

## **Mayor's Advisory Committee On an Age-Friendly Community Action Plan**

At the January 1, 2017 Annual New Year's Levee, the Mayor announced that he has asked a number of residents to be part of a Working Group on the creation of an Age-Friendly Community Action Plan for Sackville. More specifically, an Age-Friendly community encourages active living for citizens of all ages experiencing physical or intellectual challenges by optimizing opportunities for health, accessibility, participation, and security to enhance quality of life as people age.

In practical terms, an Age-Friendly community adapts its structures and services to be accessible and inclusive for all residents with varying needs and capacities, including children, care-givers, older residents, and those with special needs.

Given the aging of the population in general and the projected increase in the number of people with chronic illness including physical and intellectual challenges, and particularly with dementia, municipalities will require assistance from all levels of government, as well as local residents and businesses, to not only address the needs of those living in the community but also those that are reliant on caregivers and health care professionals.

Age-friendly communities are ones which exhibit a high level of public awareness and understanding so that all citizens with physical and intellectual challenges, particularly those with dementia, and their caregivers, are encouraged to seek help and are supported by their community.

Age-friendly communities seek to adapt their structures, infrastructure, programs and services to be accessible and inclusive of older residents, and in so doing, actually make the overall community open and accessible to all through universal design.

### Advisory Committee Proposed Work-plan

1. Establish an Age-Friendly Community Working Group, which will include representation from a wide cross-section of the community, initially to be named by the Mayor. While the Working Group is advisory to the Mayor and supported by Mayor and Council, it will operate on its own accord, as a liaison between citizens, community groups and local businesses as part of an overall commitment to creating an age-friendly community. It is proposed that there be four to five working group meetings to develop an Action Plan on or before May 1, 2017. The Advisory Committee shall elect its own chair and may add members and resource persons that they deem appropriate, including representatives from established health and support groups, such as the Alzheimer's Society of New Brunswick and/or the Sackville Walk in the Park Committee.

2. Create an Age-Friendly Community Profile for Sackville. This will include information as to the:
  - number of seniors (65+) for the town;
  - number and percentage of people with specific health and age requirements;
  - number and percentage of people with dementia living in the community; and
  - projected number and percentage of seniors and people with dementia to 2034.
  - Housing options and community support services that currently exist within the community
3. Conduct research on age-friendly communities and identify promising practices for Sackville. These promising practices will be compiled in a Working Group Report and will be shared with applicable municipal departments, local businesses and age-friendly support agencies.
4. Conduct focus groups with the various sectors of the community that the committee wishes to identify, including youth, care-givers, seniors, special needs groups, as well as caregivers and family members and related health care professionals. The purpose of the focus groups will be to identify opportunities and challenges, both physical as well as social, so to inform the messaging and overall action plan for the community as they move towards the goal of increased accessibility and age-friendly policies and procedures. Action outcomes and timelines should be assigned to each element of the plan.
5. Develop messaging related to the age-friendly community plan. The purpose of this messaging will be to raise awareness about physical and intellectual challenges, the prevalence of dementia, and some of the identified barriers to being age-friendly; to dispel misinformation about such issues as dementia and aging or community living for those with special needs; and to provide links to reputable sources of information about dementia, including the Alzheimer's Society of New Brunswick, the New Brunswick Association for Community Living, the Tantramar Family Resource Centre, etc.
6. Based on the profile, research and consultation, the Advisory Committee will develop an overall Age-Friendly Action Plan for the Town of Sackville. While specific working plans and launch date of May 1st is suggested here, the Advisory Committee and any other groups or individuals are free to move forward on individual projects and events that will promote an age-friendly community as they deem appropriate.