

City of Ashland
ASHLAND PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION (APRC)
ASHLAND SENIOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ASAC)
Meeting Minutes
November 9, 2020

Committee Members Present:

- Anne Bellegia, Chair
- Mike Hersh
- Mike Gardiner
- Stef Seffinger
- Sandy Theis

Staff Present:

- Michael Black
- Isleen Glatt
- Natalie Mettler

Committee Members Absent:

- Mary Russell-Miller

CALL TO ORDER

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

OPENING

Bellegia acknowledged the citizen guests present: Jackie Bachman (OHRA, Housing and Human Services Commission), Rob Casserly (OLLI), Allayana Darrow (Mail Tribune), and Gary Schaff (public comment).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Theis/Hersh m/s to approve the minutes from March 9, 2020. Voice vote – All AYES.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA

None.

PUBLIC INPUT

Schaff spoke as a representative of a citizen group working on reducing driving speeds in Ashland. This would be on roads where such reductions are allowed per Oregon state policy. He asked if ASAC could send a representative to be part of a group working to develop and present this proposal to the City Council. He will also be asking the following groups: Climate Policy Commission, Conservation and Climate Outreach Commission, Transportation Commission.

Bellegia asked if any ASAC members would be able to serve in such a role. None currently have the capacity to do so. Schaff said he understood that citizens who participate in local government are usually overcommitted and asked if ASAC could add to a future agenda to review the white paper his group will be drafting and consider endorsing the stated position.

ASAC MEMBER AND OFFICER CHANGES

a. Farewell to Rob Casserly, Welcome to Gina DuQuenne

Bellegia thanked Casserly for his service to ASAC and expressed gratitude that he will remain involved as a citizen. She also thanked Theis for her service as ASAC Chair for two terms. Theis added that Casserly's input has always been thoughtful and meaningful. Bellegia announced that DuQuenne has resigned from her ASAC appointment, as she would be overextended given her recent election to the City Council and continuing role on the Housing and Human Services Commission. ASAC will continue to recruit for new members to replace Casserly and DuQuenne.

b. Welcome Anne Bellegia as 2020-21 chair

Glatt noted that a new chair will again need to be elected before July 2021.

c. Nominations for 2020-21 co-chair (ideally to be chair 2021-22)

Bellegia asked if anyone in the present ASAC group would be willing to serve as current Co-Chair. Gardiner volunteered.

Motion: Bellegia asked if there were any other nominations for Co-Chair, and heard none. Called vote for Mike Gardiner as Co-Chair. Voice vote – All AYES.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND RECOVERY UPDATES

Glatt noted that while ASAC was not meeting, she has sent updates via email about Senior Services Division's (SSD) emergency response and recovery efforts. She reminded all that role of Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission (APRC) staff in City emergency operations is to provide care and shelter. APRC has been very involved in this capacity in both the COVID-19 pandemic and Almeda fire.

SSD has supported seniors and their families with information and referrals about available social services, maintained a webpage of resources at ashland.or.us/COVID19SeniorResources, reached out to seniors by phone, and created the Senior Phone Buddy program to address social isolation. Superintendent Glatt led the City collaboration with Adopt a Neighbor Ashland (AANA) that matches vulnerable residents with volunteers to help shopping and errands; SSD staff support AANA clients with referrals to meet other needs beyond the scope of the program. AANA has served about 90 vulnerable individuals and will continue in a smaller scale until there is an effective vaccine.

SSD staff transitioned some programming to an outdoor setting in the summer, and then to a Zoom platform this fall. Mettler has resumed educational programming as virtual presentations. Staff has also organized several drive-through social events, such as an ice cream social and a Halloween event.

In the aftermath of the Almeda fire, APRC again worked on care and shelter. Director Black worked with Linda Reid on short and long-term housing, while other APRC leaders set up a helpline and webpage for resources which got 6000 hits in the first 3 days. SSD staff and volunteers called all clients in north Ashland, Talent and Phoenix, and helped guide those affected to the relevant resources. SSD's strong relationship with partners such as Rogue Valley Community Organizations Against Disaster (RVCOAD) and AARP Oregon proved to be an asset as a conduit of information. Bellegia gave kudos to SSD staff, noting that one of the biggest needs for seniors and their families is information, and that their ongoing work confirms SSD as a vital information source.

Members discussed some of the problems with notifications, traffic, evacuation routes, and coordination among municipalities. Seffinger noted that these issues are being discussed with ODOT and the County; a committee is forming to work on fire response and identify more evacuation routes, especially for neighborhoods with only one way out.

Members also discussed the need for more coordination around donations. Hersh stated that the Ashland Emergency Food Bank (AEFB), where he is an active volunteer, continues to funnel a lot of donations through intermediaries, and announced that donated Thanksgiving meals will be available for all in Ashland and Talent. He also mentioned that the AEFB also provides bread and other food supplies that RVCOG Food & Friends gives out with the meal pick up program in Ashland. Glatt thanked Hersh and Seffinger, who is on the AEFB Board, for resuming these donations and making more food available for seniors who pick up meals and are often food insecure.

Bellegia suggested the use of drones available from RVCOG to track future fires and map escape routes. Seffinger responded that drones are budgeted for the Bear Creek Greenway, but that some people do not

endorse them because of the perception that they target the unhoused population. Gardiner noted that Ashland Fire and Rescue uses RVCOG drones during fire season.

Seffinger noted that City government is undergoing transitions with newly elected Council members and the transition of the City Administrator to a City Manager role. Seffinger offered kudos on APRC for being perceived as one of the most stable parts of City government during the COVID-19 pandemic; she noted that the Senior Services Division's role, as an information conduit and connector to social services, is much broader than providing programs for older adults.

Cassery added that OLLI is also an information hub for many City residents, and he announced an upcoming class on Disaster Preparation to help prepare seniors for the next disaster.

STANDING REPORTS

a. APRC Update

Gardiner highlighted two items of general interest. First, that the Japanese Garden in Lithia Park will be closed starting today for remodeling, a process that will take 18 to 24 months. Second, that the abbreviated ice rink season has been canceled due to the new reopening "pause" guidelines in Jackson County.

Black spoke about the Daniel Meyer pool project, stating that this has slowed down due to COVID-19. The hiatus allowed consideration, based on the City's Climate and Energy Action Plan, of an all-electric heating system for the pool. The Commissioners will continue to hear public input.

Seffinger asked about the new restrictions for gatherings under the County's reopening "pause." Black responded that APRC is anticipating that the pause will extend beyond two weeks and is tentatively preparing for a return to Phase 1 restrictions.

b. City Council Update

Seffinger reiterated that the City Council is in the middle of a transition following the recent election. With the new City Manager model, the Mayor will hold less decision-making power while the City Manager will have more power. Seffinger also noted that the new City Finance Director has started, and that there have been new appointments to the Budget Committee. Akins and Moran ran on a ticket prioritizing budget, so there may be shifts in the Council's priorities with the coming budget biennium planning. Bellegia asked Seffinger to alert ASAC if there is a need for advocacy and education about senior needs in the community, as an integral part of the overall community's needs (not in competition with other generations' needs). Gardiner advised all to think of individuals with an interest in parks and age-friendly communities for the Budget Committee. Seffinger added that it would be a good idea for ASAC to present to the new Council before the upcoming budget decisions, to clarify that the SSD is not only about running a senior center that's currently closed to the public, but has a much broader role as an information hub and connector to services. This will add this to the agenda for Livable Ashland's presentation to the Council.

c. Education Report

Mettler shared that SSD has resumed educational programming with presentations via Zoom. She listed those recently offered: *Stay Healthy and On Your Feet*, a fall prevention workshop co-sponsored with Providence (9/16/20), *Medicare 101* (10/7/20), and *Fast Powerful Tools to Harness Worries, and Turn the Winter Holidays into Pure Joy* (10/21/20). The following Zoom events are upcoming: *Nature Journaling Workshop* (12/9/20) and *Identity, Meaning and Purpose in Retirement* (1/27/21).

Glatt added that SSD has been in conversation with Jackson County Library Services (JCLS) about possible future collaboration on education programs, which would serve SSD and JCLS' separate but overlapping

audiences. She also thanked Casserly for sharing SSD programs in OLLI publicity, and invited him to share OLLI events that SSD might highlight in their monthly *Senior News*. Bellegia highlighted the following upcoming OLLI classes of particular interest: “Disaster Preparedness: Alameda, Cascadia, Zombies,” taught by Ashland Fire & Rescue CERT program coordinator Terri Stewart, and a series of six free community lectures on “New Directions in Healthcare in the Rogue Valley,” hosted by Asante Ashland Community Hospital.

d. Senior Services Superintendent Report

Glatt referred to her reports included in the meeting packet, stating that she included reports for canceled meetings so all could be part of public record. She noted that in the first year after she was hired as Senior Services Superintendent, staff worked the most on goals of increasing services, programming and publicity. With the crises faced by our community in 2020, staff focus has served the goal of helping vulnerable seniors.

Glatt noted that the previously discussed Gatekeeper Program is the best way forward. In these times of enforced isolation, a social call program may, however, be a better priority. SSD launched the Senior Phone Buddy program April 1 to match seniors for peer-to-peer support. Staff are currently planning to transition to a social call program designed by the Motion Picture and Television Fund (MPTF), which Glatt learned about through the National Council on Aging (NCOA). This model uses trained volunteers who are background-checked and better able to be support for those who are truly vulnerable because of a lack of organic support systems. MPTF provides free training toolkits and use of a call system with built-in volunteer reporting that protects client privacy.

Theis suggested it is time to revisit all the SSD goals and priorities at a future meeting.

ITEMS FROM ASAC MEMBERS AND WORK GROUPS

a. Livable Ashland (Theis)

Theis is now chair of the work group for “Livable Ashland: An All-Age Friendly Ashland.” She reported that the group is broadening their network by adding steering committee members from other sectors such as YMCA, Ashland Library, healthcare and religious groups. The next step is a needs assessment, which includes looking at existing data as well as outlining what still needs to be done. Bellegia added that Livable Ashland’s work is beneficial to all ages; we all do well when everyone is thriving.

b. Other Items from ASAC Members

Bellegia announced that OLLI’s Winter 2021 catalog is out, offering 75 classes via Zoom. Scholarships are available for those who can’t afford the \$125 all-inclusive membership fee. Gardiner requested an addition to the agenda for the next ASAC meeting: following up on Schaff’s public comment request to ASAC about the reduction of roadway speeds in Ashland. Glatt responded that she would wait to receive the white paper from this group.

MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2021

Bellegia pointed out the planned ASAC meeting schedule for 2021 in meeting packet. Glatt noted the change in date for the May 3 meeting due to an APRC furlough day on May 17. Members agreed to shift the May 3 meeting time to 3-4:30pm, so that Seffinger will get a break before the City Council meeting on that date.

The next meeting is Monday, January 11, 3:30-5:00 via Zoom.

Adjournment – 4:57 pm

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