



## Resident Association Council Meeting Minutes

9:00 a.m. August 25, 2023

Freedom Plaza Clubroom

President Sweet called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Council members present via roll call: Alice Aragon, Veanna Cape, Ron Carter, Carolyn Clark, Nuri Georges, Janis Harris, Letha Jones, Al Hurlbrink, Doug Heym, Joyce McCutcheon, Carol O'Brien, Al Roberts, Chuck Roth, Susie Schuldt, Ron Sweet, Kathy Vore, Janet Warren, Don Vore Technician.

Excused Absences: Pam Cummings, Jeanne Nenarella,

The roll call confirmed a quorum.

The July 2023 RAC Council Meeting Minutes were previously approved via email distribution and response by a majority of Council members confirmed by Secretary Warren.

Joyce McCutcheon moved and Carol O'Brien seconded to adopt the agenda. The motion was carried unanimously.

### **President's Report: Ron Sweet**

The president's report and council discussion focused on two topics of concerns that have been voiced by residents: Proposed changes in transportation services furnished by Freedom Plaza to residents and proposed changes in Dining Services. President Sweet presented a review of the proposed changes outlined by management in recent RAC General and Apps with Angie meetings. None of the proposed changes suggested by LCS and Freedom Plaza management have been established as policy, however Council members voiced concerns that proposed changes should be reevaluated by management given feedback from residents.

There is a problem in that there is a shortage of Freedom Plaza drivers and vehicles available to take residents to doctor's and professional appointments, because they are being used to transport residents to personal destinations such as the beauty parlor or to play Bridge in another area. Proposed changes include: Honoring requests for transportation to medical appointments but not for personal activities and limiting transportation to medical appointments to a 20 miles radius for new residents instead of the 35 miles allowed for current residents.

Although, residents are asked to request transportation within a certain time frame of the day, if an appointment lasts beyond 5:00 o'clock they will still be transported back to Freedom Plaza.

However, one resident was billed \$55.00 by the FP transportation department for the return trip from Moffitt Cancer Center, because the appointment pickup was beyond the time limit.

President Sweet will ensure she gets a reimbursement. Alternate modes of free and fee transportation services have been suggested by management such as the use of SCC Ride, Samaritan Services, Uber, Lyft, and Innovative Home Services. However, the Council concluded that travel to Tampa General, Moffitt Cancer Center and Brandon Hospitals should

be provided free to residents, given that Freedom Plaza was not in close proximity with those hospitals like other sister facilities. Also, there needs to be some flexibility regarding the duration of the appointment time which at times the resident can't control. Council members expressed concerns that Marketing promotions regarding transportation services are not always congruent with services actually provided. Another concern is that Freedom Plaza management is taking away services in order to make the budget work instead of figuring out how to fund the services they have been traditionally providing. Given that Freedom Plaza provides transportation to professional and medical appointments within a 35 mile radius to current residents and proposes limiting new residents to a 20 mile radius, Council members feel there is a need for a continuing guarantee for current residents via a contractual document.

Proposed changes in dining services include options for dining in informal as well as formal settings and options for selecting food from various menus offering fast foods as well as higher priced food items like steaks. The food allowance may be increased to allow flexibility in food choices given some meals will cost more than others. When the allowance has been spent, any overage will be billed as it is at present. There is some confusion as to how this will work; however, floor and GVT building meetings with Director Rohr and dining staff will be scheduled during September, so residents can ask questions and voice concerns.

**New Business:**

Sue Schult volunteered to be a liaison to the RAC Sports Committee filling a vacancy left by Nuri Georges.

Changes have been made to the Section 651 Florida state statute. President Sweet called for volunteers for an ad hoc By-Laws Committee to review changes in the statute that might require changes in the RAC By-Laws. Vice-President Joyce McCutcheon, Ron Carter and Veanna Cape will meet together and present findings and recommendations at the next RAC Council meeting September 22<sup>nd</sup>.

A resident objected to a request from the RAC President that appeared in The Weekly under RACommendations for all residents to come to meetings that management provides to apprise them of proposed changes so they are informed and respond appropriately to management with questions and concerns rather than spreading false rumors in public. President Sweet advised it is his job and duty to keep residents informed with accurate information, which is something residents expect from him. All comments submitted to the Weekly are subject to approval from the Director, Angie Roher and Executive Assistant, Stephanie O'Fallon, so Council members are advised to submit announcements at least a week before publication.

Vice-President McCutcheon reported that she has completed the task of duplicating 2023 RAC minutes for inclusion in the RAC minutes reference book housed in the Third Floor Residents' Resource Room.

Secretary Warren informed the Council that since June 2023 there have been 9 move-ins, 3 closings with a move-in date, and 9 closing without a move-in date. RAC Reps have been very responsive in providing timely orientations to new residents. She encouraged the RAC Reps to plan at least one party or luncheon or meeting during the year and most reported that they had or are planning to in the near future.

She reported that President Sweet, Secretary Warren, and Liaison Alice Aragon had two meetings with the six persons invited to be members of the New Resident Orientation Committee. She presented information to them meant to be helpful for their planning and organization consisting of the scope of work done by the RAC Council and Committees for the benefit of residents; the roles of the Ambassadors, Friends of Freedom Plaza, and RAC Representatives, Freedom Plaza management, and the Marketing Department in working with potential residents and new residents; and Mission and Responsibilities from previous New Resident Orientation committees as well as those proposed by a Council ad hoc committee for the new orientation committee. All discourse was well-received, however all expressed that they thought their singular involvement would be with a new resident assigned to them as a host and not any of the potential responsibilities outlined for this new committee. Given that President Sweet and Secretary Warren would be leaving office February 2024, they did not feel they had the time to donate to establish a working committee with an elected chair and secretary from the group, even with the three RAC members offering their time to help them with the organization in any way they discerned. Secretary Warren wrote letters to all thanking them for their coming to the meetings, and the establishment of this committee has been tabled but will be revisited with the Council at a future meeting. At this time RAC Reps will continue providing orientations to new residents as they have before, the Council, through Don Vore, will still be responsible for updating the RAC Orientation Manual, Insider's Scoop; Secretary Warren will continue to be responsible for providing updated information about new residents to RAC Reps; and several new responsibilities will be undertaken by the Council including a Welcome Letter that will be sent to new residents after their closing with marketing and to publish a newsletter that provides a bio and picture of those residents who have moved in. Stephanie is providing tours for new residents and Marketing is preparing orientation videos.

Sue Schuldt suggested that RAC Reps could send out a letter to prospective residents who have closed. Carol O'Brien suggested inviting new residents to floor parties even before they move in.

Alice Aragon suggested contacting ROC to make business cards for the RAC Reps. She will ask ROC if they are willing to do this like they do for the Ambassadors.

Veanna Cape and Sue Schuldt volunteered to plan with Janet Warren for the RAC Holiday Party on December 1<sup>st</sup>.

President Sweet reported that the Technology Committee needs more volunteers, because they are not able to handle the number of requests from residents. He is working with Director Roher to devise a plan that involves additional avenues for technology assistance.

RAC Council meeting dates for the fall are:

Friday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> Council 9:00 a.m. and General meeting 10:00 a.m.

Friday, October 27<sup>th</sup> Council 9:00 a.m.

November: no meetings

Friday, December 1<sup>st</sup> Council 9:00 a.m. and General meeting 10:00 a.m.

Friday, December 1<sup>st</sup> RAC Holiday Party at the Plaza Clubhouse 4:30 p.m.

*All Council meetings are held in the Third Floor Club Room and General meetings are held in the auditorium.*

As there was no further business, Ron Carter moved and Carol O'Brien seconded that the meeting adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Warren, RAC Secretary