

City of Ashland  
ASHLAND PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION (APRC)  
ASHLAND SENIOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ASAC)  
Meeting Minutes  
March 14, 2022

Committee Members Present:

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

Staff Present:

- Michael Black
- Isleen Glatt
- Natalie Mettler

Committee Members Absent:

- Cori Frank

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**OPENING**

Citizen guests: Jim Bachman, Nancy Boyer, Noriko Toyokawa

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion:** Theis/Hersh m/s to approve the minutes from January 10, 2022. Voice vote – all AYES. Minutes approved.

**ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA**

Glatt announced that Gardiner has applied for and been accepted to continue serving on ASAC as a community member. He will continue to serve as ASAC Chair as well.

**PUBLIC INPUT**

None.

**PROPOSED MOBILE HOME PARK ZONING AMENDMENT**

Referring to the memo included in the meeting packet, Cynthia Dettman from Committee to Protect Ashland's Mobile Home Parks presented the group's appeal to ASAC for future support for a proposed mobile home park zone to protect Ashland's mobile home parks from closure.

Dettman added the following information during the question and answer period:

- The majority of Ashland's mobile park home residents are 65 years or older. Dettman guessed the overall figure to be around 80%. At Wingspread mobile home park, Dettman estimated that 75% of the residents are single, senior women.
- The group is currently focused on protecting mobile home parks in Ashland, but hopes to become a model for other areas in Jackson County, possibly even Josephine County.
- While it is a park owner's choice to close a mobile home, public good is also a factor. Zoning inherently infringes on property rights but is legal because of public good concerns. Given the critical need for affordable housing in this area, creating a mobile home park zone will help protect this public good. Owners have options beyond closing mobile home parks, such as selling the business.

- There is a risk that mobile home park owners may choose to liquidate their assets by closing parks if it is known that a mobile park zoning ordinance is coming. However, experience from Portland showed little owner resistance to zoning changes, and there has been no legal challenge there.
- This resident group has not been in contact with mobile park owners and does not expect owners will want to collaborate on a joint request for a mobile park zone ordinance.
- Oregon law prevents annual rent increase over 7% plus cost of living increase, which came to about 9% per year in recent years. This safeguard protects against large rent hikes when ownership of mobile home parks changes.
- The proposed mobile park zones would just cover Ashland's existing mobile home parks. The Wingspread and Tolman Creek mobile home parks are currently zoned as multifamily housing. The Pines mobile home park is currently zoned as commercial.
- Considering competition for land between mobile home parks and denser apartment structures, Dettman noted that the City is concerned with further traumatizing Alameda fire survivors by imposing additional relocation. It is also much cheaper to preserve existing housing than build new housing.
- Mobile home park residents have been making their own adaptations to make their homes and communities more all age-friendly, doing their best to ensure a safe environment for seniors.

#### **PROPOSED OUTDOOR CLASSROOM SPACE AT ASHLAND SENIOR CENTER**

Glatt shared that AARP offers Community Challenge Grants, generally up to \$10,000, to help communities undertake projects to become more age-friendly and livable. She sees an opportunity to increase venues for SSD and APRC programs by creating an outdoor multiuse space off Ashland Senior Center's deck. This would allow indoor programs to flip to outdoors during COVID-19 surges or for other reasons. Glatt proposes a 40'x36' decomposed granite floor surface, which would provide a more stable and level surface than the current grass. There are large shade trees at that location, and Glatt is researching options for a shade structure. She also suggested adding 3 to 4 benches along the back edge of the outdoor surface area. Livable Ashland has already endorsed this proposal, and Glatt is now seeking ASAC endorsement. In response to questions, Glatt answered:

- This area will be at ground level; it is too expensive to extend the existing deck. This project could be considered a pilot to assess demand for and user satisfaction with an outdoor classroom area. If sufficient usage is demonstrated, staff may be able to apply for a larger grant for a more permanent space in future.
- The proposed benches are for observation of classes and to store personal belongings, not to encourage conversation clusters that may create user conflict with an ongoing class. A separate grant for conversation clusters would be a good future project.
- The grant proposal is due on March 22. Black already voiced full support, and Glatt consulted with Parks staff, who provided quotes for the in-house work they could provide. The APRC Recreation Division also supports this proposal and may make use of the space when not in use by senior programs.
- After checking with current instructors about the pros and cons of various surfacing options, all preferred a tennis court surface (asphalt with special paint) but this is prohibitively expensive for the current grant. All queried instructors support and are interested in a possible outdoor classroom space, and all felt they could use the decomposed granite surface.

**Motion:** Theis/ Bellegia m/s to support the grant request for a proposed outdoor space at Ashland Senior Center. Voice vote – all AYES. Motion passed.

## **STANDING REPORTS**

### **a. APRC Update**

No report until there is a new Commissioner representative to ASAC.

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

Seffinger updated about the City survey to ascertain citizen priorities regarding General Fund budget spending. Other regular business by the City Council has recently been primarily focused on budget issues. The survey will be mailed to all residents in May and also available for pick-up at various locations. In response to questions, Seffinger answered:

- The City Council subcommittee working on this survey, of which Seffinger is a part, is currently looking at bundling services that citizens may want to be funded out of the General Fund.
- The survey will also be asking about increasing revenue, not just cutting expenses and services.
- Survey questions will be framed to make repercussions clear; potential changes to policy and budget will be connected to possible outcomes with public impact.
- Seffinger has asked for a question specifically about the services and programs provided by the SSD.

### **c. Education Report**

Mettler shared about upcoming educational presentations: The Sense of Touch (3/23/22) and Understanding Alzheimer's and Dementia (4/13/22).

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

Glatt referred to her report included in the meeting packet. She highlighted the change in mask mandate: at Ashland Senior Center masks are now recommended but not required. APRC is following OHA guidelines, which continue to strongly recommend masking for risk groups, including all those aged 65yrs+. Staff has chosen to continue masking to maximize protection of patrons and model mask encouragement.

Glatt invited ASAC members to volunteer at events and as presenters. Any members interested in offering an educational presentation through SSD should contact Mettler to arrange details; they may also help connect Mettler to other potential presenters in the community.

Glatt introduced Professor Noriko Toyokawa, who has taken over for Mary Russell-Miller in teaching the Psychology of Aging at SOU.

Glatt also shared that SSD will once again be working with OHSU interns this spring and fall, continuing last year's work on digital access and education. Glatt will suggest the interns do a project to educate seniors on using telehealth and MyChart, partnering with both Asante and Providence to offer presentations.

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

This reported that Livable Ashland steering committee is continuing to meet every other month; the last meeting was in February. They continue to have a good representation from across Ashland and are shifting to calling the group an "alliance," as a standalone entity. The priority is to be a clearing house and provide synergy for projects that partners do that benefit the overall community, such as JCLS and Asante seeing a need for digital education to help patients navigate MyChart. The group may undertake a more formal needs assessment in future. Seffinger added that the Livable Ashland group has already had local impact, for example the inclusion of universal design in some recent housing developments.

Seffinger shared, as a member of the Ashland Emergency Food Bank (AEFB) Board, that their services remain available to seniors who may be food insecure, especially with current inflation. Hersh added, as an AEFB volunteer, that he brings some supplies to Ashland Senior Center when requested by the Food & Friends Meal Site Coordinator on behalf of patrons. He suggested that we set up a mini-food pantry at Ashland Senior Center. He also reminded all that AEFB offers home delivery of food boxes.

**Next meeting** – Monday, May 9, 3:30-5:00pm (tentatively planned for in-person)

**Adjournment** – 5:02pm

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