

City of Ashland
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION (APRC)
ASHLAND SENIOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ASAC)
Meeting Minutes
June 10, 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

Committee Members Absent:

- Rob Casserly – planned absence

CALL TO ORDER:

This is called the meeting to order at 3:31pm at Ashland Senior Center, 1699 Homes Ave in Ashland.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Hersh/Gardiner m/s to approve the minutes of May 6, 2019. Voice vote – ALL AYES, except Russell-Miller, who abstained. Motion passed.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA:

Seffinger had a message from Ashland at Home. Put under Items from ASAC Members. Bellegia requested an update on hiring. Put under Superintendent's Report.

PUBLIC INPUT:

None.

AARP AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES – DISCUSSION & NEXT STEPS:

Hersh noted that Ashland's physical landscape is rather diverse compared to most small towns, so the focus should be on age-friendly *communities* within Ashland rather than the whole town. Bellegia responded that AARP's Age-Friendly Community Program only requires that a city make improvements in its eight domains of livability, not that it absolutely meets all criteria in all locations. This directed ASAC to consider first whether they would support Ashland becoming age-friendly both in principle and in practice, before considering the mechanisms by which to attain this goal. She passed on a message from Casserly, who is in favor of the age-friendly goal only if ASAC members commit to work on it, so that the work does not fall on staff, who have other obligations.

Bellegia framed the “Age-Friendly Community” as analogous to “Bee City” status, which is largely an aspirational model; ASAC members would do education and advocacy, rather than implementation. Seffinger added that moving towards becoming age-friendly requires many different parts of the City working together, to address such issues as access to health care, public buildings, street design, etc.

Seffinger explained that the Mayor would begin the formal process by writing a letter to AARP stating the City’s intention to become an Age-Friendly Community. The Mayor has already indicated he is willing to send the letter. Bellegia noted that part of the Age-Friendly process is doing an assessment, which ASAC can help with. She volunteered to work on the assessment.

Black suggested that since ASAC advises the City as well as APRC, and there is no financial obligation to APRC in this process, ASAC should move the process forward by making the recommendation to the City Council, copying the Parks Commissioners on all communication. Glatt added that APRC approved all the ASAC goals, including advocacy and promoting an age-friendly community. In addition to Bellegia, Theis, Russell-Miller and Gardiner volunteered to work on the required application and assessment. Seffinger noted that she is already promoting the Age-Friendly Community in her role as City Councilor.

Bellegia/Russell-Miller m/s to recommend to the Mayor to write a letter of intent and for ASAC to draft the letter and application to become an Age-Friendly Community. Voice vote – ALL AYES, except Hersh, who abstained. Motion passed. Theis, as ASAC Chair, will reach out to the Mayor.

ASHLAND SENIOR CENTER ROOM USE & FEES – INPUT ON PROPOSAL:

Referring to the memo in the meeting packet, Glatt stated that the goal of this proposal is to maximize value for seniors while maintaining transparency and consistency in the facility’s rental policy.

Hersh voiced concern with the suggested rental fees, noting that many seniors over 70 years on fixed incomes would hesitate to apply for available SSD scholarships that could offset the burden of higher class fees. Glatt noted that rent is not being charged to volunteer instructors teaching free classes, just those instructors collecting fees, and she did not expect class fees to rise much if at all. In order to be more sustainable, SSD has to collect more rent, but the proposed discounted rental rate of \$10/hour favors programs that serve seniors. (The regular room rental rate is \$20/hour.)

Gardiner asked whether any of the rental fee tiers carry more weight in terms of priority for room use (i.e. paying vs non-paying activities). Glatt answered that SSD’s priority is to not revenue but to offer a the most robust and diverse set of senior activities. However, paying programs help support the free programs. Bellegia added that the new Jacksonville Community Center is successfully generating revenue with facility rentals, and suggested Glatt reach out to

find what's working for them. Renting out the Senior Center on weekends and evenings could provide revenue without conflicting with senior activities.

SENIOR VOLUNTEER FAIR – INPUT

Glatt reported a planned Senior Volunteer Fair on January 22, as described in the memo in the meeting packet. Glatt added that in addition to co-sponsor Community Volunteer Network, Asante Ashland Hospital has now joined as a co-sponsor for the fair. Glatt highlighted how this event will be a win-win for the Senior Services Division (public relations opportunities and attracting new patrons) and partner organizations (recruiting needed volunteers). ASAC and SSD staff brainstormed a list of area organizations to invite to recruit at the event.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Public Awareness (Russell-Miller, convener)

Russell-Miller stated that the Public Awareness subcommittee met and discussed potential templates for promotional materials for the Senior Services Division (brochures, flyers, posters, rack cards), which she will present to Glatt before they are brought to ASAC for feedback. Bellegia added that the Senior Services Division will be represented at the OLLI Open House on July 20, 2019.

B. Advocacy (Bellegia, convener)

Bellegia shared that she will be working on advocating for making Ashland an Age-Friendly Community. Seffinger reported that she has done some advocacy with the City Planning Commission around universal housing and options for seniors. Bellegia wondered how to attract more services or businesses to Ashland to expand local capacity for senior assisted living options.

C. Education Programs (Mettler, staff)

Mettler reported that the subcommittee did not meet this month and no new education events were scheduled. Staff is working on fine tuning educational programming, which includes: streamlining the scheduling process, implementing a preparation checklist, presenting a brief welcome and overview of Senior Services Division services before events, and collecting participant evaluations. Staff has also met with the Public Awareness subcommittee to collaborate on strategies and action to increase public awareness of future education and other programs.

STANDING REPORTS:

A. APRC update, if any pertaining to seniors

Black reported that City Council approved the APRC budget last week and confirmed that the Senior Services Division is fully funded for the next two years.

B. City Council update, if any pertaining to seniors

Seffinger reported that the City Council has been primarily focused on next biennium's budget, working on balancing cuts with finding new revenue sources (fees, bonds, etc) and forming two new Ad Hoc Committees to ensure future budgets are more sustainable.

C. SSD Superintendent report

Glatt directed ASAC to the report she included in the meeting packet. Glatt reported that the Senior Services Office Assistant II job posting will close on June 17th; she is currently assembling the interview committee which will include a community representative. Glatt and Mettler are sad to lose the current office assistant, who needs to move out of state, but are optimistic about finding a replacement with the same good balance of personality and office skills.

ITEMS FROM ASAC MEMBERS:

Seffinger reported that Ashland at Home (ashlandathome.org) Board is striving to be more connected to all parts of their community. Daniel Seffinger, Ashland at Home Board Vice President, is seeking to meet with ASAC members for input on how to maximize efficiency in serving a broader spectrum of the community. Theis and Bellegia offered to meet informally with Daniel Seffinger. Bellegia recommended Ashland at Home contact the Community Volunteer Network for additional connections and mutual benefits.

Bellegia suggested that with increased interest in having ASAC members on various Boards and Commissions, ASAC may need to grow to be able to fill these needs. Glatt will research the APRC policy and ASAC bylaws about the size of ASAC.

FUTURE MEETINGS:

Chair Theis will be away on July 8; Vice Chair Hersh agreed to chair that month's meeting. Russell-Miller will be unable to attend the August 12 meeting. Glatt and Seffinger will be away and unable to attend the September 9 meeting.

Gardiner/Russell-Miller m/s to cancel the September ASAC meeting. Voice vote – ALL AYES. Bellegia requested that a discussion enlarging ASAC membership and frequency of meetings be an agenda item at a future meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:59 pm.
Next meeting: July 8, 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.