

City of Ashland  
ASHLAND PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION (APRC)  
ASHLAND SENIOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ASAC)  
Meeting Minutes  
November 4, 2019

**Committee Members Present:**

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

**Staff Members Present:**

- Isleen Glatt
- Natalie Mettler

**CALL TO ORDER**

Theis called the meeting to order at 3:31pm

**OPENING**

Invited speakers and other guests gave short introductions: John Stromberg (Mayor of Ashland), Kelly Madding (City Administrator), Jackie Bachman (Housing & Human Services Commissioner, OHRA board member), Linda Peterson Adams (Transportation Commissioner), Gina Duquette (Housing & Human Services Commissioner), and Jean Conger (Senior Services patron).

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion:** Gardiner/Bellegia m/s to approve the minutes from October 14, 2019. Voice vote – All AYES.

**ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA**

Bellegia announced that OLLI will be presenting a murder mystery dinner theatre event from December 11-15. Proceeds from the show will go towards the cost of renovating OLLI's Campbell Center.

**PUBLIC INPUT**

None

**PRESENTATION BY ASHLAND MAYOR JOHN STROMBERG & ADMINISTARTOR KELLY MADDING: How to identify and recruit senior advocates to serve on City commissions & advisory committees**

Glatt explained ASAC has been receiving requests from various City committees for recommendations of potential members to represent seniors needs and issues. Stromberg and Madding were invited to today's meeting to counsel ASAC on how to be more proactive in getting senior advocates to apply for City commissions and committees.

Stromberg clarified that the Mayor, by charter, appoints commission members, whose appointment is then subject to City Council approval. Stromberg believes that commissions don't work well as platforms for advocacy. Rather, the Council benefits most from objective, thoughtful, well-researched advice. He pointed to Healthy Democracy Oregon as a model for a productive political process. For a city of its size, Ashland has a complex city government with only a small staff at the top (Mayor, six Councilors, Administrator, Lawyer) who bears all responsibility for policy decisions. Combined with a very engaged citizenry, the City government's

role is especially challenging when dealing with portentous decisions. He credited Seffinger with representing senior needs on an issue-by-issue basis to the Council, and noted that certain commissions, such as those dealing with housing and transportation, most need senior representation to consider the impact of new ordinances or other changes on community seniors. Stromberg suggested the Council invite ASAC's informal input on upcoming important topics, such as a City evacuation plan, to ensure input for senior needs.

In the ensuing discussion, Hersh supported the idea of thoughtful and pragmatic advocates on commissions, given some recent history with controversial city decisions. Stromberg remains sympathetic to change being hard and wondered how to humanize the process. Theis suggested recruiting commissioners who think broadly, i.e. focusing on all-age-friendly rather than just seniors. Bellegia agreed and added that ASAC has an opportunity to educate commissioners and the public about the implications of decisions that are sensitive to senior needs. For example, creating age-friendly housing ultimately offers lower costs to families than long term care of their elder family members. Community education could help shift the culture away from a more self-interested approach to one of better problem-solving. Stromberg concurred that drawing on ASAC's expertise and insight can help support more meaningful conversations before key issues become overly politically charged. Bachman and Theis both pointed to Team Ashland as a positive example of City government connecting with the public. Madding said she will discuss with Theis about offering a similar program again through OLLI. She also stated that the more people participate in decision-making at the macro-level, the better, as this gives the Council a broader, more balanced perspective. Theis suggested that best practices from AARP's Age-Friendly Communities initiative may be helpful.

Stromberg noted that in Ashland, and the broader US, the problem is that seniors are not recognized for fulfilling unique and productive functions in society. Glatt responded that part of ASAC and the SSD's mission is to reframe "senior" to encompass the spectrum of abilities and capacities of older adults. Yes, they have certain specific needs, but they also make important contributions, as can be seen in the new *Seniors Celebrating Creativity* art exhibit at the Senior Center and the upcoming Senior Volunteer Fair.

Theis summarized the discussion with a plan for ASAC and the City Council to maintain an ongoing conversation on what's best for Ashland citizens broadly, in a way that includes seniors. ASAC can invite City Council members to attend their meetings, or communicate through Seffinger, as Council liaison to ASAC. Seffinger added that working with AARP to cultivate an age-friendly perspective will bring to fruition a lot of goals she has for the Council and relevant commissions, by increasing awareness of how policy decisions affect all parts of the community. She sees promising synergy among local groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, Asante Ashland Community Hospital and OLLI, who are all working on community well-being. Bellegia agreed that this is a real-life example of how seniors working together across organizations helps the community as a whole.

### **POOL RENOVATION UPDATE: Benefits to Seniors**

Gardiner reported that the APRC voted at their last business meeting to accept all 34 recommendations by the Pool Ad Hoc Committee for the renovation of the Daniel Meyer pool. They are currently exploring funding options; their preferred option is a revenue bond that would advance capital to be paid back through the APRC's portion of the Food and Beverage tax (from 2021 through 2030), so that there is no additional tax for the community. Gardiner indicated that a new walkway from the Senior Center's Hunter Park-side deck to the pool will require a slight shift in the fence line between the two facilities, but that this will improve access for seniors to both the pool and the Senior Center activity room. There will be no change to the Senior Center building. Community seniors will benefit from the addition of a therapeutic pool with a zero entry ramp. Bellegia asked if there will be any cover for the pool, or other way to extend the pool season. Gardiner responded that there currently aren't funds for such a cover, but that the swim community is eager to fundraise for such an option in the future.

## **STANDING REPORTS**

### **a. APRC Update**

In addition to the pool renovation update, Gardiner also shared that the Japanese Garden Plan has been approved, with construction to start this winter. The new garden will be entirely ADA accessible. Also, the Lithia Park Master Plan will be voted on later this month. It includes a provision for handicapped parking in the vicinity of the Japanese Garden.

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

Seffinger invited ASAC to share senior perspectives at the Revitalize Downtown Ashland Open House on November 6 at Carpenter Hall.

### **c. Education Report**

Mettler announced that there will be two events at the Senior Center on November 13, in honor of Veteran's Day: a brief celebration honoring veterans followed by an educational presentation. She also outlined future event calendaring, as SSD is moving towards organizing events on an annual cycle.

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

In addition to the report included in the meeting packet, Glatt spoke briefly about the new *Seniors Celebrating Creativity* art exhibit and invited ASAC members to the upcoming November 25 Firefighters' Thanksgiving and December 24 Holiday Luncheon Party, both at the Senior Center.

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

Theis and Glatt will speak at the November 18 APRC Study Session about the AARP Age-Friendly Community proposal with which ASAC has been involved. Bellegia has been involved in conversations about AARP encouraging the entire state of Oregon to become Age-Friendly.

Cassery offered to organize some outreach to recruit SOU faculty and administrative staff as advocates for seniors on City commissions, perhaps when the Age-Friendly proposal is further along.

## **UPDATED MEMBER TERMS, 2019-20 OFFICERS, AND 2020 MEETING DATES**

Glatt clarified that the updated member terms included in the packet will now all end June 30, in staggered years to ensure continuity. She provided the 2020 meeting dates for ASAC members to get them on their calendars.

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

- a. Monday, January 13, 3:30-5:00pm, at Ashland Senior Center, 1699 Homes Ave
- b. Monday, March 9, 3:30-5:00pm, at Ashland Senior Center, 1699 Homes Ave

## **Adjournment – 4:52 pm**

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