

Family Council Meeting – Minutes

Topic: Planning the Future of Family Council (2026)

Proposed Evolution: Family Council → *Family Circle*

Date: February 24, 2026

Time: 6:15 p.m.

Format: Zoom

Attendees: Angela, Amanda, Elizabeth, Katherine

Facilitator: Anne

Purpose of the Meeting

The purpose of the meeting was to explore whether the current Family Council model continues to meet families' needs and to test future-facing ideas for how families may want to connect in 2026. The discussion focused on:

- A potential rebrand from *Family Council* to *Family Circle*
- A possible shift in format from evening Zoom meetings to daytime, in-person, site-based gatherings
- Challenging the assumption that low participation reflects lack of interest rather than structural or scheduling barriers

The session was exploratory in nature, with the intent to gather honest feedback rather than make decisions.

Opening and Framing

Anne opened the meeting by inviting participants to reflect on the future of Family Council and whether its current structure fits families' needs.

Chat Warm-Up Question:

“What is one word that describes how Family Council currently feels to you?”

Themes from Participant Responses:

- Sense of community and connection, particularly with others who understand the experience of having a family member in long-term care
- Family Council as a support group that reduces isolation and allows for sharing personal experiences
- Appreciation for guest speakers, alongside a desire for more advocacy-focused discussion

- Value in mentoring and supporting new families
- First-time attendees expressed appreciation for finding a community while navigating complex caregiving situations

Context: Why Change Might Be Needed

Anne outlined several factors prompting the discussion:

- Participation patterns have shifted over time
- Evening Zoom meetings do not work for all families
- Some families are seeking connection without formal governance structures

Participants were invited to react openly to proposed ideas with an emphasis on what works, what does not, and what may be worth trying.

Discussion Area 1: Rebrand – *Family Council* to *Family Circle*

Overview:

The idea of renaming Family Council to *Family Circle* was introduced as a way to reflect connection, sharing, and collaboration rather than formality.

Key Feedback and Discussion Points:

- The term “*Council*” can feel formal, intimidating, or policy-focused
- “*Circle*” was viewed by some as more inclusive, relational, and supportive
- Participants suggested that different names could reflect different purposes, such as advocacy, education, or support
- Some families prefer evening meetings and value Zoom for accessibility, particularly for those living outside the region
- Awareness of Family Council is limited; improved promotion and communication were suggested
- Email was identified as a preferred communication channel
- Suggestions included more structured workshops on Zoom, potentially using breakout groups

Discussion Area 2: Format Shift – Daytime, In-Person, Site-Based Meetings

Overview:

A potential shift from evening Zoom meetings to daytime, in-person, site-based gatherings

was discussed, including the idea of hosting brown-bag lunch-and-learn sessions at Vancouver Lodge and Burnaby Lodge.

Key Feedback and Discussion Points:

- Daytime, in-person meetings may deepen connection for some families
- Accessibility concerns were raised, as in-person daytime meetings may exclude others
- On-site meetings could feel more meaningful for some but more challenging for others
- Interest was expressed in balancing educational content with open discussion
- Participants discussed preferences around meeting frequency (monthly vs. quarterly) and format (drop-in vs. structured agenda)

Additional Topics Raised

- Interest in partnerships with external organizations focused on advocacy and policy work
- Suggestions for guest speakers, including individuals involved in family advocacy and policy
- Communication gaps when recreation programming changes and the need to notify residents and families
- Interest in caregiver supports such as wellness offerings and shared spaces
- Operational concerns were raised related to equipment and facilities

Next Steps and Follow-Up

- Anne to look at setting up in person meetings, maybe bi-monthly??, at each site, during the day as a drop-in social time