

Patterson pledges support for senior citizens council

By RALPH R. ECHTINAW
STAFF WRITER

You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours.

That's basically the message Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson had for the county's Senior Citizens Advisory Council Monday as he welcomed the group into the intrigue of county government.

Created by former county executive Dan Murphy in 1987, the council comprises 27 members, each chosen by the county commissioner whose district they hail from. The concept is that the council should collect, collate and germinate ideas regarding how county government policies might account for and/or help Oakland's 118,000 seniors.

However, for the first six months of Patterson's first term in office the council members worried that he didn't care about them and would be happy to see the group dissolved through neglect.

"We've got a new county executive and he doesn't like us," said first vice chairman Leo Mahany on June 14.

But Patterson proved to be a genial county executive Monday

'We're not going to have any problems with Brooks.'

Rosemary Clark
senior council chairwoman

as he sat down at a council meeting and told the seniors that he'll help them if they help him.

"Let me know, and I'll do what you want to do," he said. "You are an influence in this community, certainly in this government."

The caveat is that Patterson also expects the council to come through on his behalf if "I need a letter from you, (or) I need a spokesperson."

Patterson apologized to the seniors for not talking to them sooner. "We got swamped with all sorts of problems," he said. "You can't imagine the number of things that I was being pulled in different directions by."

Patterson also announced the appointment of public health nurse Kay Gallagher as his liaison to the council. Gallagher will attend all future council meetings.

Council chairwoman Rosemary

Clark, a Bloomfield Hills resident, said Patterson surprised her with his generosity.

What had she expected from him? "Hi and by," she said.

And now? "We're not going to have any problems with Brooks."

Council member Bill Liba, a Farmington resident, said he thinks Patterson "understands pretty much what the needs of senior citizens are."

Second vice chairman Lou Kondur, a West Bloomfield Township inhabitant, called Patterson "very sincere. He appointed a coordinator. Now we know who to talk to. I think it was a very pleasant surprise that he came down and spoke so positively of our endeavors."

Mahany, who wrote off Patterson in June, now says the county executive has "sort of blessed us. Before, we felt like outsiders. Now I feel more like coming to meetings."

The Senior Citizens Advisory Council meets at 1 p.m. the third Monday of each month in the third-floor conference room of the Executive Office Building at the county complex in Pontiac. For additional information, call Clark at 628-1359.

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