



Meeting with MP Tony VanBynen - Dec.3, 2020

Present: ASA Executive: Dave LeGallais (President)  
Cheryl Rines (Treasurer), Jim Abram (Vice President)  
& John Scherrer (Secretary)

MP: Tony Van Bynen & Sarah Campbell

Recording for ASA: Lydia Schuster

**1. Update on current status of Centre including number of activities and members using the facilities at present.**

Dave provided a comparison of ASA activities & attendance since the closure of the Seniors Centre due to COVID.19 restrictions.

- Doors closed March 2020; Reopened Sept. 28, 2020 -
- Centre has been open 2 full months with greatly reduced activities

- Comparison of October & November 2019 with Oct. & Nov. 2020

• October 2019	October 2020
Activities:36 Participants 2621	Activities: 10 Participants: 205
Reception shifts: 319	Reception Shifts: 170

November 2019	November 2020
Activities: 34 Participants: 2600	Activities: 8 Participants: 184
Reception shifts: 391	Reception shifts: 147

- ASA has been proactive by establishing a Reopening Committee that has worked with Town staff to ensure the safest protocols for re-introducing ASA activities which are limited to those that can safely be delivered under current Provincial & York Region Public Health directives: Art drop in; Knitting; Sewing; Bingo; Creative Colouring, Movies and Woodshop.

- This excludes the 2019 most popular and high-participation activities e.g. - cards, board games, physical activities (pickle ball, badminton; billiards, table tennis, etc.) lunches, computer club, choir & sing-along - due to current restrictions - social distancing and room maximums (10).
- Jim added that seniors in York Region are supported by the Seniors Centre Without Walls program organized and delivered by Karie Papillon & Andrew Bailey (Town Staff) who have also arranged to offer as many town programs as feasible via Zoom.
- Ongoing communication with ASA members via e-flashes & monthly Newsletter
- Call list to communicate with members without internet access
- ASA has obtained PPE supplies from Red Cross;
- Reopening Committee is constantly seeking other means to virtually deliver programs to members - e.g. Computer Club, Book Clubs
- ASA membership in 2020 was at 1600 members - many of whom are not comfortable returning under current conditions.
- Prior to COVID.19 the major issue affecting seniors was isolation.
- COVID.19 has exacerbated that - not just for seniors but for everyone else.
- Tony noted that the Federal Gov't., recognizing the impact on mental health that this pandemic is having, has established a "Wellness Together" phone portal that is a free phone line for anyone to access  
- the service is private and managed by professionals. Gov't. has allocated \$43M for this service.
- Tony also noted that he is a member of the Health Committee which has recognized that mental health is going to be a continuing pandemic.
- Recovery for Not for Profits will take longer - possibly 3-7 years.
- Employment recovery is hoped for early 2021.

## **2. Discussion on Financial situation - Cheryl Rines**

Cheryl provided an overview of current and anticipated 2021 ASA revenue/expenses:

- ASA Board has approved extending 2020 memberships through 2021 and suspended ASA activity fees - which represent \$72,000. of 2021 revenue. Factoring in other sources of revenue (events & fund raisers) - **ASA revenue will be down by \$106,000. for 2021.**
- **Expenses for 2021 will be \$83,000.** (if Town does not discount user fees of \$46,000 for the year).
- Recovery will take a long time - even with availability of vaccines.
- We may be able to offer more activities, but that will translate in more revenue.

### 3. Possible Federal Grants.

- Tony noted the New Horizons for Seniors Federal Grant - applications closed at the end of October, but a new application will come in 2021 with expanded criteria and improved application process.
- Tony/Sarah will forward particulars when available.
- Sarah noted that a new grant feature will be technology. Sarah has offered to help with ASA application.
  - Jim - ASA was aware of the grant and Board decided not to pursue given existing, uncertain conditions. Will consider for 2021.
  - Jim - Will gladly discuss New Horizons Grant - ASA had considered technology hardware as a means of helping to keep members engaged and connected - this requires tech. support and program delivery.
  - Jim - Grants are available to municipalities and Karie applies for these on behalf of the Town in support of Town programs.
- Tony also noted the availability of the Summer Jobs Programs supported by the Gov't. that covers up to 75% of employment cost for full & part-time employees. Will add ASA to mailing list.
- Students could be hired to do virtual training
- John - While 70% of members use technology -access to internet and electronics is very costly for those living on Gov't. pension income. What assistance could Gov't. provide.
- 
- Tony proposed arranging a meeting with the Minister for Seniors - Deb Schulte - possibly in January to address these issues more fully.

#### **4. Covid situation as it stands now, where the Federal Government envisions it going in the next several months and any current information they have regarding vaccines and their distribution.**

- **Tony:** Gov't. will focus on the most vulnerable.
- December-Jan. & Feb. will be challenging - 2nd wave is creating new challenges -
- Addressing outcomes will remain a Provincial responsibility
- Vaccine when approved will be available for everyone - free of charge
- 429M doses have been reserved
- As of Nov. 12 there are 140 COVID Vaccine candidates
- Canada has highest number of vaccines per capita
- How soon? - depends on vaccine being approved for distribution/delivery
- As of last month 16 million flu vaccines have been delivered - so capacity is there
- In meantime, Gov't. is encouraging use of "Wellness Together" phone line
- Gov't. is working with Provinces to develop criteria for distribution/delivery
- Gov't. will use scientific facts in developing criteria
- Gov't. has established an independent "Vaccine Committee" to help prioritize vaccine delivery
  
- Jim noted that vaccine distribution will be a military operation whereas delivery will be a Provincial & Regional responsibility
  
- Cheryl noted that as two doses are needed - communication will be vital -
- What is Federal Gov't. to do to ensure individuals follow through.
  
- Tony - agrees - reported Feds. are working with Province and cited recent Health Minister Patty Hajdu meeting with York Region Health Unit.
- Gov't. has established (6 labs.) for Rapid Surge capacity testing and contact tracing
- allocated \$150.M
- And \$150.M for Red Cross to help with contact tracing

#### **5. How is the Federal Government working in conjunction with the Provincial and Municipal Governments?**

**Is the Federal Government taking any action on reported sub standard conditions in Long Care Facilities?**

- **Tony:** COVID.19 has brought to light associated issues - e.g. need to start manufacturing vaccines in Canada; systemic racism, homelessness, mental health - need to address these basic challenges.
- Gov't. has committed \$740.M for Provinces and Territories &
- \$1.B for safe Long Term Care fund to provide infection control
- \$38.5M for training of P.S.W.'s to ensure retention
- Need to develop with Provinces & Territories a National Standards for Long Term Care
- For Profit Long Term Care facilities are licensed by the Province
- Non-Profit LTC are Municipal
- All are currently under analysis
- Next Liberal Party priority is Long Term Care - how ageing is valued across the country
- Ont. has rules re. LTC - not sufficiently adequate re inspection and enforcement
- National standards would help Provinces to implement inspection enforcement (move away from complaint driven)

**6. Seek any input they may have for improving our reopening strategies over the next few months.**

**Tony:** Function of Seniors Centre will be dependent of Provincial and Y.R. directives -

- Optimistic that availability of vaccine will help to mitigate
- Gov't. has committed \$380.B for seniors programs
- Once vaccine program is in place, Gov't. is committed to a job stimulus program
- Gov't is aware that funds committed to bolster economy will have to be repaid
- Using balanced approach - not investing enough is costlier than too much  
- Gov't does not want anyone to be left behind
- Jim - ASA is totally volunteer-based; we have a Reopening Committee
- Evidence of volunteer fatigue as older adults withdraw and younger members are not taking on responsibilities
- Need to create a bridge so we can continue to offer services at a minimum cost

- Tony assured ASA he and his office are accessible and encouraged ASA to stay in touch.
- Will arrange a meeting with Minister for Seniors Deb Schulte in January.