

**The Town of Oakville**

**Department of Recreation & Culture**

**Seniors' Working Action Group (SWAG) - We're Age Friendly**

**Minutes – Wednesday, October 22, 2025**

**In Attendance:** Darlene Cox, Ruth Sheridan, Ted Lambert, Margaret Kirwin, Micheline Wheeler, Julie Pennal, Pierre Wong, Michelle Cleary, Pat Moore, Bev Cathro

**Regrets:** Rachel Fraser, Councillor Duddeck, Michelle Nichols

**Guest:** Nancy Beddoe – The Death Café, Home Hospice Association

**Minutes:** Kelly Meeussen

1. **Call to Order:** by Darlene Cox – 1:30 p.m.

**Guest Speaker: Nancy Beddoe – The Death Café, Home Hospice Association**

- Death Cafes are run by the Home Hospice Association which is a not-for-profit organization. Its mission is to normalize death. Their tag line is “Talking about death won't kill you”.
- I reached out to the HHA and went through their training program and became a Death Cafe Facilitator.

**History of Death Cafes**

- The first Death Cafe was held in 2011 in the UK in Jon Underwood's house, who said the objective of the cafes is to increase awareness of death with a view to helping people make the most of their lives. Since then, over 7000 Death Cafes have been held in over 60 countries.

**HHA runs different themes of Death Cafes- 10 altogether. I have personally run Pet Lovers and older Adults Death Cafes.**

1. Parents and Guardians - Explores how adults can intentionally help children in their lives by talking about death.
2. Pet Lovers - Identified the unique community of pet lovers and their need for space to dialogue about the dying and death of pets. Especially those who are about to lose their fur baby. I have a unique take as I have pets on both ends of the spectrum. I have a 27-year-old parrot who is basically my baby and fostered 12 different rats over the years, with a life span of 2 - 3 years.
3. LGBTQ25 - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and Two-Spirit. This community faces unique and common experiences around death, dying, loss and grief.

4. MAID Death Cafe - more a conversation and sharing of ideas and thoughts about MAID (Medical Assistance In Dying).
5. BIPOC - Black, Indigenous and People of colour.
6. Open Death Cafe - no specific objectives or themes aside from increasing everyone's awareness of death.
7. Caregivers Death Cafe - anyone who currently is or has been in a caregiver role. Gives caregivers a chance to talk openly about their feelings and thoughts.
8. Older Adult Death Cafe - for different reasons, it becomes more difficult to talk about death as we age. OADC provides every older adult an environment to freely share their hopes, plans, fears, etc. with others
9. Spoonie Death Cafe - spoonie is a form of empowerment assumed by the community of people who suffer from chronic pain and illness. HHA realized that this community faces their mortality differently and daily.
10. Neurodivergent Death Cafe - Neurodivergent Individuals (brain works differently, having traits often considered different from the norm, like in autism, ADHD, or dyslexia) often respond to loss and experiences and express grief differently than their neurotypical peers.

**Before I start a Death Cafe, I say:**

- Today's group will be a directed discussion of death, with no agenda, themes or judgement. We are all here to discuss personal thoughts and feelings, there is no counseling or offering of professional advice.
- Confidentiality is a big piece - what happens at the Death Cafe, stays at the Death Cafe. Every Death Cafe runs for 1 – ½ hours.
- I ask questions and you can put your hand up answer or we can go in a circle. I may cut you off as I want to give everyone a chance to talk. If you don't feel comfortable that's fine, just say pass.
- The purpose of the DC is getting people comfortable about death and talking about it.

**General Conversation Starters**

- Why did you come today?
- What would you tell your younger self if you had the chance to go back in time?
- How would you like to be remembered?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you are interested in learning more about HHA or attending one of their Death Cafes - look them up online <a href="https://www.homehospiceassociation.com/deathcafes">https://www.homehospiceassociation.com/deathcafes</a> as many of their Death Cafes take place on zoom.</li> <li>• I am facilitating a Pet Lovers Death Cafe at Colborne in November and an Older Adult DC at QEP in March.</li> </ul>
2.	<b>Attendance / Regrets</b> – Regrets as noted.
3.	<b>Acceptance of previous Minutes / Agenda</b> Ted Lambert, seconded by Pierre Wong. Carried.
4.	<b>Update from Rachel Fraser – No update</b>  <b>Standing Agenda Items</b>  5a. <b>Councillor Cathy Duddeck update:</b> <u>Safety concerns with e-scooters:</u>  The Halton Regional Police has provided an educational video to deal with e-scooters: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/share/r/17nDa3gAFE/">https://www.facebook.com/share/r/17nDa3gAFE/</a>  We are working on bylaws (in compliance with provincial legislation) to deal with e-scooters, e-bikes, and other mobile devices that create safety concerns in the community.  <u>Vaccinations:</u>  Reminder to get your Enhanced Flu Vaccine for Seniors and if needed the COVID booster can be administered at the same time.  RSV – you are covered if you are 75 years of age and over or immune compromised. You do require a physician’s requisition form to be provided at the time of immunization.  <u>Driveway windrow clearance applications:</u>  Applications were open as of Monday and are on a first come first served basis. The fee has increased to \$184.00 for the season and 1100 applications are available.  <u>Bulk Leaf pickup</u>  Starts on October 27 <sup>th</sup> and concludes December 5 <sup>th</sup> . They are scheduled according to your Area / Region to consult the Town’s website for your area’s pick up.

Seasonal activities:

Oakville Santa Claus Parade

Same route as last year – 9 am start time

November 15<sup>th</sup>

\*\* For the young at heart or grandparents of little ones:

Halloween Festivities:

Downtown BIA

Boos & Brews (Adult fun)

Get ready for a spooktacular night of chills and thrills at *Boos & Brews!*

**Tickets:**

Fee: \$35 each

Quantity: 20 tickets available per evening

Little Ones

Oct 31, 2025, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Participating Downtown Oakville Businesses

Spend the morning trick-or-treating through Downtown Oakville with your little ones at participating merchants along Lakeshore and side streets. More details to come

**Kerr BIA**

Save the Date for Little Tot Trick or Treat!

Hidden Treasures

November 8<sup>th</sup> 10 – 1 pm Iroquois Community Centre

Colborne Craft Sale:

November 16<sup>th</sup> 12 – 3 pm

Trafalgar Park Christmas Bazaar

November 29<sup>th</sup> 9 am – 12:30 pm

b.	<p>Trafalgar Park Community Centre</p> <p>Budget deliberations continue and you can view the proceedings on the town's YouTube page</p> <p><b>Meals on Wheels – Michelle Nichols</b></p> <p><b>Cookie Fundraiser</b> Our Terra Cotta Cookie Fundraiser has concluded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 13% increase in cookie sales and profit</li> </ul> <p><b>Fun facts:</b></p> <p><b>Top 3 Most Popular Cookies Selected in 2025</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Shortbread (baked, not frozen)</li> <li>2. Ginger</li> <li>3. Oatmeal Raisin</li> </ol> <p><b>Thanksgiving Cards</b></p> <p>St. Mildred's-Lightbourn School and Appleby College both created wonderful Thanksgiving cards for our clients that were distributed the Friday before the long weekend to everyone receiving a hot lunch.</p> <p><b>Mo's Annual Thanksgiving Dinner</b></p> <p>Mo's Family Restaurant Annual Thanksgiving Dinner was held on Monday October 13, 2025. They served up 284 meals to our community and raised just under \$2700.</p> <p><b>Fundraising:</b></p> <p>We are gearing up for a very busy season of fundraising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purdy's Holiday Chocolates</li> <li>• Giving Tuesday</li> <li>• GIVE Oakville</li> <li>• Year End Campaigns</li> </ul>
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## **Soup Program**

Thanks to a grant from the Halton Region Community Investment Fund, Oakville Meals on Wheels will be launching a “Soup to Warm the Soul” program in November. We have partnered with Oakville Community Living to help support their clients, in addition to our clients, who are at risk for food insecurity during the winter months.

## **Volunteer Opportunities**

We’re currently looking for passionate individuals to join our team to help us continue to Drive Care into our Community in the following roles:

- Board of Directors – Specialists in Fundraising, Finance, and Secretary roles
- Drivers – Weekly drivers needed, especially on Monday, Thursday, and Friday
- Spare Drivers – Help fill in for vacations or illness

If you know someone who might be interested, please help us spread the word! Get Involved – Oakville Meals on Wheels

c.

## **Senior Connector Update – Pat Moore**

Milton Sees Spike in Residential Break and Enter Occurrences

The Halton Regional Police Service (HRPS) is investigating a recent spike in residential break and enters occurring in Milton. Investigators have noted that homes backing onto, or located near, trail systems and green spaces are being specifically targeted.

Police believe organized crime groups responsible for similar offences across the region and throughout the province are behind these incidents.

Thieves are taking advantage of reduced daylight hours, with most break-ins occurring between 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. Unlit and unoccupied homes are particularly vulnerable. In many cases, suspects gain entry by smashing rear doors or windows using tools, exploiting the darkness to conceal their movements.

Before committing these crimes, suspects often conduct surveillance on neighbourhoods—waiting for residents to return home from work and then leave again for evening errands such as grocery shopping or children’s sports. Entry is typically made once they believe the home is empty.

Once inside, thieves quickly ransack bedrooms and other areas, targeting cash, jewelry, luxury items, and government identification. Most incidents are completed within minutes, with suspects fleeing undetected.

Suspects are typically dressed in dark clothing, gloves, facial coverings, and backpacks, allowing them to blend in with pedestrian traffic along residential streets and trail systems.

Police are urging residents to remain vigilant and to immediately report any suspicious persons, activity, or vehicles to police.

### **Crime Prevention Tips**

Residents are reminded of the following steps to help keep their homes secure, regardless of location:

- Lock and secure all doors, windows, and fenced yard gates.
- Consider installing shatter-resistant glass film, upgraded deadbolts, and door reinforcement hardware.
- Use a home security system, audible alarm, and CCTV cameras (interior and exterior).
- Install outdoor motion lighting to ensure your property remains well-lit.
- Leave interior lights, music, or other audible noise on when leaving the home.
- Dogs can serve as a deterrent.
- Trim hedges and greenery to improve visibility around your property.
- Notify trusted neighbours if you'll be away for an extended period and consider a house sitter.
- Maintain the appearance that your home is occupied (e.g., lawn care, snow removal).
- Store valuables in a secure, well-hidden safe or location.
- Review your home insurance policy to ensure adequate coverage for valuables.

Anyone with information related to these incidents is asked to contact the 1 District Criminal Investigations Bureau at 905-825-4777, ext. 2416.

### **Distraction: Thefts Targeting Halton Seniors**

The Halton Regional Police Service (HRPS) is warning residents about a concerning trend of distraction thefts targeting seniors across Halton Region and the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA).

In these incidents, suspects approach seniors in public and engage them by asking for directions or some false gesture of goodwill such as requesting prayers for a sick family member. Next, the suspect will distract the victim with hugging, or by placing inexpensive

	<p>costume jewelry on them as a so-called “gift.” During this interaction, the suspects remove valuable jewelry already worn by the victim.</p> <p>Burlington has seen a recent spike in these thefts during September, though similar incidents have also been reported in Oakville, Milton, and Halton Hills.</p> <p>Victims are most often targeted while walking in public areas and approached roadside. Suspects are typically female and will exit a vehicle to initiate contact.</p> <p>The HRPS is asking residents to be vigilant and to share the following safety tips with senior family members and friends who may be at risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay alert to your surroundings, particularly in parking lots or less busy areas.</li> <li>• Avoid displaying expensive or sentimental jewelry in public; keep it covered when possible.</li> <li>• Do not allow strangers into your personal space or allow them to touch you. If someone attempts to place an object on you, treat it as a warning sign.</li> <li>• If approached by a stranger under suspicious circumstances, walk away and seek help if necessary.</li> </ul> <p>While jewelry is the primary target, thieves may also attempt to steal wallets, purses, or phones.</p> <p><i>“These despicable acts targeting our most vulnerable members of our community are alarming”, said Superintendent, Dave Costantini, 3 District. “The reprehensible individuals involved in this type of crime are members of travelling organized crime groups. They often utilize rental vehicles and stay in neighbouring motels and hotels. We are asking anyone, including those who work in our transportation, hospitality industry, to call police or crime stoppers if you see anything suspicious.”</i></p> <p>If you believe you have been the victim of a distraction theft, call 911 immediately. Try to recall as many details as possible, including the suspect’s physical description, clothing, and any vehicle involved (make, model, licence plate, etc.).</p>
d.	<p><b>enVISION Oakville Update – Ruth Sheridan.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eighth year of operation</li> <li>• Shared concerns provided feedback during the meeting.</li> </ul>
e.	<p><b>OAAC Darlene Cox</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No speaker at this month’s meeting. Open discussion about the purpose of OAAC and how to encourage people from the community to get involved.</li> <li>• No longer reporting to the Regional Council but unclear why they are not.</li> </ul>



f.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working on a senior's directory. Micheline and Pat are interested in supporting this project, Darlene to send information and the link. Meeting will be held the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays from 1-3.</li> </ul> <p><b>Older Adult Isolation Table</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to meet, however grant funding has not been secured.</li> </ul> <p><b>g. Links2Wellbeing – Kelly Meeussen</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In October, Jolaine had one Links2Wellbeing referral from a Halton Healthcare Hospital Social Worker in the Neuro Rehab department. The Town has partnered with the hospital to begin a Stronger &amp; Steadier fitness program starting in November. Jolaine gave the Links2Wellbeing referral &amp; information packages to the Registered Physiotherapist in charge of the Geriatrics Falls Clinic at the Oakville Hospital. Look forward to receiving more referrals from the Oakville Hospital.</li> </ul>
6.	<p><b>Business Arising</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Mary Dimas, Sustainable Transportation Program Coordinator, Transportation and Engineering Oakville – Presenters for November meeting</li> <li>b. Councillor Gittings/Janet Haslett-Theall – Midtown Development Project, November meeting</li> <li>c. Debra Pope – Cyber Security – January</li> <li>d. MPP Stephen Crawford – asked to speak but no confirmed date.</li> </ul>
7.	<p><b>Information Sharing –</b></p>
8.	<p><b>Next meeting – Wednesday, November 26 at 1:30 p.m. at Colborne Centre</b></p> <p><b>Julie shares her regrets.</b></p>
9.	<p><b>Meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.</b></p>