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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 4/20/17

SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Cleveland's new Senior Citizens Advisory Committee held its first meeting on April 20.

The Cleveland City Council created the committee on March 27, 2017 to hear suggestions from senior citizens. Each Council member makes one appointment to the seven-member committee. Each member must be a city resident and be at least 62 years of age. Members serve without compensation.

The Committee includes one member from each of the five City Council Districts plus two serving at-large. The city mayor serves as chairman of the committee.

Committee members include Jimmy Armstrong, District 1; Shirley Knight, District 2; Ron Williams, District 3; Jo Benjamin, District 4; Hugh Hogeman, District 5; Roger Jennie, at-large and Charlie McDowell, at-large.

Initially, members representing districts 1, 2, 3 and 4 will serve a two-year term. The District 5 and two at-large members will serve a three-year term. Subsequent appoints are all two-year terms.

The committee meets monthly for four months and afterwards as the committee deems necessary. The committee agreed to meet the third Monday each month at 2 p.m. at the Municipal Building.

Four members - Williams, Jennie, Hogeman and Benjamin - attended the initial meeting with Mayor Tom Rowland. Councilman Tom Cassada and City Manager Joe Fivas also attended along with Cele Curtis representing the Tennessee Commission on Aging And Disability.

Rowland told the group to bring any needs they see in the community to the attention of the city. He gave the group an overview of city government.

"When something comes to our attention, we will address that," he said.

Members suggested the City partner with local institutions, including Lee University and Cleveland State Community College, that offer educational opportunities for seniors. Among the topics discussed by the group for educational programs were personal money

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management, computer use and scam alerts. Other suggested topics included veterans benefits and financial assistance programs available locally.

Mayor Rowland said other organizations, including the public library, might be included as education program partners.

The group encouraged the city's continuing sidewalk program. They discussed a need for covered city bus stops and asked for more publicity of the Cleveland Urban Area Transit System's route information.

Mayor Rowland said the city is securing a grant for two covered bus stops.

The group discussed increased traffic congestion across the city.

Members asked about the recent city survey's results. City Manager Fivas said 1,076 people responded. The city is preparing a public report with the results, he said.

Committee members also expressed concern for city funding needs. Members noted more funds will be needed for city services as the city grows, including a possible increase in tax revenue.



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