

City of Ashland
ASHLAND PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION (APRC)
ASHLAND SENIOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ASAC)
Meeting Minutes
January 9, 2023

Committee Members Present:

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

Staff Present:

- Isleen Glatt
- Natalie Mettler

CALL TO ORDER

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

OPENING

Citizen guests: Bob Kaplan

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Bachman/Theis m/s to approve the minutes from November 14, 2022. Voice vote – all AYES. Minutes approved.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA

None.

PUBLIC INPUT

Guest Bob Kaplan introduced himself. He is a new City Councilor exploring serving as liaison to ASAC.

REBUILDING TOGETHER ROGUE VALLEY (RTRV) PRESENTATION

Kendyl Berkowitz, Acting Executive Director of Rebuilding Together Rogue valley, presented on the operations, funding and services for seniors offered by the organization. See [presentation slides](#).

Berkowitz added the following information during a question-and-answer period:

- *How long is the client waitlist?*
This depends on the service. Costly items like ramps and other bigger projects lack funding and take longer. “Friday installs” are low-cost, high-impact projects like shower bars and are more quickly completed.
- *Could volunteers help with client intake?*
RTRV currently uses an answering service that takes clients through intake questions. More volunteer involvement would be good in future, but the answering service is meeting the need for now and allowing RTRV staff to focus on critical work.
- *Beyond ramps, DMEs and hallway widening, what other work does RTRV do to help people that in a home that’s not otherwise livable?*

This depends on the specific grant for which an individual qualifies. Some grants have covered exterior repairs such as siding or downspouts. It is challenging to succinctly cover all relevant questions within different grant stipulations during client intake.

- *Is the waitlist length due to funding issues or a shortage of contractors?*
RTRV has enough general contractors but struggles to find specialists such as electricians and plumbers. Funding is the biggest obstacle.
- *Are grants sufficient to cover the cost of a stair-lift installation?*
Stair-lifts have not yet been requested by any client. Staff is unsure of the cost, but open to such work given funding availability.
- *Are wheelchairs getting more streamlined, thereby circumventing the need for hallway widening?*
Not sure if wheelchairs are improving to the point to obviate hallway issues. Wheelchairs are not qualified Durable Medical Equipment (DME) for RTRV's funding purposes.
- *Could RTRV generate more income by serving higher-income clients who pay for their services?*
If clients are over-income but otherwise qualify for assistance, RTRV puts them directly in touch with contractors.
- *What counts as DME?*
Depends on specifications within each grant, but includes smoke detectors, grab bars, toilet risers, shower stools, shower wands, air purifiers, air filters, commodes, carbon dioxide detectors, bed railings, stair railings at the front door.

STANDING REPORTS

a. APRC Liaison

Commissioner Bachman reported that the APRC business meeting is back in-person this Wednesday, January 11. They have a full agenda, including: presentation by Friends of Ashland Parks & Open Spaces about the citizen initiative to dedicate to the City's Food & Beverage tax as APRC funding, work with Ashland Fire & Rescue on prescribed burns on Parks' lands, public input for finalizing the East Main Street park design, and budget presentation. Bellegia asked about timing to revisit constructing adult playground equipment in City parks. Gardiner announced a new January 30 date for the City of Ashland Town Hall gathering to identify citizen priorities in the next budget biennium. Bellegia asked if this Town Hall is replacing the longer Citizen Budget Committee process of the past. She is concerned that budget cuts will impact senior services, which should be a priority to protect. Kaplan, as a member of the public who has served on the Citizen Budget Committee, confirmed that that process will be shorter and starting later than before. He clarified that the City approves the overall budget for APRC, then the Commissioners approve a dedicated amount for SSD. He hopes that there will be more of a process to onboard and educate members of the Citizen Budget Committee. Bachman noted it is unclear what the Commissioners' discretion to allocate their funding will be under the new City Manager system.

b. City Council Liaison

There is currently no City Council Liaison.

c. Education Report

Mettler reported strong registration for upcoming January-April educational presentations and social events, as well as regular programs; this is a positive outcome of getting the word out early via APRC *Playguide*, as well as monthly *Senior News* newsletter. She also reported representing SSD to the public at the JCLS Community Table event on January 7, 2023.

d. Senior Services Superintendent Report

Glatt highlighted items from her attached report. She thanked ASAC members for helping at recent holiday events. She reported that, going into budget season, there seems to be more money available for capital improvement projects, which APRC leadership will prioritize spending on deferred maintenance, including replacement of the Ashland Senior Center roof. She also shared that she has been advocating with the City staff to raise the income limit for their senior utility discount program in the next biennium budget; she may call on ASAC members to help with this advocacy. She noted that SSD has reached a functional balance after shrinking to two staff. Volunteer help and cautious, sensible growth has supported this balance.

Bellegia noted that the budget savings from no longer paying a third staff person are “false savings;” if SSD staff had more capacity, they could apply for grants and increase sponsors. Bellegia congratulated Glatt on her success in marshalling program sponsors for senior activities. Theis said she appreciated the opportunity to meet and interact with SSD patrons while volunteering at recent holiday events.

ITEMS FROM ASAC MEMBERS OR WORK GROUPS

a. Livable Ashland Alliance update

She reported that the Livable Ashland Alliance met last week and has been meeting every other month. Each representative discusses their agency’s livability related work at these meetings, and this generates synergy among member agencies. Each agency has been asked to commit to a livability initiative, which generally dovetails with work the agency is already doing. The group continues to look at the possibility of securing fiscal sponsorship, which could support project coordination to guide creating an action plan. Bellegia reported that the Ashland YMCA is considering taking on a significant role in providing community childcare services. She also invited Toyokawa to give an update on her proposal for SOU to apply to join the Age-Friendly University Global Network. Toyokawa reported that the proposal has been accepted by the SOU president and leadership and is now pending submission. Toyokawa added that she is teaching two sections of Psychology of Aging and looking for older adults to join her class discussions.

b. Other items from ASAC members

Frank asked about education for seniors on how to use supermarket e-coupons, which she sees as a practical need for community seniors. Mettler will work with Frank to organize such education. Glatt asked what topics ASAC members would like to see presented in future meetings. The following were suggested as priorities: opportunity to give input to APRC Director Black on budget; services provided by a death doula and End of Life planning; Ashland at Home services, care circles and other informal options for care at home; SSD staff perspective on greatest needs for seniors and most helpful community organizations.

Next meeting – Monday, March 13, 2023, 3:30-5:00pm (Zoom)

Adjournment – 4:56pm

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