

City of Ashland  
ASHLAND PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION (APRC)  
ASHLAND SENIOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ASAC)  
Meeting Minutes  
May 3, 2021

Committee Members Present:

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

Committee Members Absent:

- Kathy McNeal
- Mary Russell-Miller

Staff Present:

- Michael Black
- Isleen Glatt
- Natalie Mettler

**CALL TO ORDER**

Bellegia called the meeting to order at 3:04pm.

**OPENING**

Bellegia acknowledged and welcomed the citizen guests present: Jackie Bachman (OHRA, Housing and Human Services Commission) and Rob Casserly (OLLI).

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion:** Theis/Gardiner m/s to approve the minutes from March 8, 2021. Voice vote – all AYES. Minutes approved.

**ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA**

None.

**PUBLIC INPUT**

None.

**APPOINT & WELCOME NEW ASAC MEMBERS: KENNETH BENNET, DEBRA JOHNSON**

Gardiner welcomed and formally appointed Debra Johnson as a new ASAC member. Johnson summarized her relevant background: she is a retired geriatric care manager who remains active as a volunteer for hospice (Oregon Death with Dignity law) and the Red Cross, as well as with OLLI and Ashland Newcomers. She has joined ASAC out of her interest in aging and seniors and to share her expertise in these areas to further ASAC's work. Kenneth Bennet was not able to attend and has withdrawn his application. ASAC will continue recruiting for two open positions open as of July 1, 2021, keeping in mind diversity, equity and inclusion.

**ELECT OFFICERS FOR 2021-2022 & REVIEW TERM DATES FOR ALL MEMBERS**

Bellegia, Hersh and Russell-Miller's terms all end on June 30, 2021. Bellegia and Hersh will renew for another three-year term, while Russell-Miller will step down. McNeal and Theis's terms end on June 30, 2023. Gardiner volunteered for the Chair position.

**Motion:** Gardiner to serve as ASAC Chair from July 1, 2021 through July 1, 2022. Voice vote – all AYES.

There is no candidate for Co-Chair. Recruitment for this position will continue and be revisited at the July 12 ASAC meeting.

## **HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS SOLUTIONS IN ASHLAND**

Linda Reid, City of Ashland Housing Specialist, was not able to attend. Glatt will reschedule this presentation for a later ASAC meeting.

### **STANDING REPORTS**

#### **a. APRC Update**

Gardiner discussed the Ashland School District's planned remodel of Walker Elementary School, which includes relocating the parking lot and drop off area to the corner of Homes Avenue and Hunter Court. Hunter Court is a private road managed by APRC and will be impacted by the planned remodel. APRC has asked the School District for maintenance and cross-parking agreements for Hunter Court, but the School District has been hesitant to agree. Gardiner does not anticipate that the remodel will have any major impacts on the Senior Center, other than the loss of three street parking spots and a change in traffic flow, but warned that there will be major construction in the next 12-18 months.

Hersh requested a map to show the planned changes and other possible parking areas for the Senior Center; Black agreed to provide that information at the next meeting. Bellegia was concerned about the impact on parking and access to the Senior Center for patrons, and suggested that the Livable Ashland workgroup reach out to the School District to offer education on the benefits for the all generations in considering seniors in their remodel plans. Seniors are a too often underappreciated resource to their community; they can offer mentoring and financial support (via donations) to younger generations. Gardiner agreed that collaborating in sharing resources increases livability for all. Black and Gardiner are both working to advocate on behalf of the whole community in discussions with Ashland School District. Bellegia will pursue connecting with the School District to offer education.

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

Seffinger reported that currently the Council is absorbed in the budget process for the coming 2021-2023 biennium and that it continues to be important for ASAC to advocate for continued funding for programs relevant to community seniors. Theis shared that she contacted the Budget Committee, per Bellegia's request, and asked if there was more that could be done. Seffinger noted that the Council and Budget Committee consider the public emails and letters they receive, so it is important to advocate for continued funding for "enrichment programs," such as those provided by APRC, and highlight all the work to serve the community that APRC and SSD has carried out through the pandemic and Almeda fire, to balance out all the calls for cuts.

Gardiner reported that the Budget Committee has requested APRC be present to answer questions at their upcoming May 11, 2021 meeting. One of his priorities will be to clarify that cuts to the APRC budget will eliminate programs and services that make the community more livable for all. Black noted that the May 11 meeting is an important last opportunity to advocate, via public comment, on behalf of APRC, SSD and community seniors. Bellegia added that she could also invite other stakeholders from the Livable Ashland workgroup to offer comment, such as Ashland YMCA, SOU, Asante Ashland Community Hospital. Hersh asked if independent performance audits on City Departments are done and could be shared with the Council and Budget Committee. Black responded that APRC is audited financially annually, and that those reports are available on the City website. APRC has also undertaken a performance audit independently, and those results could be shared; performance audits are not standard practice for all City Departments at this time.

Seffinger also reported that the Council has approved the first reading of the City's Social Equity Commission. Bellegia asked if respect for aging is included in this document. Seffinger clarified that the focus is more on racial and gender diversity.

### **c. Education Report**

Mettler shared about upcoming SSD educational events: Veterans' Benefits: Are You Missing Out? (5/12/21) and RVTD Travel Training: New Programs and Services to Help Riders (6/16/21).

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

Glatt referred to her report included in the meeting packet. She added that SSD is wrapping up their work connecting community seniors to the COVID-19 vaccine with a final clinic with Rogue Community Health on May 4, 2021. Overall, SSD has helped over 600 seniors navigate to vaccine opportunities, and directly matched about 250 of those seniors to a vaccination appointment. SSD is now working with two Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) students on a practicum project studying social isolation and loneliness about seniors, both of which have been exacerbated by the ongoing pandemic. The students will be conducting a literature review and helping SSD staff transition the Senior Phone Buddy peer-to-peer social call program to one that relies on volunteer callers, as this will be a more robust way to provide the service long term. She hopes they will be able to present their research to ASAC at the upcoming July 12 meeting. She also addressed questions about the Senior Center reopening: current Oregon Health Authority (OHA) guidance indicates that senior centers are not allowed to operate regardless of risk level, so further clarification on reopening will only come once OHA provides updated guidance. Finally, she invited ASAC members to the July 21 Ice Cream Social Drive-Through for Seniors and their Families.

Gardiner asked if Glatt has noticed the same level of vaccine hesitancy among seniors as exists in the broader Ashland community. Glatt answered she has noticed some hesitancy but noted that SSD staff was mostly hearing from seniors who were actively seeking the vaccine. In partnership with Community Volunteer Network (CVN), SSD may be able to enlist an epidemiologist to offer an educational presentation about COVID-19 and the vaccines.

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

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

Theis reported that the Livable Ashland steering committee is continuing to meet and make progress. At their upcoming May 13 meeting, they will wrap up the needs assessment and discuss the group's future long-term role. The group is linked to ASAC's Advocacy workgroup but also represents other community stakeholders, such as Ashland YMCA, Jackson County Library Services (JCLS), SOU and Asante Ashland Community Hospital. Overall, their role will be to facilitate collaboration and mutual education of programs and services that increase livability for all.

Some ideas of their role are:

- Assess and identify livability issues
- Convene meetings of stakeholder organizations
- Encourage collaboration among stakeholder organizations
- Monitor collaborative Livable Ashland initiatives
- Publicize Livable Ashland initiatives
- Advocate for support for Livable Ashland initiatives

The steering committee is considering several potential Livable Ashland initiatives, with an emphasis on multigenerational projects.

Johnson asked if the Livable Ashland workgroup is the same behind the “A Livable Ashland for Everyone” Facebook group. Glatt clarified that there is no connection, and that the Facebook group is facilitated by Jackie and Jim Bachman and represents a group of citizens who are also interested in livability,

**b. Other Items from ASAC Members**

Hersh shared that Ashland Emergency Food Bank (AEFB) is working to expand home delivery of food boxes to seniors. He asked if ASAC would like him to briefly report on AEFB projects at future meetings. Glatt and Gardiner agreed this would work well under the “Other Items from ASAC Members” part of the agenda. Glatt shared that SSD will include the news about AEFB’s expanded home delivery in a future newsletter. She will also invite AEFB Executive Director Isaak Oliansky as a presenter at a future ASAC meeting.

**Next meeting** – Monday, July 12, 3:30-5pm via Zoom.

**Adjournment – 4:30 pm**

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