active

In the last 3 months the majority of respondents have gone to church and social activities such as bowling, cards, quilting and shuffleboard. Some say they do not get out to activities due to poor health, lack of care giving persons and facilities and that some of the venues are difficult to access from outside.

Most respondents are satisfied with the activities that currently take place in Nackawic and Area and feel that the Wellness Committee works hard and is successful with the programs they run.

Asked about activities seniors would like to see in the area, they responded with: more physical activities, a walking track, an indoor swimming pool, movie nights and the like.



Recommendations:

- Consider accessibility limitations (including scheduling) of seniors in the design of community programs and events. Create more, new and different physical activities for seniors
- Develop more programs designed to include citizens under 50 years of age as well as those who are older.
- Expand the use of buildings already in existence. Ensure accessibility meets the demands of a diverse population.
- Create an active Recreation committee.
- Develop a plan for communication with seniors. Getting information about current activities in Nackawic and Area is sometimes difficult but is important in helping citizens to stay active.
- Create a survey to gather information about the types of social and physical activities seniors would like to see developed in the area.



Respect and Social Inclusion

“Social inclusion, respect and feeling connected are determinants of the health and well-being of seniors. Links between the generations go beyond family relationships. Thus, intergenerational relations serve to strengthen people’s feeling of belonging.” (AFC)

Goal:

Ensure that relationships in the community are respectful and inclusive.

Seniors in Nackawic and Area feel that they are treated with respect in the businesses and recreational sites. They feel that other cultures are made to feel welcome and that none have been treated poorly due to their gender, marital status or culture. They also feel the town often asks for senior’s opinions on what else the town could do to serve them better.

Recommendations:

- Promote intergenerational events designed to encourage young and old to mingle and get to know and respect each other.
- Encourage the development of committees that are reflective of the population.
- Work closely with Provincial Senior Goodwill Ambassadors, Nackawic Wellness Committee, Lion’s Club, Local Churches, Legion, Masons and any other organized groups to help promote programs/supports available to seniors in Nackawic and Area.
- Work collectively to promote more positive images of aging (profiles of actively engaged seniors, senior-run initiatives and activities, etc.)

Community Support and Health Services

“People live better and longer when they are in good health. They have more independence and wellness, and less reliance on health care and social services. Society must respond to people’s needs by developing appropriate, affordable and accessible health and social services.” (WHO)

Goal:

Ensure that appropriate health and support services are available to seniors.

Respondents are mostly satisfied with the health services offered in Nackawic and Area. They mentioned Wheels to Wellness and the Horizon Health Services in the town. Most respondents said they go to their family doctor when they are ill and almost half said they go the Nurse Practitioner in the Health Centre. Some respondents said they are not really sure about what services are offered at the Clinic.

Some seniors mentioned they are not aware of any supports available for banking needs, grocery shopping, rides to appointments or to shopping, grocery delivery and the like. They suggested that this kind of support would be very much appreciated by seniors as they age.

Seniors also feel they can get food that is safe, healthy and affordable in Nackawic and Area. Most said they take advantage of senior’s day discounts and almost half said they use the bulk food program. More than half of respondents said they take advantage of the Seniors Lunch at the Kirk Church.

88% of respondents say they are satisfied with their life in Nackawic and Area, with their family and social relationships and their mental, physical and spiritual health. Most say they can rely on neighbours for help if needed. Less than half of the respondents say they worry about having enough money to live on as they age and about being able to get around on their own. Others worry about losing their health and having to leave their home.

Recommendations:

- Begin dialogue with Horizon Health to improve services at the Health Centre in Nackawic.
- Work with Horizon Health to expand health services to include physical therapists and other health services.
- Work toward establishing a Meals on Wheels program in Nackawic and Area.
- Make citizens aware of free services they can access through the government.
- Expand the Resource Guide for seniors.



Communication and Information

“Communication is a fundamental operation between people. It is linked to inclusion and social participation. The health and well-being of seniors are related to the distribution and accessibility of information.” (AFC)

Goal:

Ensure information is easy to find and easy to understand for seniors.

Seniors want to know what activities and resources are available to them to satisfy their regular and special needs.

In Nackawic and Area, when asked how seniors get information about services and activities taking place in their communities the majority of respondents said “word of mouth”. They say they get information from their family and friends either face to face or over the phone. Some seniors say they get information from posters, bulletin boards and the Wellness Flyer. Less than half of the respondents got information from the internet.

- Facilitate better communication and coordination among service providers (federal, provincial, municipal, and not-for-profit) to break down barriers, reduce duplication, encourage partnerships, and address gaps.



Civic Participation and Employment

The contribution of seniors is essential to society. Being socially, politically, and economically engaged is a health determinant for seniors. They must have opportunities to use their skills, knowledge and time to contribute to society, whether it is through volunteering, civic participation, employment, or any other form of engagement. (AFC)

Goal:

Ensure that seniors can take part in volunteer, political and employment positions.

In Nackawic and Area, 75% of survey respondents are retired 4.2 % are self – employed and less than 4% are not in the work force because of lack of work or other reasons. As a result, employment is not an issue for those over the age of 50 in Nackawic and Area.

When asked if they volunteer in their community the majority of respondents said “Yes”. They are unsure about any training provided to volunteers or any list that outlined where volunteers are needed. They are also unsure about transportation for volunteers who might need it and whether or not there are opportunities for seniors to serve on the Boards of clubs and associations.

Acknowledgements:

The Age-Friendly Committee would like to thank the Mayor and Council for providing the opportunity to the seniors of Nackawic and Area to participate in this initiative, and Councillor Gail Farnsworth for chairing the Age-Friendly Committee. Their support in this endeavour was invaluable in ensuring its success.

Thanks also to all committee members who attended meetings, distributed surveys, provided lunches and spent hours tallying the responses in the survey. Thanks also for the ideas and strategies they suggested for future actions. Without their hard work, this initiative would not have been possible.

The Age-Friendly Committee must also thank respondents for agreeing to take part in the survey. It was lengthy, often confusing and seemingly redundant in places, but the seniors persisted and provided the committee and the Council with some very important information. Thank you all!



