

City of Ashland  
ASHLAND PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION (APRC)  
ASHLAND SENIOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ASAC)  
Meeting Minutes  
July 11, 2022

Committee Members Present:

- Anne Bellegia
- Cori Frank
- Debra Johnson, Vice Chair
- Jim Bachman
- Kathy McNeal
- Mike Gardiner, Chair
- Noriko Toyokawa
- Stef Seffinger

Staff Present:

- Isleen Glatt
- Natalie Mettler

Committee Members Absent:

- Sandy Theis

**CALL TO ORDER**

Gardiner called the meeting to order at 3:30pm. He welcomed new ASAC member Noriko Toyokawa, Assistant Professor of Psychology at SOU. Each member introduced themselves with their relevant backgrounds.

**OPENING**

Citizen guests: Nancy Boyer, Rob Casserly, Dean Silver.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion:** McNeal/Frank m/s to approve the minutes from May 9, 2022. Voice vote – all AYES. Minutes approved.

**ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA**

Frank asked to put the impact of budget cutbacks on the Senior Services Division (SSD) on the agenda. This will be covered in the APMC and City Council Liaison's standing reports. She also asked when the City's survey results will be back. Gardiner answered that the collection of survey results was completed on July 8 but there is not yet a date for when results will be made public. Seffinger confirmed.

**PUBLIC INPUT**

None.

**STANDING REPORTS**

**a. APMC Liaison**

Commissioner Bachman reported that APMC Director Black presented his proposal for \$350,000 in cuts to the APMC budget. Recommendations include reducing staffing by not hiring temps and seasonal workers furlough days for the Director position, withdrawing from the lease on Pioneer Hall, and reducing spending on equipment and fleet. Bachman expects the Commission to approve these recommendations in their 7/13/22 meeting. He is concerned that the reduction in staff and equipment for parks will have a negative impact on parks' maintenance, and that putting off equipment and fleet maintenance will increase future costs in this era of inflation. In addition, APMC is still absorbing the news that the City Council is considering the City Manager's proposal to revise the City Charter to change how APMC has functioned for the last 100+ years and how the

City uses the Food & Beverage tax. He deferred to local media reporting about what will be on the November ballot.

#### **b. City Council Liaison**

Councilor Seffinger confirmed that Commissioner Bachman covered the main issues about the budget. She said citizens will decide, via ballot, about the future structure of APRC leadership and how APRC relates to the City regarding employee policy. The Council is also considering changes in how commissions are established, which may result in reclassification of some commissions as committees, a reduction in the number of committees, and an increase in ad-hoc working groups.

Bellegia noted that ASAC, as an advisory committee and advocacy group, should see the budget changes as cause for concern. Such changes have the potential to affect all age groups. For example, gutting resources for maintenance will create increasing safety issues.

#### **c. Education Report**

Mettler announced upcoming educational presentations: End-of-Life Planning (8/17/22), Author Talk: Sue De Marinis, *The Station Master's Wife* (9/21/22), Yoga Basics Workshop (9/28/22). She also reported that monthly computer basics classes will be offered, in partnership with Jackson County Library Services, during September through December. She invited all to the Ice Cream Social for seniors and their families on 7/13/22.

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

Glatt echoed Mettler's invitation to the Ice Cream Social. She referred to her report included in the meeting packet.

Glatt then responded to Frank's request about budget cut impacts on SSD. She offered some history on the current situation: at the beginning of the pandemic, APRC laid off employees including three office assistants, but SSD was able to retain their office assistant. This helped support all the intervention, education and support work SSD was able to offer to community seniors, even while all staff were working remotely. This work included being an information source source for seniors, help accessing other community services, continuing to host the RVCOG Food & Friends program to ensure vulnerable Ashland seniors could get meals delivered at home, and a major project to help seniors access the early COVID-19 vaccines.

Ashland Senior Center finally reopened to the public in March 2022, but shortly thereafter lost their office assistant due to other circumstances. That position could not be refilled during the City's hiring freeze. Glatt believes that no one in APRC or the City wants to reduce services to seniors, but given the need to make cuts, she predicts APRC will formally decide to no longer fund the 0.75 FTE Office Assistant II position at SSD. SSD will instead have 0.25 of an 1.0 FTE position, to be shared with the Recreation Division. This staff person will primarily help with activity registration and vacation coverage for SSD staff. She reminded all that another strategy to cope with reduced staffing has been closing Ashland Senior Center to the public on Fridays. Friday activities have been shifted to other weekdays to avoid cutting activities and services. Net activities and services are therefore similar to when SSD was fully staffed, but SSD can no longer plan as expansively as they had been tasked in the restructuring of the Division.

Glatt highlighted from her report the discussion about Ashland Senior Center potentially being used as a City cooling center. So far, a cooling center has been held at Pioneer Hall and the City is working with Jackson County Library Services to use Ashland Library as an alternative site. Glatt thinks the trend of using these other locations will continue.

## **ASANTE ASHLAND COMMUNITY HOSPITAL'S (AACH) AGE FRIENDLY HOSPITAL INITIATIVE**

Dr. Steven Hersch, AACH Administrator and Vice President of Medical Affairs, presented on AACH's work to become an age-friendly hospital, including training, protocols, design of the ward and recruiting for an Asante Foundation Chair in Geriatrics (see [presentation slides](#)).

Hersch explained that Asante has chosen an age-friendly approach to address the community's changing needs as the local demographic of older adults continues to grow. An aging population has unique needs as their physiological reserves decrease over time. AACH was chosen as the pilot site in the Rogue Valley for this initiative as it is a high-touch facility with a culture of teamwork across departments and strong community engagement. The core principles of Asante's Age Friendly Hospital System are captured in the 4 M's framework: What Matters, Medication, Mentation and Mobility. Other locations and organizations address some of these needs, but AACH is seeking to bring them together. The hope is that, if successful, this program will grow out into the community organically.

During a question-and-answer period:

- Frank asked how patient care is coordinated, such as through a case manager or discharge planner. Hersch responded that AACH facilitates two work group meetings per month to discuss how to coordinate across relevant disciplines and departments, and the discharge planners are included.
- Seffinger asked if there are any psychology or counseling specialists available to discharged patients through this program, and whether the medicinal use of marijuana and psilocybin is being considered. Hersch answered that mental health support is by telehealth on a case-by-case basis. The use of medical marijuana remains inconsistent with Asante's mission, and medical use of psilocybin is permitted only within very narrow confines that Asante does not meet.
- Bellegia noted that primary care providers are a critical part of patient care, and the shortage of such providers in this region impacts care before and after hospitalization. Hersch noted that the shortage of primary care providers is nationwide.
- Bellegia also noted that it is a tall order to carry out integrated communication with patients and their family members. Hersch explained that AACH communicates with out-of-system primary care providers via written communication and phone calls. Hersch would like to see support from the community to support integration of care and communication. Community members can be trained to help others. Bellegia thanked Hersch for Asante's efforts in community education so far, such as making community members more literate in using MyChart.
- Johnson asked how long follow-up is provided for a discharged patient. Hersch noted that a number of efforts are made to reduce readmission, but the length of follow-up care is contingent on a patient's diagnosis and who provides their primary care. Nurse navigators are assigned to certain high-need diagnosis patients, such as heart failure and COPD, to help patients navigate the post-hospitalization transition. There is also a longitudinal care team for those with an Asante primary care provider. This team will follow a patient for months to track social determinants of health. He recognized that patient follow-up care is not as universal as anyone would like but is limited by funding and resources. Seffinger asked about coordination for patients with Providence primary care providers. Hersch said it would be the

same as with any non-Asante primary care provider: calling the primary care provider to discuss that patient's care and directing them to review the patient's after-visit summary. He affirmed that area physicians often have productive professional relationships beyond their affiliation, and this facilitates good coordination.

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

Bellegia reported that Livable Ashland steering committee met in June and will meet again in August but has been hampered by scheduling issues to bring all partners to the table. As a body without a budget, their role is in identifying existing organizations with relevant initiatives on which to collaborate. The group is waiting to update the City Council before making a public announcement about their work.

**Next meeting** – Monday, September 12, 3:30-5:00pm (Zoom)

Members agreed to return to meeting on Zoom due to high COVID-19 rates and to reduce required staff time.

**Adjournment** – 4:54pm

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