



# RAC HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE MINUTES

August 8, 2024

## CONFERENCE ROOM

Chair Janet Warren called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Members Present: Ellie Anderson, CJ Corneliussen, Rosalyn Doty, Doris Ferron, Bill Ferron, Esther Hagen, Emily Lahti, Janet Warren, Lisa Frank, Director

Absent: Carl Bohnenkamp, Joan Macholl, Marty Mallak, Janice Kimbro

The roll call confirmed attendance of nine members and Director Frank with four absent. Joan Macholl has passed leaving the committee with eleven members who have committed to active participation.

The July 2024 RAC Health Care Committee minutes were approved after Chair Warren reviewed the content, given that four members responded to her initially that they received them via email distribution. Chair Warren reviewed major decisions and individual responsibilities for action within the minutes. Ellie Anderson moved followed by a second to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Reports:**

All members were given a history to study of the Committee's accomplishments for the last three years. All members were encouraged to work actively in an health care area of choice: observe and report to the committee any health care concerns observed at Freedom Plaza, suggest topics that could be of interest to the Freedom Plaza residents, suggest and contact professionals who would provide seminars or help with support groups, write articles for the Did You Know newsletter, volunteer as a moderator or assistant for the on-going support groups, provide a workshop on a health topic, volunteer to be a SHINE counselor, or develop a new area to develop.

Ellie Anderson suggested that we \*visit the Wimauma Senior Center to observe their program in action, and get spin-off ideas, perhaps establishing a liaison from the committee. In early October, date to be announced, Ellie A. is planning to provide a second presentation concerning \*Medicare Choices and Medical Prescriptions. She would like the session recorded so the information could be given to the other communities. She and Lisa will follow up to \*engage ROC's services.

The September 24<sup>th</sup> date is filled with a \*physical therapy presentation.

CJ C. will preside at a \*Cancer Support Group meeting Thursday, August 15 for the Cancer Support Group and would like to develop an activity in the fall that honors those with metastatic cancer by\* lighting up certain areas of the building with a pattern of lights. She is scheduled for a \*large group seminar on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. For January or February she suggested a speaker she knows who would give a presentation on metastatic cancer. She will follow up appropriately.

No large group presentations are scheduled for the already busy month of November.

Doris Ferron has agreed to chair the Visually Impaired Support Group in Joan Macholl's absence and will be planning programs for the support group meetings the second Tuesday of each month. Bill Ferron reported that Ben Greene, the president of a group that provides services to visually impaired residents of Sun City Center will be moving to Freedom Plaza in September. He is totally blind and described to the Ferrons, a device, GUIDE, available soon that will help persons with blindness (as an example) guide them from a transport bus to their room. Directions are given to the device and this information is used to guide a person to a destination. It is in trial at present, and expected to be available in 2025. Doris and Bill are very pleased that he was amenable to joining our Freedom Plaza Support Group and will follow up with him.

### **Unfinished Business:**

Chair Warren has contacted Theresa Lehman, Dining Services Director to ask on behalf of Joan Macholl's request, for several menus to be printed with a larger font size for those who are seriously vision-impaired. Director Lehman wanted to know how many persons need this service. Ellie A. volunteered to print menus with a larger font size to accommodate those who are visually impaired, if dining services was not amenable to doing this on a regular basis. It was noted (name not available) that the request for a menu with a larger font could be justified by the Act of Disability in that restaurants must furnish a menu with a larger font when requested. \*Lisa volunteered to take action on the issue and will report back to the committee. This should be completed by the next meeting of the Committee, September 12.

Another issue still needing attention was the request from Joan Macholl to the RAC Executive Board for RAC Reps to furnish information concerning the number of residents needing support in the areas of vision. Lisa Frank suggested a modification of the initial request to collect data concerning the persons in Freedom Plaza who had vision impairment. Instead of asking RAC Reps to collect information from residents who have

visual, hearing and mobility impairment, they would be asked to furnish information to Lisa about the number, but not the identification, of persons in their care who do have these impairments. There would be no survey of residents. Lisa, as Director, has all the information about everyone's health and/or impairment, so the goal would be to share information rather than collect it. Any communication to the RAC Executive Board should be made by Lisa and then channeled to the appropriate support groups.

However, before pursuing this approach, Lisa F. will revise the \*Support Group Poster and this will be sent out to residents to remind them of the support groups available to them. One side will show the names of the support groups, the name and phone number of the moderator/chair and time and location of the regularly scheduled meetings. The reverse side will be an open letter to residents telling them a little about the function of each support group and inviting them to attend. Lisa and Janet will write the\* letter and all will be presented at the next meeting, September 12 and distributed thereafter. Each support group has guidelines and these can be displayed along with the poster in the \*Wellness Center with extra copies of the poster available. An additional step would be for\* Lisa to call residents who are not attending a support group and invite them to come to a meeting if she feels that such a call would be well received and appropriate.

**It is noted that EACH Support Group Moderator is \*\*responsible for informing residents of scheduled meetings and this should be by poster and/or a reminder in the Freedom Plaza Weekly in a timely manner well in advance of the meeting. Additionally members are given reminder calls and emails. This has worked well in the past and should continue to work well in the future.**

Given the duration of the extended fire alarm recently, discussion centered on the RAC Reps responsibility for visually, hearing, and physically impaired persons. Lisa pointed out that getting impaired persons to safety is not the RAC Rep's responsibility—it is the responsibility of the staff who have procedures in place along with those dictated by the fire department. Basically, residents are instructed to “keep their door closed and not go out into the hall”, “don't call the front desk”, and “wait to receive instructions from RAVE” the electronic communication system. \*Lisa said this will be a topic of discussion by the staff and residents will get a review concerning their responsibilities during an emergency.

There is still no person who has volunteered to be Chair of the Neuropathy Support Group. It is possible that those who asked for a support group for tremors could be accommodated in the Parkinson's Support group, but that would be a \*decision for the Chair, Ellie A. to make, perhaps with the permission of the group. At present she is

leading two groups, one concerned with Parkinson's Disease and another for the caregivers.

At the last meeting there was a brief discussion about establishing a bereavement support group. Daina Machado, grief counselor for LifePath Hospice was invited as a speaker July 23. She elaborated on the different kinds of loss, e.g. by death, by divorce, etc. and coping mechanisms that help. There were 30 residents who attended and each got a booklet, "Life Beyond Loss". Many stayed to talk further. The general consensus is that a support group should be led by a person who has had professional counseling experience. Another speaker can always be invited again to talk about the topic of grief and loss.

The Mobility Device Clinic on July 19 was very successful. There were 30 residents who came to have their walkers or scooters cleaned and adjusted to encourage better posture. The Director of Assisted Living has requested that the same clinic be held at her facility. All agreed that this service should be available again in six months. There was no formal workshop on safety and walking with best posture, but each resident was given a handout that explained this and the topic has been stressed in the Did You Know newsletter.

#### **New Business:**

At the last meeting, Marty Mallak, FLICRA liaison, presented information about the use of an Alexa device to contact help via voice communication, specifically if a resident does not have a medical emergency button or cord available to them after a fall. This concept offers dynamic assistance to those jeopardized by a fall at a time and place when they can't get help. Many persons have an Alexa device already which could simply be programmed to reach a designated phone by voice control, and there is such a phone number available that reaches the front desk directly. This is not published in the directory and not well-known by residents. The RAC Technology Committee is very interested in the concept and will discuss it at their next meeting. \* Every effort should be made to pursue this worthwhile project which should include a\* "trial run".

In the absence of a hearing support group moderator, it was decided that Ellie A. would make a \*presentation for the hearing impaired, tentatively scheduled for January. At that time residents can express their interest in restarting a support group.

The position of Neuropathy Support Group moderator is still vacant with no volunteer to fill in for Bruce Clatterbuck. For all the support groups there is a need for a moderator/chair and the involvement of another person as \*an assistant. This will be discussed further at the September meeting.

Respectfully Submitted, **Janet Warren, Chair and Secretary**