

Senior Advisory Board

The City of Oak Ridge Senior Advisory Board (SAB) continued its effort to establish a “senior volunteer transportation program” to replace the taxi coupon program that has provided discounted taxi rides to senior citizens and people with disabilities. (See the February Voter for background.)

The SAB met once each week for four consecutive weeks. At the most recent meeting, February 20, the board finished assembling the information for a grant application to Tennessee’s Senior Volunteer Transportation Network and voted to recommend that the City submit the grant request. Subsequently, City Manager Mark Watson advised the board that the request had been submitted, and SAB members learned that it was under active review by the decision-making panel.

As proposed, the program will be called “My Ride Oak Ridge” and will enlist volunteers to provide rides within Oak Ridge to people over age 60 (with an intention to expand later to include younger people who are unable to drive) who will pay \$6 per round-trip ride to help support the program. The City government will be asked to administer the program through the Senior Center and provide some financial support. The initial steering committee for the program consists of the 11 SAB members plus two other citizen volunteers. Steering committee members plan to work on a volunteer basis to get the program started and to provide the first ride before April 15 in order to qualify for the first year of grant funding.

At its March meeting, the SAB plans to (1) review results of a survey of taxi coupon users conducted to assess transportation needs and (2) hammer out some details of implementing the volunteer program.

~Ellen Smith