

City of Ashland  
ASHLAND PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION (APRC)  
ASHLAND SENIOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ASAC)  
Meeting Minutes  
January 11, 2021

**Committee Members Present:**

- Anne Bellegia, Chair
- Mike Hersh
- Mike Gardiner, Co-Chair
- Kathy McNeal
- Mary Russell-Miller
- Stef Seffinger
- Sandy Theis

**Staff Present:**

- Michael Black
- Isleen Glatt
- Natalie Mettler

**CALL TO ORDER**

Bellegia called the meeting to order at 3:33pm.

**OPENING**

Bellegia acknowledged and welcomed the citizen guests present:

- Kathy McNeal (new ASAC member),
- Barbara Jarvis (potential ASAC member)
- Eddie Wallace (potential ASAC member)
- Gary Shaff (20's Enough presenter, Climate Policy Commission)
- Bryan Sohl (20's Enough presenter, Conservation and Climate Outreach Commission)
- Mark Brouillard (20's Enough presenter, Transportation Commission)
- Linda Peterson-Adams (Transportation Commission)
- Jackie Bachman (OHRA, Housing and Human Services Commission)

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion:** Theis/Seffinger m/s to approve the minutes from November 9, 2020. Voice vote – Russell-Miller abstained as she was not present at the November 9 meeting; all others voted AYE. Minutes approved.

**ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA**

None.

**PUBLIC INPUT**

None.

**ASAC MEMBERSHIP**

**a. Appoint new member Kathy McNeal**

Bellegia introduced Kathy McNeal, a longtime volunteer at Ashland Senior Center who most recently has been conducting outreach calls to local seniors in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Alameda fire. McNeal specified that she has volunteered with Food & Friends at Ashland Senior Center for the past three years, and helped the Senior Services Division (SSD) in the office, at events such as the 2020 Senior Volunteer Fair and ice cream socials, and making outreach calls for Senior Phone Buddy, Adopt a Neighbor Ashland, and check in. Bellegia appreciated Kathy's role in extending the SSD's outreach capacity. Gardiner, as APRC Chair, officially appointed McNeal as a new ASAC member.

**b. Review member term dates, intentions to renew**

Bellegia & Hersh indicated their intentions to renew their ASAC terms. Russell-Miller will make her decision by the next ASAC meeting. Jarvis and Wallace are attending to consider applying to join ASAC.

**c. Member recruitment update**

Bellegia stated that the application to apply for ASAC is available online, but that anyone interested can also talk to her directly. She noted that it is good for ASAC to strategically recruit for diversity.

**20'S ENOUGH INITIATIVE – REQUEST FOR ENDORSEMENT**

Shaff referred to the executive summary “Evidence, Safety and Economic Benefits of Reduced Maximum Speed Limits – In Ashland, Oregon” included in the meeting packet. He stated that reducing the speed limit by 5 miles would have a huge impact on bicyclist and pedestrian safety as well as cost savings for the City. The lack of sidewalks in parts of Ashland is an obstacle to mobility equity.

Sohl outlined the financial implications in a document entitled “[Financial Implications of a Reduction in Speed Limit](#).” He reported that the cost savings to the community far outweigh the hard costs, such for enforcement, infrastructure and signage. Bellegia asked for clarification about financial savings for the City rather than individuals.

Russell-Miller asked if this proposal has buy-in from the Ashland Police Department. Brouillard said he had spoken with Officer MacLennan, who is in charge of traffic enforcement, and shared that the Police Department supports the proposal for residential areas, but needs to look into it more for main thoroughfares and county roads, where the priority is to keep traffic moving. Hersh asked about enforcement in residential areas. Sohl responded that more conversation is needed with the Ashland Police Department about enforcement, but suggested that technology could be used to take a license plate photo of any offending drivers.

Theis asked if this proposal requires a 20 mile speed limit on all streets, or just a 5 mile reduction in existing speed limits. Schaff clarified that the Oregon statute allows for a speed reduction of 5 miles on non-arterial roads, and that this proposal is more about starting the conversation on making streets safer for all to increase livability. Asking for ASAC’s endorsement, to help get the City Council’s endorsement, is one of many steps the group is taking. Bellegia noted that endorsement implies speaking on behalf of ASAC’s constituents, who are seniors, working adult children of seniors and senior tourists, and who are not a homogenous group. Theis added that not all would necessarily embrace this proposal, although she believes it fits well with the Livable Ashland Initiative. Sohl noted that seniors are the most vulnerable in terms of serious injury from accidents, independent of the mode of transportation.

Black asked if this proposal would accomplish the goals of increasing safety and livability. Reducing speeds on some roads is a good idea, but not the only idea, and other changes would also have to be made. He identified two issues with the current proposal: 1) the proposal needs further development before endorsement, and 2) this project would need engineering, enforcement, education, encouragement and evaluation, not just adapting posted signage. Hersh supported Black, adding that a more thorough evaluation of the local impact of reducing speed limits is needed. Russell-Miller also supported further investigation, as well as more attention to cost benefits and evidence-based support for the benefits of reducing speed limits. Bellegia added that there are still questions about the best methods to achieve the goals of safety and livability.

**Motion:** Seffinger/Russel-Miller m/s that ASAC supports exploration of improved street safety for all ages, including exploration of lowering of speed limits as one possible tool.

Hersh stated that a motion would not need to name reducing speeds, just the goal of increasing safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. Gardiner supported the notion, but is uncomfortable with endorsing or even supporting the current motion without buy in from the Police and Public Works Departments. Bellegia summarized that ASAC members are wanting more information and investigation before endorsing or supporting the current proposal.

**Amended Motion:** Seffinger/Russell-Miller m/s ASAC supports exploration of improved pedestrian and bicyclist safety for all ages. Voice vote – AYES: Seffinger; NAYS: Bellegia, Gardiner, Hersh, Russell-Miller and Theis. Motion did not pass.

Bellgia stated again that more information is needed and asked the '20s Enough Initiative group to return after further investigation. Theis would want to know which City staff would be involved and whether they support the goals. Bellegia also wants more input from the Police and Public Works Departments. Black noted that a similar motion also did not pass in the Transportation Commission, and that ASAC does not need to vote in order to support active transportation for seniors. He noted that another barrier is procedural, because ASAC advises the Parks Commission and not City Council. He added that the Director of Public Works, Scott Fleury, would look into the current proposal to tie it into the City Transportation Plan.

## SENIOR SERVICES DIVISION GOALS UPDATES

Glatt referred to her Progress Report on Goals in the meeting packet. She highlighted the following in each category, where the SSC has made remarkable progress:

- 1) Build partnerships: SSD progress in building partnerships allowed for expanded programming and was vital in 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic and Alameda fire crises, enabling SSD to link the community to relevant resources.
- 2) Identify and reach frail or vulnerable seniors: SSD was already helping frail or vulnerable seniors connected to Ashland Senior Center, but was able to expand during the pandemic to make outreach calls to everyone with a phone number on record with SSD, as well as Ashland Disaster Registry clients. Ultimately, this pandemic outreach model may serve better than the previously proposed Gatekeeper model to reach frail or vulnerable seniors.
- 3) Raise community awareness: Effective community outreach was visible in rising participation rates in programs and services, but progress was cut short by the pandemic.
- 4) Advocate for the needs of Ashland seniors: The City and APRC signed on to the AARP Age-Friendly Community Network. The Livable Ashland Initiative is undertaking the work of the required 3-year process of community assessment and planning.
- 5) Evaluate/maintain/improve/add facilities: SSD facilitated some major improvements to Ashland Senior Center, including replacing the deck, interior painting, adding bike parking, and installation of sound dampening panels in the dining room. The improvements have freshened Ashland Senior Center's look, in line with the goal of broadening SSD's audience.
- 6) Expand programs: SSD now offers monthly educational and/or social programs, rather than just occasionally. A significantly larger audience is also being served. This meets the mission of providing tools for healthy aging in addition to recreation.
- 7) Expand services: SSD started offering additional services to connect community seniors to needed resources during the pandemic.

Glatt added her personal assessment that all original ASAC goals continue to be important, but perhaps some new strategies to reach goals is needed. Gardiner cautioned against burdening staff with additional goals, but ASAC could add goals if any specific needs are not being addressed. Theis agreed and noted the difficulty of adding goals as the pandemic continues, noting also the remarkable progress by SSD in meeting current

goals. She suggested a separate meeting to reassess strategies. Bellegia added it would be better to revisit goal setting in the new fiscal year (July 2021 or later). Glatt noted that SSD will likely have a constrained budget in the coming budget biennium, with no funding for new goals. Bellegia asked Glatt to let ASAC know of any risk of contraction of services and whether there is a need to engage in advocacy and education to the new City Council about the restructuring and priorities of SSD. Seffinger added that ASAC could clarify to the City Council that SSD expanded their service role through new supportive programs during the pandemic, and that SSD has effectively been serving as the social service arm of the City Council, providing services to the entire community. Glatt and Black stated they would get back to ASAC when the budget process is further along.

## **STANDING REPORTS**

### **a. APRC Update**

Gardiner had no senior-specific items from the Parks Commission to report. He will report on the budget process at the next meeting.

### **b. City Council Update**

Seffinger reported that the City Council approved the development of a new commission on social justice [Race and Social Equity Commission]. Regarding the City budget review, she noted there will be constraints, but not as bad as was initially feared. The City Council is also in the process of hiring a City Manager and assigning Councilors as staff liaisons to various City Commissions and Committees.

### **c. Education Report**

Mettler highlighted the upcoming SSD educational presentations: "Identity, Meaning and Purpose for Aging Adults," to be presented by Anne Bellegia on January 27, and "Ashland Radio Hour," to be performed by The OLLI Players, on February 10.

### **d. Senior Services Superintendent Report**

Glatt referred to her report included in the meeting packet.

## **ITEMS FROM ASAC MEMBERS AND WORK GROUPS**

### **a. Livable Ashland (Theis)**

A smaller work group of the Livable Ashland Steering Committee is working on a needs assessment in the 8 areas outlined by AARP and the WHO. They will then present their data to the rest of the Steering Committee to identify gaps and next steps. Jeanne Stallman (SOU), Lee Shapley (Asante) and representatives from Ashland YMCA and Jackson County Library Services (JCLS) have joined the Steering Committee. The group has also reached out to the Ashland Chamber of Commerce and other potential stakeholder groups. Bellegia noted the benefit of engaging with SOU, YMCA and JCLS in making sure that the Livable Ashland initiative serves all ages.

### **b. Other Items from ASAC Members**

Seffinger advocated for seniors' access to the COVID-19 vaccine. Other states have prioritized seniors' vaccinations more than Oregon, and/or are expediting the process of vaccinating seniors in other ways. Bellegia suggested inquiring with Jackson County Health and Human Services (JCHHS) about the timeline and plan for vaccinating area seniors. Theis added that ASAC could advocate for a plan if there is not currently one in place. Mettler has reached out to JCHHS about their immunization phone line and reported that staff is actively monitoring other sources of information, such as Oregon Health Authority (OHA). Glatt shared the possibility of holding a drive-through vaccination clinic at Ashland Senior Center, but more needs to be known about the channels through which the vaccine will arrive in Jackson County.

**Motion:** Seffinger/Theis m/s for Bellegia and Glatt to draft a letter to JCHHS about the need for better communication of information to the public and a clear plan to avoid hardships for seniors, such as long lines at mass vaccination clinics. Voice vote – all AYES.

Russell-Miller suggested reaching out to Tanya Phillips, the Public Information Officer for JCHHS. Bellegia concluded that, at a minimum, ASAC wants to know the JCHHS plan for communicating information to the public. She alerted all to Lee Shapley's upcoming OLLI lecture and noted that he will also be present at the next Livable Ashland meeting to answer questions.

**Next meeting** – Monday, March 8, 3:30-5:00 via Zoom.

**Adjournment** – 5:03 pm

*Respectfully submitted by Natalie Mettler, Senior & Adult Services Coordinator, Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission*