

City of Ashland  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION (APRC)  
ASHLAND SENIOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ASAC)  
Meeting Minutes  
May 6, 2019

**Committee Members Present:**

- Anne Bellegia
- Rob Casserly
- Mike Gardiner
- Mike Hersh
- Mary Russell-Miller
- Stef Seffinger
- Sandy Theis, Chair

**Staff Members Present:**

- Michael Black
- Isleen Glatt
- Natalie Mettler

**CALL TO ORDER:**

This is called the meeting to order at 3:30pm at Ashland Senior Center, 1699 Homes Ave in Ashland.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Gardiner/Russell-Miller m/s to approve the minutes of April 8, 2019. Voice vote – ALL AYES. Motion passed.

**ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA:**

None.

**PUBLIC INPUT:**

None.

**PRESENTATION: AARP AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES (Liz James, AARP Volunteer Leader, & Connie Saldaña, RVCOG SDS Planner):**

Liz James, the AARP volunteer spearheading Talent's Age-Friendly Communities initiative, stated that the on-the-ground infrastructure for AARP programs is run by volunteers. James has a personal interest in advocacy, housing and transportation, which she is now applying to her AARP work with the Network of Age-Friendly Communities (NAFC). Referring to the one-page summary about NAFC (included in the meeting packet) and her presentation agenda (see attached), she stressed the benefits to municipalities of joining NAFC: the added recognition and visibility of membership can increase funding opportunities and attract new residents as well as tourists. She stated that NAFC provides a critical framework, resources and tools for communities to become age-friendly. There are currently six municipalities in the state that are part of NAFC; AARP's goal is for Oregon to become an age-friendly state.

Bellegia asked about potential downsides of joining NAFC, such as financial costs. James said that there aren't any costs, and she doesn't see downsides. She walked through the NAFC Program Cycle (included in the meeting packet) for ASAC to better understand the steps a municipality needs to take to become age-friendly. Bellegia asked ASAC if they would commit to shepherd this process for the City of Ashland, as James said ASAC is an ideal point of NAFC ownership for Ashland. Theis said ASAC would need time for discussion after this presentation before deciding their role in NAFC membership for Ashland. This decision will be an agenda item at the next ASAC meeting.

Hersh expressed concern about making Ashland an Age-Friendly Community since the hills in town mean that different neighborhoods will have varying needs. He feels that the City tends to prioritize lower-lying areas and not focus on municipal services, such as public transportation and street maintenance, for those living above 2500 feet within city limits. James responded that the NAFC program has the mechanisms to address such diverse needs and is all-inclusive for all communities.

James identified AARP's Livability Index (<https://livabilityindex.aarp.org/>) as a useful web-based tool for assessing a community's rating in seven key categories (Housing, Neighborhood, Transportation, Environment, Health, Engagement, Opportunity). Ashland is rated 54 out of 100 (Talent is 56 and Medford is 53). Ashland's highest score is 69 for Health (69) and lowest is 45 for Neighborhood. She noted that this index demonstrates that Ashland is already well on its way to becoming an age-friendly community, noted some steps already taken by the City in that direction. Other aspects of Ashland align with NAFC guidelines, such as: the Senior Services Division and its variety of programs, the availability of senior housing, the Asante Community Hospital, curb cuts in ramps, and the breadth of local cultural and social offerings.

A crucial component of NAFC is lifelong housing. Connie Saldaña summarized the history and main elements of the Rogue Valley Council of Governments (RVCOG) Lifelong Housing Certification program, noting that lifelong housing is beneficial for everyone in the community, not just seniors. Such homes are more convenient and attractive than institutional options for older adults, and the age-friendly features are valuable for all age groups. Saldaña reviewed the Lifelong Housing Certification Checklist and flyer included in the meeting packet. She noted that the challenge is to convince builders that building such certified homes is also in their financial interest, and she named some area companies that have already adopted the Checklist guidelines. This is program that was recently honored with an Aging Innovation Award by the National Area Agencies on Aging, and its terminology has been adopted by the Multiple Listing Service used by realtors nationally. Saldaña's goal is to continue to raise awareness about this program and have it become the national standard for home-building. She has already worked with Linda Reid, the Housing Program Specialist with the City of Ashland, to get Lifelong Housing Certification named as a Value by the City; it is now included in the City's Comprehensive and Consolidated Plans.

Gardiner asked who decided for Talent to join NAFC, and how quickly that decision was made. James responded that the Talent City Council and Mayor made the decision and moved quickly. She will provide a sample NAFC application and Mayor's letter for ASAC. Russell-Miller asked if ASAC is the right place for this process to start. Gardiner replied that more research is needed to determine if it would fall under the Senior Services Division, in which case it would be under the Parks Commission umbrella, and they would make the recommendation to the City Council to join NAFC. Seffinger reported that she already spoke with the Mayor and City Council about Ashland becoming an Age-Friendly Community a couple of years ago, and the Mayor was supportive. Bellegia volunteered to help drafting the application and letter. Theis advised ASAC to retain a strong role in promoting Ashland joining NAFC; ASAC needs to remain engaged and invested in this process, not just push it off on the City Council. Seffinger cautioned against waiting too long to begin this process, noting that the City's Housing Strategy Implementation Plan was being presented that evening. This is another opportunity for ASAC to represent seniors needs, as they are already doing with various allies such as Seffinger as Council liaison to the Planning Commission and Katharine Danner as an appointed member on the Transportation Commission.

#### **PROPOSAL FOR QUARTERLY LISTENING CIRCLE:**

Theis reported that she had a phone conversation a couple of months ago with a member of the public who continues to be dissatisfied with the changes at the Senior Center in the last two years. She asked that SSD bring back listening circles that took place in the past. Glatt shared that she had followed up with this patron, who said her interest was in listening sessions modeled like those held by the Ashland Senior Program Ad Hoc Committee (ASPAC) in 2017-2018. Glatt believes such sessions could help patrons feel more comfortable with ongoing changes. She and Mettler had held a spontaneous and productive listening session with lunch patrons about the scheduling changes affecting the Repair SO sewing repair program; that session seemed effective to hear concerns, dispel rumors, and answer questions.

Theis and Glatt suggested that ASAC members rotate to partner with Glatt in holding such listening sessions, perhaps quarterly. Gardiner suggested running a trial session first, and to try a different model if the public is not responsive to the format Glatt proposed. Gardiner said that APRC Listening Sessions are usually dedicated to a particular subject, but what Glatt is proposing could be more open, such as general issues related to seniors. Theis recommended having items of interest to discuss in case the public doesn't bring their own issues. Bellegia echoed Gardiner in cautioning against committing, at this time, to holding such Listening Sessions quarterly. Theis proposed starting with a trial session to be held by her and Glatt.

#### **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:**

##### **A. Public Awareness (Russell-Miller, convener)**

Russell-Miller summarized subcommittee progress on public awareness. (See attached report.)

The subcommittee met and is expecting Russell-Miller's student intern to submit drafts of a brochure and marketing plan for the SSD by May 20, 2019. Hersh will post event flyers at key locations around Ashland. Russell-Miller asked how and where the Senior News newsletter is distributed. Mettler answered that it is sent out to subscribers in print and email form, posted on the APRC Facebook page, and will be available in print form at the following locations: the Chamber of Commerce, the Grove, the library, and soon at the YMCA. Hersh asked if SSD staff has connected with the Chamber greeters, and whether they have those emails for their distribution list. Glatt responded that it would be helpful for the Public Awareness subcommittee to collect such emails for SSD staff to use; she is also cultivating more professional contacts with whom to share SSD promotional materials.

**B. Advocacy (Bellegia, convener)**

Bellegia reported that the committee had not met this month. This reported that she and Glatt attended the Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVTD) Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund Advisory Committee (STIFAC) meeting on April 11, 2019, where they advocated for two of the projects which would improve public transportation access for Ashland seniors. On May 7, 2019, they will attend the City Council Business Meeting to read the ASAC thank you letter for the City's naming of "All-Age Friendly Community" as one of the twelve Values in their Goals process; This will read the letter during the Mayor's Announcements and mention ASAC's educating themselves on the issue today.

**C. Education Programs (Mettler, staff)**

Mettler summarized staff progress on Education Programming. (See attached report.) Casserly informed ASAC that Jami Hanna, the new Active Older Adult Programs Coordinator at the Ashland YMCA, is working on developing their education programming for seniors. The YMCA has significant assets, membership and revenue to support such programming. Casserly is helping them ensure a successful launch with these programs, and he recommended the SSD also provide directional assistance. Such collaboration promises benefits for the local senior community, as a rising tide raises all boats. Glatt noted that SSD staff will be meeting with Hanna later in the month.

**STANDING REPORTS:**

**A. APRC update, if any pertaining to seniors**

None.

**B. City Council update, if any pertaining to seniors**

Seffinger recommended ASAC send a member or representative to the May 7, 2019 City Council Business Meeting, at which the "Revitalize Downtown Ashland" Transportation and Growth Management (TGM) project will be discussed, and appointments made to the Citizen and Technical Advisory Committees. Seffinger stated that there needs to be an advocate for seniors on at least the Citizen Advisory Committee.

Unfortunately, no one from ASAC was available to attend, nor did anyone have suggestions for other advocates.

**C. SSD Superintendent report**

Due to lack of remaining time, Glatt directed ASAC to review the report she included in the meeting packet.

**ITEMS FROM ASAC MEMBERS:**

Cassery won't be able to attend the June 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. Theis won't be able to attend the July 8<sup>th</sup> ASAC meeting; ASAC will decide at the June meeting whether to cancel the July meeting or ask Vice Chair Hersh to chair.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:04 pm.

Next meeting: June 10, 3:30-5pm, Ashland Senior Center, 1699 Homes Avenue

Respectfully submitted,

Natalie Mettler, Senior & Adult Services Coordinator  
Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission

These minutes are not a verbatim record. The narrative has been condensed and paraphrased at times to reflect the material presented, discussions, and decisions made. APRC ASAC Meetings are digitally recorded; the recordings are available upon request.