



APPROVED MINUTES  
MEETING OF THE AGING IN COMMUNITIES COMMISSION  
Oak Park Village Hall, Room 124  
August 14, 2025 - 6:00pm

The August 14, 2025 meeting of the Aging in Communities Commission was called to order at 6:03 pm by Chair Blesoff.

**Roll Call: .**

Marc Blesoff	Present
Monika Robinson	Present
George Bailey	Present
Evelyn Clay	Present
Carl Spight	Present
Linda T Francis	Present
Melissa A Avila	Present

**Staff present:** Cassandra L Adediran

**Other:** Rob Sproule, Director of Village of Oak Park Public Works

**Agenda Approval:** Motion to approve the agenda was made by Comm. Robinson and seconded by Comm. Spight. All were in favor.

**Minutes Approval:** Motion to approve minutes from the July 10, 2025 meeting, was made by Comm. Francis and seconded by Comm. Clay. All were in favor.

**Non-Agenda Public Comment:** None submitted to the Village.

Dir. Rob Sproule was in person to promote, and educate on, the Fall Leaf Collection activity. Dir. Sproule was also seeking feedback and recommendations for change from the 2024 Fall leaf collection activity. From the Village staff's viewpoint, the transition went well. Fly dumping was not an issue. There was positive neighborhood engagement, pedestrian safety. The Village Board continues to move forward similar to last year. Per Dir. Sproule, there were opportunities for a) financial impact – a refund of leaf collection fees, the rate stayed the same; and a 80% reduction in collection of leaves with equipment, gas and labor costs; and (b) community engagement – education, free bags, volunteer assistance, and a contract-based financial benefit to 40+ households.

Questions from the Commission centered around the success of the leaf collection activity, the sustainability of the method for leaf collection, support for those who need more information on the program, and support for those who have financial or physical issues which impede their ability to properly collect the leaves. Dir. Sproule pointed the commission members to Environmental Manager Erica Helms. The discussion on the Fall Leaf Collection ended with Dir. Sproule informing the commission, upon questioning, that the Village is looking to either

renegotiate the contract with the current vendor or go back to competitive bidding. Dir. Sproule will give the AIC's staff liaison the contact information for leaf collection.

Chair Blesoff saw the opportunity for intergenerational activities via the volunteering by the youth to assist the seniors with leaf collection. The youth can come from other VOP entities such as the High School or even the Township's Youth Development group. Chair Blesoff summed up the discussion with an acknowledgement that the leaf collection effort is trying to make the Village of Oak Park better environmentally, financially, and cohesively as a community.

### **Old Business:**

1. Ageism Awareness Day Program – Ageism Awareness Day is Thursday, October 9, 2025. Chair Blesoff confirmed that the commission has accepted Becca Levy as the keynote speaker. The Commission will have a luncheon during the day at the Village Hall for the commission members as well as for key Village Hall staff. Comm. Francis suggested that the Commission put something together to talk about at the community level with Chair Blesoff adding that Becca Levy can also contribute to the content. Comm. Clay suggested that there be an umbrella of topics that stream to other departments and these topics should be given to Becca Levy by the Commission. Chair Blesoff requested staff to begin finalizing arrangements for the program at 19<sup>th</sup> Century Club on the evening of October 9<sup>th</sup>.
2. Becca Levy research project - Comm Francis started the discussion on the subject of the recruitment for participants and group leaders for the project. Once in place, training for the leaders will take place during the last week of August with the activities starting the first week of September. The groups will meet for six (6) weeks. At this time, the team is trying to increase the number of participants. Comm. Francis explained that the project will focus on getting seniors to be aware of their own ageism and how they can influence policy and the services that they receive. The project team is also aware that technology is a challenge. Flyers are being distributed all over the Village of Oak Park where people congregate. It was suggested that some residents of the Heritage House may be interested in being participants and group leaders, as their site can be used to hold the sessions. Staff will assist with connecting Comm. Francis to the resident leadership and the property management team.

### **New Business:**

1. Chair Blesoff provided a link to the Age Guide with the explanation that the Age Guide offers an online program about ageism and how it impacts residents in the western suburbs. He encouraged the commission to plug in via the Zoom platform.  
<https://ageguide.org/advocacy-spotlight-special-virtual-session-explores-solutions-for-diverse-communities-and-caregivers/>
2. Workplan for 2026 –Comm. Bailey wanted to know what happened with the mural project that he and former Comm. Cimaglio worked on as it was no longer part of the

Commission's work plan activities. Chair Blesoff explained that the timing for the mural project was an issue as the Oak Park Area Arts Council (OPAAC) had a project that they had to get done. Per Chair Blesoff, the mural project may not be totally gone away as part of the Becca Levy research involves doing community projects. Comm. Francis expanded the response to related that to her understanding, there was one project for the summer [for the OPAAC] and it was not clearly stated that way. She suggested that the AIC gets on OPAAC's schedule/calendar for next summer. Chair Blesoff concluded the discussion by iterating the need for clarity between him and the Director of the OPAAC.

On the format of the workplan, Comm. Francis asked if there could be some changes made to the descriptions for the activities. Chair Blesoff wanted to know what the commission members thought of the AIC's progress: how well they have done, if there is anything coming up, and if there is anything they have for next year. Comm. Francis asked for understanding about the staff liaison's role which parlayed into a question about the Trustee liaison's role. Staff offered that the information can be found in the Procedure Manual.

Chair Blesoff reminded the Commission that the Work Plan is due in a couple of months. He has met the new staff liaison Kellye Keyes when he spoke with the Board about aging and ageism. Comm. Francis commented on the work plan and how it functions for the commission. Chair Blesoff suggested that the commission members take a look at the work plan and decide what they want to do in 2026. Some of the current items will carry over and the commission is to think about how they will advance the Village Board's goals. A few of the umbrella topics for the 2026 Work Plan will involve Age Friendly and Dementia Friendly items, as well as awards, and yard signs.

Comm. Clay asked about the "assisted dying" agenda item from last month. Chair Blesoff related that the person, Tiffany Johnson, was not available the meeting on this day but should be next meeting. Dir. Rob Sproule was at the meeting instead. Chair Blesoff would like staff liaison Kellye Keyes to come to the next meeting on September 10<sup>th</sup> to hear what is important to them. Perhaps Tiffany Johnson can attend the October 8<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Prior to the meetings end, Comm. Bailey related that there are lot of unspoken things effecting seniors and it seems that not much attention is being paid to the change that is happening in the atmosphere and the "livability" for seniors. Both Chair Blesoff and Bailey thinks this issue may call for a strategic and tactical conversation.

**Adjournment:** Motion to Adjourn to was made by Comm. Francis and seconded by Commissioner Clay. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:50p.m.