



Agenda Item Summary

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Submitted By

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Reviewed By

LKS

Agenda Item Title

A Resolution Approving the Village of Oak Park, Illinois Becoming a Dementia Friendly Community as Designated by Dementia Friendly America

Overview

The Village recognizes the changing dynamics of its community and the importance of addressing the needs of its aging population, including those impacted by dementia. After over one year of considerable work by the Village of Oak Park and its Dementia Friendly partners, Dementia Friendly America has formally recognized the Village as being part of their network of communities. With this recognition, Oak Park has become only the 9th governmental entity to be so recognized in the State of Illinois. Approval of this resolution will formally accept the Dementia Friendly America Community Designation and pledge the Village's ongoing support of this important initiative.

Recommendation

Approve the Resolution.

Staff Recommendation

Approve the Resolution.

Fiscal Impact

The Village was able to partner with the University of Indianapolis to have the services of a graduate student in gerontology and social work as an intern for spring semester 2019 at no cost to the Village. The intern was able to earn graduate level credits by interning with the Village to help with the groundwork to obtain the Dementia Friendly designation. This work included convening meetings including the Aging in Place Commission, interviewing residents and businesses and helping develop training videos for the community.

Background

In recognition of the effort that has been completed over the past twelve plus months, as outlined in the information provided below, Washington DC based Dementia Friendly America has formally recognized Oak Park as being a part of their network of communities. With this announcement, Oak Park has become only the 9th governmental entity to be so recognized in the State of Illinois. The final requirement of the Dementia Friendly Community recognition process is that the Village Board pass a resolution accepting the Dementia

Friendly America Community Designation.

Since the Village Board's initial actions on June 17, 2019, the Village's Aging in Place Commission and Development Customer Services Department staff has partnered with other Oak Park taxing bodies, including the Oak Park Township, Park District of Oak Park and the Oak Park Library. All four taxing bodies, and our other Action Team partners, have worked together to make Oak Park a dementia friendly community and to form the ongoing foundation of Oak Parks Dementia Friendly Action Team.

The following information provides the Village Board with a summary of the effort to pursue achieving the dementia friendly community designation.

INTRODUCTION - As the Village of Oak Park's population aged, the Village Board recognized a need to improve awareness, regarding dementia, within the community. On February 20, 2018, the Oak Park Village Board approved the establishment of an Aging in Place Commission. One of the first actions of the Commission was to recommend to the Village Board the pursuit of a dementia friendly designation. In early 2019, the Village's Aging in Place Commission voted to recommend to the Village Board that Oak Park become a dementia friendly community. On June 17, 2019, the Village Board officially supported the Village's Aging in Place Commission's recommendation that the Village work towards achieving the designation. Since the Village Board's action, Oak Park has worked to earn the right to be designated a Dementia Friendly Community.

KICK-OFF-EVENT - A large dementia friendly community kick-off event was held on October 17, 2019, to bring the public and community leaders together to learn about and discuss dementia and its impact on Oak Park. More than 80 individuals from various sectors attended this event. Dr. Raj Shah, Associate Professor of Family Medicine with the Rush Alzheimer's Disease Center and a leading expert on dementia friendly communities in Illinois, gave a keynote address. Dr. Shah focused his remarks on the importance of communities recognizing and developing policies to support people with dementia. Small discussion groups gathered to share their input on the importance of creating change in Oak Park and to brainstorm on "next steps." Additionally, a local caregiver shared his personal experiences with the audience about the joys and trials of caring for a loved one with dementia. The community kick-off meeting created the momentum needed to bring individuals together to begin enacting change.

CHAMPION ORGANIZATIONS AND COORDINATION CAPACITY - Oak Park's initiative is led by the Village of Oak Park and championed by the following three additional local taxing bodies: 1.) Oak Park Township; 2.) Park District of Oak Park; and 3.) Oak Park Public Library. All four entities coordinate events and meetings and work together to ensure the management of the initiative. Each champion has committed time, staff and resources to the dementia friendly project, with two of our champions bringing on full-time interns to ensure the necessary time and attention was devoted to seeing the Village's initial vision become a reality.

DEMENTIA FRIENDLY INITIATIVE VISION AND GOALS - Since its beginning, the Oak Park Dementia Friendly Initiative has not slowed down. Utilizing the Dementia Friendly America toolkit, an action team was created and the vision and goals for the initiative were outlined. The initiatives vision is as follows: "The Dementia Friendly Action Team aims to increase the overall quality of life for all Oak Park residents, both now and in the future, by focusing on providing sustainable person-centered change that allows for continued engagement in the community for those impacted by dementia." The initiatives goals are as follows: 1.) Reducing stigma by

raising the level of understanding and acceptance of what it means to live with dementia in our community, through education and awareness; 2.) Reduce social isolation by increasing awareness of programs tailored to the needs of those impacted by dementia; 3.) Implement programs to address identified gaps in support; 4.) Create a safe and respectful community by increasing awareness about dementia and training local businesses to offer dementia friendly customer service in their commercial space; 5.) Ensure our first responders are adequately equipped to address the needs of those impacted by providing sensitivity and awareness training to better support their ability to interact with and service this population; 6.) Provide a platform for those impacted by dementia to share their experiences and guide the communities actions to make meaningful change; and 7.) Work to engage all sectors of our community to be dementia friendly, including, but not limited to, businesses, communities of faith, healthcare organizations, institutions of learning, financial institutions and other aging-related service providers.

CONNECTING ACROSS SECTORS - Oak Park not only has four governmental champions who are committed to seeing dementia friendly change implemented in our Village. Multiple partners who represent businesses, organizations and individuals have joined our initiative's efforts. Our partners are from education, healthcare, residential services, senior support services, restaurants, interested residents and caretakers impacted by dementia. Approximately 50 individuals, from the sectors listed above, make up Oak Park's Dementia Friendly Action Team. Up until the COVID-19 emergency, the Action Team held monthly meetings. We will begin meeting again soon. This format is designed to bring people from different sectors in the community together, to discuss and help implement change. Our partners work together to ensure that collaborative, community-driven and person-centered change is occurring in Oak Park.

INCLUSION AND LEADERSHIP OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA - Oak Park's efforts focus on creating meaningful change. The Oak Park Action Team recognizes that individuals living with dementia may not want to be publicly acknowledged. Therefore, in order to respect their privacy, the Action Team has implemented alternative methods to record their perspectives, in order to better guide our process. Over this past year, Oak Park has conducted several one-on-one interviews with both individuals living with dementia and with their caregivers. These interviews have allowed our initiative to identify the communities existing dementia friendly strengths and weaknesses. In addition, we have utilized the interviews to help us identify areas that need adjusting in order to increase the quality of life for all residents living with dementia.

ADOPTION AND COMMUNICATION OF DEMENTIA FRIENDLY PRACTICES AND CHANGE GOALS - The initiative has set goals which it hopes to achieve in order to see meaningful change in the community. Several steps have already been taken with additional steps planned for the future to ensure the sustainability of this project.

ADOPTION OF PRACTICES LIKE TRAINING OF BUSINESSES, PUBLIC SERVANTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS - Over the past year progress has been made regarding establishing dementia friendly training. The following examples provide an overview of the initiatives ongoing efforts: 1.) **ON-LINE VIDEO TRAINING SERIES** : One of the initiatives most time-consuming and useful projects has been the creation and dissemination of sector-specific business on-line training videos that the initiative will utilize to train businesses remotely. These on-line videos are a resource we hope to share with other communities as they seek their dementia friendly designation. We have sent out over 1,500 announcements to Oak Park businesses to help increase awareness about these free on-line training tools and to get businesses signed up to participate in our efforts. Businesses that complete the remote training will be provided with a window decal to show their participation; 2.) **FREE**

IN-PERSON TRAINING: Our local library, township, municipal, park district, businesses and the public will all have access to videos as well as in-person training. In-person training has been provided since we began our dementia friendly initiative work. Currently, we have several community support services that have signed-up to receive in-person training, including senior living, healthcare and financial institutions. We have several dementia friendly awareness trainers on the Oak Park Dementia Friendly Action Team who will offer in-person training, for free; and 3.) **FIRST RESPONDER IN-PERSON TRAINING:** In February 2020, the Village launched an in-house created, full dementia friendly training series designed and created just for first responders. The training offers specific skill advice and best practice standards for staff in the Village's Police and Fire Departments. All of the Village's first responders have now been trained in dementia awareness.

ADOPTION OF PRACTICES/PROGRAMS TAILORED TO PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA - Oak Park recognizes its aging population and has been ensuring programs and services are available to allow individuals to successfully age-in-place. These services include an emergency ID bracelet program, snow shoveling services, rehab loan programs, money management services, future planning services, in-home respite care, transportation assistance, meal delivery, caregiver support groups, etc. Many of these programs are tailored specifically to individuals impacted by dementia and they include the following: 1.) **Emergency ID Bracelet Program.** This program was developed by the Village of Oak Park Police Department and aims to allow officers to reunite individuals who are confused or involved in an emergency situation with a caregiver or loved one. The green emergency ID bracelet makes it easy to identify individuals who may be experiencing distress or disorientation in emergencies.; 2.) **The Memory Café.** This program is hosted by the Township on a monthly basis, to provide individuals living with memory loss and their caregivers a safe space in the community to connect, share a meal and enjoy recreational and educational opportunities. Oak Park's memory café has been so successful and well-attended that two additional entities are also set to host a memory café; 3.) **Film Viewings.** These are no-shush film viewings, where all ages and abilities are welcome to watch movies at the local theater. These viewings provide an opportunity for those impacted by dementia and their loved ones to enjoy an outing without fear of disrupting other moviegoers; and 4.) **The Memory Kit Program.** This program has been implemented by the Oak Park Library. This program provides a Memory Kit, which can offer mental and emotional stimulation, and is based on themes including gardening, I Love Lucy, and travel. These kits aim to inspire conversation and build stronger connections between those living with dementia and their loved ones. Memory Kits are available in the Main Library and can be checked out for up to three weeks at a time.

COMMUNICATION PRACTICES, ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS - Decreasing stigma and raising awareness are two other big components of our action plan. In order to address these, we have held several events at the Village of Oak Park Village Hall where residents and businesses can receive in-person training. In the future, we will be setting up awareness booths at various community events and are publishing our efforts via several different media outlets and the extensive use of social media.

PROGRESS AND TRACKING - Oak Park's Dementia Friendly Action Team's goal is to meet once per month and this group is charged with ensuring we identify areas that require change, as well as formulating an action plan to address these areas. As mentioned previously, the action team created an action plan that is currently being implemented. The action team continues to track the progress of the developed plan and also continues to evaluate each accomplished task. This action team is led by the Village of Oak Park's Development Customer Services Department staff and the three additional taxing body champions, as previously mentioned. The Action Team is supported by the Village of Oak Park's Aging in Place Commission. This set-up allows for each group to ensure progress is being made, at both a community level and an administrative level.

Alternatives

The Board could delay action and seek additional information.

Previous Board Action

In early 2019, the Village's Aging in Place Commission voted to recommend to the Village Board that Oak Park become a dementia friendly community. On June 17, 2019, the Village Board of Trustees officially supported the Village's Aging in Place Commission's recommendation that Oak Park work towards achieving a dementia friendly community designation.

Citizen Advisory Commission Action

The Aging in Place Commission officially supports the Village Board's approval of this resolution to formally accept the Dementia Friendly America Community Designation.

Anticipated Future Actions/Commitments

N/a

Intergovernmental Cooperation Opportunities

Since the Village Board's initial actions on June 17, 2019, the Village staff has partnered with other Oak Park taxing bodies including the Oak Park Township, Park District of Oak Park and the Oak Park Public Library. All four taxing bodies have worked together to make Oak Park a dementia friendly community and to form the ongoing foundation of Oak Park's Dementia Friendly Action Team.