

City of Ashland
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
ASHLAND SENIOR PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ASPAC)
MINUTES
November 13, 2017

Committee Members Present:

- Jackie Bachman, Citizen Member (Senior Program Patron); Chair
- Marion Moore, Citizen Member (Senior Program Yoga Instructor); Vice Chair
- Anne Bellegia, (SOU, OLLI Representative)
- Peggy Byrnes, Citizen Member (Senior Program Patron)
- Rob Casserly, Citizen Member (SOU, OLLI Program Manager)
- Katharine Danner, Ashland At Home Representative
- Laura O'Bryon, RVCOG Representative
- Mary Russell-Miller, Citizen Member (SOU Faculty Member)
- Mike Gardiner, APRC Commissioner
- Jim Lewis, APRC Commissioner

Facilitator Present:

- Jon Lange, Jon Lange Consulting

Staff Members Present:

- APRC Director Michael Black
- Assistant Betsy Manuel

Committee Member and Staff Absent:

- Stef Seffinger, Ashland City Council
- APRC Recreation Superintendent Rachel Dials
- APRC Executive Assistant Susan Dyssegard

I. CALL TO ORDER / OPENING

Facilitator Lange called the meeting to order at 3:15 p.m. at Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main Street in Ashland.

ASPAC members and APRC staff re-introduced themselves and spoke about organizational affiliations and associations with the senior community of Ashland.

Lange spoke briefly about the agenda-setting process conducted by Chair Bachman, APRC staff and himself. He said ideas were brainstormed and the agenda was finalized by email.

Lange asked that the committee be allowed to do the work for which it was created and that committee members serve as advocates for the process.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Byrnes requested a minor adjustment to the minutes. She referenced the importance of Gardiner's statement at the October 10 meeting (relative to the point about "informed listening") that "we do not control public input."

Motion: Lewis moved to approve the Minutes as amended. Moore seconded and the motion carried.

III. REVISIT GROUND RULES, PURPOSE AND CHARGE

Lange reviewed the list of ground rules, highlighting etiquette that included being respectful of others, limiting speaking to one person at a time, eliminating sidebar conversations while someone else spoke and discussing issues, not people.

III. REVISIT EXPECTATION CLARIFICATION

Lange said it was agreed that the Committee would make recommendations to the Commission in three to five months. A number of recommendations could be made, even competing recommendations in the form of a "minority report." The recommendations would be formed from information agreed upon by vote.

Lange stated that everything was on the table except two things: 1) a Committee recommendation of no changes and 2) personnel issues.

It was stated that requests of the Commission or staff would come from the entire Committee, with staff providing reasonable support. Exceptions would include requests requiring a great deal of research, requests requiring the spending of money and requests from individuals rather than the Committee itself.

Gardiner said the Commission set the goal of receiving recommendations in three to five months on the date of October 1, 2017. Lewis and Gardiner discussed concluding this process between January and March. Lewis said it appeared that people were in support of ensuring that the process was efficient without sacrificing thoroughness or excellence. Gardiner clarified that the Committee could take as long as it needed; however, the original request was for recommendations to be received within three to five months.

Bachman stated that most were in agreement that the Committee would work as quickly as possible to come up with recommendations.

V. PUBLIC INPUT

Bachman said 15 minutes had been allotted for public input. She asked for people to express their thoughts and avoid repetitions. She said speakers could donate their time to other speakers if they wished to do so.

Discussion ensued about allowing two minutes for each of the seven speakers or allowing three minutes each. Bellegia stated that this forum should not be the only avenue for public input.

She encouraged Committee members to access the website that had been created and to read some of the expert opinions.

Bachman decided to allow three minutes for each of the seven speakers, for a total of 21 minutes of public input.

Heiden (Heidi) Gottlieb of 1218 Rose Lane in Ashland, OR, was called forward.

[See written testimony.](#)

Sue Wilson of 1056 Dead Indian Memorial Rd. in Ashland, OR, was called forward.

[See written testimony.](#)

Peter Smeenk of 325 Ridge Road Ashland in Ashland, OR, was called forward.

[See written testimony.](#)

Michael Hersh of 932 Morton St. in Ashland, OR, was called forward.

Hersh said many seniors had things to say, both pro and con. He asked that Committee members publish office hours and allow people to make appointments and meet at the Senior Center, one-on-one and face-to-face, to give their personal opinions for future decision-making.

Susan Rust of 42 N. Wightman in Ashland, OR, was called forward.

Rust asked for a mission and goals list for this Committee, both of which she felt were missing. She said in order to develop recommendations and a strategic plan based on problems, the Committee needed to understand the problems and create a list of goals for moving forward. She also asked for agendas to be published before meetings and for meeting minutes to be published afterwards, at least after their approval.

Mort Perle of 491 Courtney St. in Ashland, OR, was called forward.

Perle spoke in support of Gardiner, who had advocated for moving ahead quickly. He said that when the reorganization first came about, it was stated that recommendations would be made within three months. He asked for an explanation of how and when that timeframe changed to five months. He suggested that it might relate to the availability of the facilitator.

Perle asked why a facilitator was necessary and suggested that the Chair could run the meetings. He said he presumed the facilitator was being paid for his services. Considering the concern for cost recovery, he asked where those funds were coming from. He asked if it would be budgeted against the Senior Center as a function of the cost of running the Senior program.

In terms of the setup of the ad-hoc Committee, there was a subject called “on and off the table.” He asked where those recommendations came from and if they were imposed as part of the rules of running the Committee. He asked if anyone had agreed to them and if they had been discussed. He said it seemed strange.

Ellen Beck of 906 Mary Jane in Ashland, OR, was called forward.

Beck said she received benefit from and appreciated the Ashland Senior Center yoga class with Marion Moore. She expressed concern about the disruption of basic human service deliveries at

the center and asked how the Commission planned to continue providing such vital services as heating assistance now that staff were laid off. She asked where people could go now for that information and wondered if it was Medford.

VI. LOGISTICS

Several logistics topics raised by Lange included collecting and responding to public input, scheduling meetings and their locations, communication between Committee members and others.

Bachman talked about the value of televising but said there were associated costs. She suggested forming smaller groups to work on various projects and recommendations, with information shared by email. Lange pointed out that the cost of televising increased if the meetings were held anywhere other than Council Chambers. He asked whether Committee members would be comfortable meeting at locations other than Council Chambers. Moore stated that meeting just once per month would be insufficient for keeping the process moving forward quickly. She suggested meeting twice a month, with the second meeting held at the Senior Center. Lewis agreed but said logistical efforts about meeting preparations and minutes would also need to be considered in terms of timing. Gardiner said staff attendance was a key ingredient for the meetings and it would be important to hear from Dials on the matter. He suggested meeting in a smaller group to generate ideas about how many meetings to schedule each month, while also getting feedback from Dials.

The Committee spoke in agreement about meeting twice per month. Two meetings had been tentatively scheduled so far: December 11, 2017, and January 8, 2018, both in Council Chambers from 3:15 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. After speaking with Dials, two additional meetings might also be scheduled: one in December and one in January.

Bellegia spoke about the transparency and sensitivity of televising key recommendations, allowing for public dissemination of information. If the second meeting were to be scheduled at the Senior Center, key ideas from those meetings should be quickly reviewed at the televised meetings. Moore added that audio recordings of meetings also allowed for transparency.

Lange talked about how to talk between meetings, between committee members and by email. Bellegia suggested that Bachman could serve as the communication bridge or intermediary between committee members, with emails sent to Bachman for dissemination. Bachman spoke favorably about that idea but said she had a certain level of concern about not holding discussions over email as a quorum (six members or more). Black said the City Attorney provided guidance about this matter, stating that when an email went out it was looked at as a one-way communication. Once it received a response, it could create problems if it appeared meetings were being held outside of public purview. If Bachman sent an email and there were questions, it was advised that they be sent directly to Bachman as opposed to everyone.

Bachman said it was her understanding that she could legally communicate by email with up to five people, as six represented a quorum for ASPAC. For items needing to be sent to the entire committee, it was best to have one person sending emails as one-way communications. Black stated that it could also work for emails to be sent to Committee members via the blind CC line.

In terms of logistics around agenda items, Moore asked for an item dealing with Committee member updates about information discovered, learned or heard outside meetings or while researching relevant topics.

Lewis stated that an item on Parks Commission agendas was entitled “Items from Commissioners.” He said this was very helpful at their meetings and he spoke in favor of adding a similar agenda item for ASPAC meetings.

The group was queried about their interest in holding public input sessions at the Senior Center. By a show of hands, a majority of members expressed interest. Lange said these would go forward to allow the public to express concerns directly with Committee members.

In terms of the amount of public input time at future meetings, three minutes was suggested as a reasonable amount of time per speaker, with a total of 21 minutes allowed per meeting. Byrnes expressed frustration that questions raised during public input were not answered. How best to capture those items for future answers? Danner stated that individual Committee members could not answer for the group, as the Committee could only listen, not answer. Lange said a progress report would be issued by Black and in that report questions would be answered. A question arose about adding the “Items from Committee Members” to the beginning or the end of each agenda. Bachman said space would be provided for bringing up issues from committee members at the beginning of the agenda; space for responding to public input or answering other questions would be provided at the end of the agenda.

VI. PROGRAM QUALITY REVIEW NOTEBOOK

- ***Memo from Director Black***

Black said many people asked for the inclusion of a discussion about the Program Quality Review Notebook compiled by the former Senior Program Manager. He specifically called out the information about cost recovery and said that information was incorrect. He said cost recovery was based on total costs as opposed to incoming revenue. He said if he were to say there should be 20% cost recovery, that would mean that of the total expenses, APRC would be trying to recover 20% from revenues generated. It was different for different programs – the Golf Course cost recovery expectations were at about 50%, the Ice Rink was around 90% and the pool was in the 40 to 50% range. In order to understand what cost recovery meant by percentage, it was important to speak the same language. The language for cost recovery used was the total cost to perform the functions of the Senior Program.

Black said the way cost recovery was prepared in this notebook listed the cost recovery percentage as 41%, indicating that the Program was doing well financially. Unfortunately, the data behind it was not the same as what was used for regular cost recovery analyses. Following a quick analysis using available data, including actual revenues and actual expenses, Black said the Senior Program cost recovery figure came back at around 2%.

Black said APRC performed cost recovery analyses for every one of its recreation programs. He said if you looked at the method utilized, the number of visits was quantified by the cost per visitor at the center. The more visitors coming in, the lower cost per visitor. That was how APRC looked at it so APRC could see what part was generated from revenue and what part came from tax monies for funding the Senior Program.

Bachman said funds coming in were basically for rent of the facility: around \$4,100. She acknowledged that Senior Center staff performed a function for the City in doing the utility work: approximately \$10,000 of staff time.

Black said a top recommendation for the Senior Program was to get the City to pay for the expense of running the programs currently operated at the center.

Black reiterated that the actual cost recovery for the Senior Program was 2%; that was the only caveat he had for the Program Quality Review.

Bachman pointed out that another commonly used term for this document was “the binder.” He brought up a point about the Committee’s suggestion to possibly create a new mission for the Senior Program. He said he, Bachman, Black, Dials and Dyssegard talked about it and felt that a new mission statement could be done after ASPAC recommendations were completed rather than before. If a new mission statement were developed at some point, it would be directed to the Parks Commission for review. Bachman said the current mission statement in the binder was well served. She felt a new mission statement was not currently needed in order to move ahead.

A question was raised about why the document was called the binder. Bachman clarified that it was developed to answer questions asked by Black of the Senior Program Manager. In response to those questions, which included data and surveys, a binder was accumulated and titled “Senior Program Quality Review.” Black acknowledged that a great deal of good work went into creating the binder.

VII. PROGRESS REPORT

- Update on Senior Program

Black said a progress report would be prepared and presented at each ASPAC meeting. He said he was providing this report on behalf of Dials, who was attending an off-site training.

Black said the Senior Center was open five days per week – 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The center was staffed full time and staff were being trained about meeting the needs of those coming into the center.

Black expressed support for recruiting and hiring a full-time Senior Program Manager sooner rather than later. He said he notified the City of Ashland HR Director and asked for assistance in getting that started.

Black said ongoing programming was continuing at the center: Tai Chi, line dancing, yoga and others. An AARP driving class was held on October 25 and 26th with 29 participants. Thanksgiving dinner was being organized for Monday, November 20, by the Ashland Fire Department with APRC assistance and 100 people had RSVP’d. RVCOG meals were ongoing Monday through Friday at the center. An additional activity included a Halloween party that occurred, with 20 people attending. A five-week series of OLLI classes was taught by O’Byron and Dials, Bachman, Bellegia and Byrnes attended them.

Black said RVCOG also provided a class to Senior Center staff to help them recognize the services provided by ADRC. He said utility assistance was ongoing at the center and could also be found by visiting Ashland City Hall Utility Billing.

Black reported that seven discounts had been issued so far for the City of Ashland utilities program, five for heat assistance. Bryn Morrison at Utility Billing was administering that program but APRC was still processing applications at the Senior Center.

Black said a participation report had been completed. APRC activities at the center in 2018 would include a chronic pain workshop and an opportunity to talk to a pharmacist. He said Senior Program monthly newsletters were still used to get information out to patrons. He said his main message was that the center remained open every day and staff worked hard to provide the customary services offered at the Senior Center over the past ten years.

Bachman thanked Black for his service report and asked for a report about additional efforts for outreach for fragile seniors. O'Bryon said she met with Senior Program staff and reviewed a series of opportunities available to seniors – similar to what was discussed in the OLLI aging class. She said there was a great amount of information available but this was a baseline training.

Black said staff were working with RVCOG to continue training but as of right now, no additional trainings were scheduled.

Bachman said community members were notifying her that, with experienced staff no longer available at the center, fragile seniors were not being checked on. She suggested keeping records such as phone logs so staff could provide customer satisfaction to seniors. She said this was a missing link and people were very concerned. Black said current staff could work on this and he asked what RVCOG was doing and whether staff could have access to their contact information for making follow-up calls. Bachman said the sooner Black and his staff could get back to her on what staff were doing to reach out to seniors, the sooner the public would have more trust in what ASPAC was trying to accomplish. Bachman said there should be phone logs showing contact information going both ways, which was something ADRC and Senior Disabilities Services could help with to allow Senior Program staff to do a better job of outreach.

- **Survey Comments**

Moore said two staff members assisted with the survey, Natalie Mettler and Dials. The survey included four questions: 1) What do you like about the Senior Center? 2) What would you like to see added? 3) Where do you get your information about Senior Program events? 4) Would you like to know more about the Senior Program? Approximately 48 people responded to the survey and there were many positive comments about the Senior Program along with at least eight good ideas for additional programs and services.

In terms of notification about events, people said they looked at the seasonal APRC recreation playbook and the Ashland Daily Tidings.

Lewis asked how the public could access the survey results. Black said the results could be posted on the City of Ashland website. In terms of the new suggestions from respondents,

Moore said she would expect to start bringing those ideas up under the “Issues” portion of future ASPAC meeting agendas.

- ***Participation***

Byrnes spoke about the National Institute of Senior Centers and said certain items were available online such as a Senior Center Evaluation Toolkit. Based on that, she said ASPAC would not need to create these documents at the Committee level as they could be accessed online. Also available were survey templates that were arranged and designed so as to be objective. She said the survey would help determine demographics and who was using the Senior Center.

VIII. ISSUES

Lange said the issues selected for this meeting were preliminary to the discussion of other issues.

- ***Current Budget of Senior Program***

Black said there are three parts to the APRC budget including the Parks Fund, which supports all the operational functions within APRC and is provided through a millage on tax (the assessed value of homes within the City of Ashland, \$2.09 per thousand of assessed value). He said APRC split that amount up and did everything it could with that amount.

Black said he presented three biennia as background for the Senior Program Budget and he spoke about the categories within those budgets. He said the Senior Program budget was approximately \$190,000 per year. When asked for more detail about the fringe benefits line item, Black provided that information. He also talked about health benefit costs. In terms of actual available dollars for staff training, Black asked the Committee to keep in mind that items requested could be constrained by not having been planned ahead of time in the biennial budget planning process. Another item discussed was the cleaning contract for the building: approximately \$20,000 per year.

- ***Current and Possible Partnerships***

Lange referenced the long list of current or potential partnerships. If his understanding was correct, he said current partnerships were being reviewed first, with any gaps identified on behalf of the Senior Program.

Bachman asked to hear from the ASPAC field representatives, especially O’Byron in terms of ADRC and Danner for understanding disability services and how to access them. She asked what education might be needed for the Committee or staff.

O;Byron suggested forming a subcommittee for the purpose of brainstorming. She said there was an advantage in Jackson and Josephine counties of disabilities services that were well connected with a plethora of partners. She said the subcommittee could discuss, in a small group format, the list of current and possible partners and make recommendations to the larger Committee.

Partnerships Subcommittee

O'Bryon, Casserly, Bellegia, Danner, Dials

Their task will be to meet and bring recommendations for what partnerships are needed to fill in the gaps and move forward. **Subcommittee Coordinator: O'Bryon**

Open House and Outreach Subcommittee Discussion

Bachman said she had experience with organizing open houses and outreach. She volunteered to spearhead this effort on behalf of ASPAC and the Senior Program. She asked for an open house to happen as soon as December. She said open houses were useful for providing information rather than taking input. Moore suggested having one open house in December and another in January. Bachman added that two sessions could be offered for each open house. Danner asked how to open the audience beyond seniors currently using the center, thereby making the process more inclusive. Danner said this could be an outgrowth of O'Bryon's work with partnerships: notifying constituencies beyond the Senior Program. It also suggested to have an open house beyond the Senior Center itself to broaden the outreach potential.

Bellegia said there are 1,100 OLLI members currently presiding in Ashland, many of whom are frail, physically challenged, attending on scholarship or caring for elderly parents. She talked about the sensitivity of OLLI's relationships with the people attending OLLI classes and said OLLI has its own outreach as part of RVCOG. She said there are mechanisms in place that would help to broaden outreach to the people using the Senior Center.

Open House and Outreach Subcommittee

Bachman, Bellegia, Mettler, Dials

Their task will be to reach out to people who have not yet seen the Senior Center or experienced senior programs to attend and learn about senior services.

Bachman said she would depend on staff to advertise these events, with the help of the seasonal Playbooks and other tools. Black said he would put a team in place to make this happen.

In terms of a survey, focus groups were suggested.

Survey Subcommittee

Moore, Bellegia, Byrnes, and Black

Their task will be to formulate a survey and/or conduct focus groups to better ascertain a number of criteria.

Bellegia said focus groups could help establish qualitative rather than quantitative feedback. She said some needs assessment guides already existed – one done by RVCOG as part of the Area Agency Aging Plan for our region as well as an AARP study on livability in Southern Oregon. She suggested having the subcommittee look at both guides in an effort to not duplicate efforts.

Byrnes brought up an additional topic she learned from the National Institute of Senior Centers: a Senior Center final report was released in 2009 that addressed all of the topics currently underway with ASPAC, including a booming senior population. The issue of less funding for additional senior support needs was also addressed in the report.

Lange said the Committee had some processes in place. He suggested meeting with Bachman to frame up where ASPAC could go in terms of creating goals and devising an efficient path for making recommendations. He thanked everyone for their time.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Lange adjourned the meeting at 5:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Manuel, Minute taker / Susan Dyssegard, Executive Assistant
Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission