



Municipality of Anchorage

Dave Bronson
Mayor

Senior Citizens Advisory Commission

July 9, 2021

Dear Mayor Bronson,

The Senior Citizens Advisory Commission would like to congratulate you on your recent election and welcome you to your new leadership role. We are excited to see how your administration improves the lives of all the citizens in Anchorage.

Our function is to advise your office, the Assembly, and the appropriate Department Heads on the aspects of aging. We educate ourselves on issues that affect seniors and compile information for their benefit. We provide public awareness for the needs of seniors as well as the resources and services available. Please, turn to the Senior Advisory Commission with your questions.

For the ninth consecutive year, Alaska continued to have the fastest-growing senior population per capita. Their contributions highlight the roles they play as mentors, guardians, role models, history keepers, and teachers. These are the pioneers who developed our community and left a legacy to pass on to our children. They robustly contribute to the economy and, as super voters, play a major role in our democracy. We must continue to ensure that when and if incomes decrease support services are in place.

In May, we celebrate seniors and the contributions they make during Older Americans Month (OAM). A highlight of the program is the Ron Hammett Award, recognizing individuals whose outstanding service, dedication, and leadership has had a significant impact on the quality of life for seniors. The 2020 award went to Mary Shields, Vice-President of the Board of Directors of the Senior Center, who received her award at the 2021 OAM celebration along with this year's recipient, Gordon Glaser, Board President of the Senior Activity Center.

While seniors constantly contribute to the vibrancy and rich texture of Anchorage life, we like to spotlight the work of those who work tirelessly for our community. This year we honored David Washburn, editor and media manager of the Senior Voice, a publication of the Older Persons Action Group, with a thank you letter and a Resolution from the Anchorage Assembly.

In 2020 we decided to concentrate on a Topic of Interest, the awareness of dementia and Alzheimer's information coupled with caregiver support. We had plans to work with the Alzheimer's Resource Center of Alaska to have people recognize the signs of these

conditions and provide memory screening services. We were planning to disseminate information through the Community Councils. Our plans have been postponed to beyond 2021, and we are still waiting for a safer and healthier time to concentrate our efforts. We hope that early interventions can reduce the stress on caregivers allowing the affected family member to age in place longer.

To increase our knowledge, we regularly invite specialists to share their knowledge at our monthly, now virtual, meetings. First, we heard from the Census Bureau and took their important information back to our communities. Although stalled by the pandemic the Village to Village Project aims to bring geographic areas together to determine and develop resources for people to age in the comfort of their own home. Currently, there are 150 Village to Village Projects nationwide, with Fairbanks being nearest to us. We have heard from the Older Persons Action Group, an Alzheimer's caregiver-driven service plan, the Commission on Aging, the Anchorage Fire Department on safety, and SAIL, Southeast Independent Living Center informed us on the HomeMAP program, a model for conducting comprehensive, person-centered home assessments designed to help determine what changes can be made to a home or apartment so you can live at home longer and safer.

We hope this letter welcomes you to your new role, serves as an introduction to the Senior Citizens Advisory Commission, and brings you up to date on our recent projects. We look forward to serving your administration and hope that you will contact us with any questions regarding the needs of our elder population.

Sincerely,

Senior Citizens Advisory Commission

James Bailey, Chair
Gayle Schuh, Vice Chair
Theresa Brisky
Dawnia Clements
Hattie Gardner
Pamela Kelly
Dr. Emily McMahan
AnnaBell Stevens
Mary Shields