

City of Ashland
ASHLAND PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION (APRC)
ASHLAND SENIOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ASAC)
Meeting Minutes
January 8, 2024

Committee Members Present:

- Anne Bellegia
- Cori Frank
- Jim Bachman
- Mike Gardiner, Chair
- John Engelhardt
- Patty Winner
- Bob Kaplan
- Noriko Toyokawa

Staff Present:

- Natalie Mettler
- Leslie Eldridge
- Nancy Mero
- Shannon Holt

Committee Members Absent:

- Debra Johnson, Vice Chair

CALL TO ORDER

Gardiner called the meeting to order at 3:30pm.

OPENING

Gardiner welcomed everyone to the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Engelhardt noted an additional correction needed on the September 11, 2023 minutes. Mettler will make the correction.

Motion: Gardiner/Bachman m/s to approve the minutes from November 13, 2023.

Voice vote – all AYES. Minutes approved.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA

None

PUBLIC INPUT

None.

Mettler noted SSD Superintendent Glatt had retired and that Mettler is now Interim Senior Services Superintendent. Shannon Holt is stepping in as Interim Senior Services Coordinator. Mettler also introduced Nancy Mero, APRC's new Executive Assistant.

PRESENTATION: Community Volunteer Network (CVN: services and volunteer opportunities for seniors)

Cassie Rose, Executive Director of CVN, presented on CVN services and volunteer opportunities for seniors. See [presentation slides](#).

The following was covered in discussion:

- Unete was noted as one of CVN's partners. Does CVN have outreach materials/volunteers targeted specifically to the Spanish-speaking community?
Not many bilingual volunteers currently. Client demographic predominately white, volunteer demographic predominately white women. Work with Unete for translation of materials.

- Does PRS have other volunteer opportunities?
PRS has volunteer opportunities through the Rogue Valley Manor for residents. As a corporation, they don't specifically recruit/maintain volunteers.
- Do Call-A-Ride volunteer drivers stay at the site of the appointment?
Varies by volunteer preference and the length of the appointment. Volunteers do not accompany clients into appointments.
- What about volunteer driver's insurance?
Transporting clients is an added risk. CVN's insurance coverage comes secondary to volunteer driver's insurance and will cover liability if there is an accident.
- Does CVN pick up volunteers from other organizations?
There is an opportunity for networking/partnering but CVN wouldn't want to steal volunteers. CVN and Hearts for Seniors are hosting a networking event to bring together care providers and referral services together. This event will be on January 30, 8:30-9:30, at 1 West Main Street Medford. Goal of the meeting is to educate about appropriate referrals.
- Papa's Pals is another provider of free in-home help for seniors (like Hearts with a Mission). Maybe federally funded. Certain Medicare Advantage plans entitle people to a certain number of volunteer hours per month/year.
- Does CVN have outcome data for addressing volunteer effectiveness in reducing suicide/depression?
CVN uses other data as they don't have the money/resources to do the research studies. Individual volunteers report on the importance of their volunteering, which includes testimony such as "[volunteering is my] reason to get out of bed in the morning."
- OLLI is an excellent source for volunteers.
- Where is CVN located?
In the main PRS building in Medford at 1 W Main Street.

STANDING REPORTS

a. APRC Liaison Commissioner Bachman

One big item in front of the commission that will affect the Senior Center physically: the Daniel Meyer Pool (DMP). Commissioners reviewed the design for the pool presented to them in 2022. Not much needs to change. The pool's dimensions were already changed at the recommendation of the aquatic community. Wanting to "house" (cover) the pool (not in original design). Will be a new pool, not a repair or remodel. Location is pretty set. Ad Hoc community strongly recommended keeping it in the current location. Heating? Bachman would like to have it totally electric – just his opinion – to reduce carbon footprint. Must update the cost. The pool will be more expensive as design is now two years old.

The following was covered in discussion:

- Will the pool be closed completely when the new pool is started?
Yes. It is going to be in the same location.
- How long will it take?
Not known yet. Contractor's estimate is possibly 10 months to a year.

b. City Council Liaison Bob Kaplan

- Parks Department – closing hours and alcohol usage in the parks – both passed.
- Camping ordinance passed in December.

- Water treatment plant: City has been considering relocating the plant to a much safer location. Downside is the cost. Some of the funding might come from low-cost, long-term financing from federal government. Some will be from increased water rates for residents. Council is discussing making available lower rates for low-income households and keeping base rates low. Anyone receiving SNAP benefits would be eligible. Easier to sign up. This was discussed in a Study Session. A priority for Kaplan to have reasonable energy rates for people with low income.

The following was covered in discussion:

- Time frame for the new plant?
In the 90th percentile for completion. To be eligible for the low-cost funding, must have a financial plan in place. Might go out for bid in the spring.
- Is the Council checking with other municipalities to see how they handle energy discounts for people with low incomes?
Great idea!
- Is the location by lower Wonder Trail?
Yes, the old quarry area. Also happens to have fantastic solar resources – south-facing and often out of the fog. Plan includes having solar and battery backup.

c. Education Report – Interim Senior Services Coordinator Shannon Holt

Recreation and Senior Services Division have transitioned into a new system called SmartRec for registering people for classes, facility rentals, etc. Staff has been learning the system and assisting clients to learn as well.

Upcoming activities and events:

- Introduction to 19th Century Guitar Music on Wednesday, January 31st, 1pm
- Four-series class called Healthy Brain & Aging
- Continuing digital education partnership with the Jackson County Library Services, who will offer a seminar in March on Cybersecurity
- Personalized Strength and Balancing class with Beth Morris has added four classes to meet demand.
- 40 participants in Line Dancing today!

d. Senior Services Superintendent Report – Interim Senior Services Superintendent Natalie Mettler (Glatt authored the report)

- December holiday party was well attended.
- Charades had a small but lively group. Might try it again.
- New *Seniors Celebrating Creativity* art exhibit is up at the Senior Center. Curated by local artist and art teacher, Ruddy Havill. Havel
- Vaccination Clinics served 300 seniors with 459 shots of Flu and COVID-19 vaccine.
- Conversation Clusters, the story was picked up by local news outlets and OHA.

There are volunteer opportunities listed in the [Senior News January newsletter](#), including some for the CVN.

The following was covered in discussion:

- Will the Center remain closed on Fridays?
Yes, due to staffing limitations. Staff need a day for meetings, trainings, etc. while not serving the public. The Center is still open for Food and Friends lunches on Fridays.

- Are the benches still up from the Conversation Clusters?
Yes, the survey has closed but the benches remain.

ITEMS FROM ASAC MEMBERS OR WORK GROUPS

a. **Livable Ashland Alliance Update** – Commissioner Anne Bellegia

- Sandy Theis is staying on the Steering Committee but retiring as co-chair, so Bellegia is looking for a replacement. Many people retiring/leaving the Steering Committee. May need to change the structure from a Steering Committee and to a Board.
- Moving ahead with the Health Action group. Also continuing to work on aging supports. Has a resource in the form of a student intern from the SOU Healthcare Administration Program. Bellegia will be her internship supervisor. The student may do a quantitative and qualitative report on aging services in Ashland. Toyokawa is working on options to place future students in internships.
- Both Bellegia and Toyokawa are on Healthcare Administration's Advisory Council which also includes Asante, Providence, Mercy Flights, La Clinica, and Valley Immediate Care. B would like to have input on how these entities are serving the senior demographic.

Comment:

- A person looking for a house-share situation in Ashland found it through [Silvernest](#). The person has already found the Senior Center. Co-housing is a foreign concept for people, they need to hear about experiences to consider it. Could be a great thing for seniors for company and/or income.

b. **Other Items from Advisory Committee Members.**

- Engelhardt reported that AARP Tax Aide will be starting free tax preparation assistance in lower level of Stevenson Union at Sou beginning in February. Will create/post flyers. This service is available for all ages. Mettler asked Engelhardt to send her the information as soon as they have it so she can include it in the upcoming [Senior News](#) newsletter.

Mettler mentioned that 2024 ASAC meetings will alternate between being in-person and on Zoom.

Next meeting – Monday March 11, 3:30-5:00pm, at Ashland Senior Center, 1699 Homes Ave

Adjournment –4:50pm

Respectfully submitted by Nancy Mero, Executive Assistant, Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission