

City of Ashland
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
AD-HOC SENIOR PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ASPAC)
MEETING MINUTES
January 8, 2018

Committee Members Present:

- Jackie Bachman, Citizen Member (Senior Program Patron / Chair)
- Marion Moore, Citizen Member (Senior Program Yoga Instructor / Vice Chair)
- Anne Bellegia, OLLI Program Director
- Peggy Byrnes, Citizen Member (Senior Program Patron)
- Rob Casserly, Citizen Member (SOU, OLLI Program Manager)
- Katharine Danner, Ashland At Home Representative
- Mike Gardiner, APRC Commissioner
- Jim Lewis, APRC Commissioner
- Laura O’Byron, RVCOG Representative
- Mary Russell-Miller, Citizen Member (SOU Faculty Member)
- Stef Seffinger, Ashland City Councilor

Facilitator Present:

- Jon Lange, Jon Lange Consulting

Staff Members Present:

- Michael Black, APRC Director
- Rachel Dials, APRC Recreation Superintendent
- Susan Dyssegard, APRC Executive Assistant

Committee and Staff Members Absent:

- None

I. Opening and Reminders (Lange, 1 minute)

Facilitator Jon Lange called the meeting to order at 3:16pm at Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main Street in Ashland. He reminded everyone to speak into their microphones and pointed out the ground rules posted in the meeting room.

II. Approval of Minutes (Bachman, 5 minutes)

MOTION: O’Byron moved / Bellegia seconded approval of the minutes as presented.

The vote was all yes

III. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda (All members, 2 minutes)

There were none.

IV. Public Input (20 minutes)

Sue Wilson, Ashland, OR

[See full testimony](#)

Gwen Davies, Ashland, OR

[See full testimony](#). She added that if APRC were moving to an Internet-based system, it would present a barrier to 40 or 50% of the seniors in Ashland who might have physical or technology challenges. She said it was a bad system to implement.

David Stein, Ashland, OR

Stein said the senior services provided by the former experienced Ashland Senior Program Outreach Specialist saved his life. He spoke about a physical health challenge and said that back in 2009, the Outreach Specialist visited his home and helped him find low income assistance through DHS and advocated on his behalf with the City of Ashland utility billing department, resulting in a lower electric bill. He said he would have fallen through the cracks otherwise. He expressed that the current absence of a program Outreach Specialist was a grave injustice that showed a lack of humanity.

Claudia Ballard, Ashland, OR

[See full testimony](#)

Ed Green, Ashland, OR

[See full testimony](#)

Michael Hersh, Ashland, OR

Hersh said the ASPAC Committee members were trapped and he offered suggestions for Item IX on the agenda, regarding the Senior Program Manager requirements and search process. He recommended that if someone other than the former manager was hired in the future, that person should possess empathy, care and relevant experience working in small towns. He said those qualities should be valued over other qualities listed in the job description. To be fair about the process, he said Senior Program users should be included on the selection committee, with full voting rights.

Bachman stated that ASPAC members were welcome to respond to the public comments, but later in the meeting.

V. Senior Program Progress Report (Dials, 5 minutes)

Dials provided an update on the programs, classes and services offered at the Senior Center located at 1699 Homes Avenue. She said the center continued to operate Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 3:30pm. She provided phone numbers and other details relevant to Ashland Senior Program offerings.

Discussion

Bellegia asked, in relation to comments made by one of the public speakers, about outreach efforts. Dials responded that APRC staff currently weren't visiting homes but were making connections when

patrons visited the center. Black said the former Outreach Specialist had worked approximately eight to ten hours per week but there were no records related to her home visits. O'Bryon said Katie Merola of RVCOG, working at the center on Wednesdays, was a resource person who engaged with individuals and referred staff to options counselors through RVCOG, Senior Disability Services. She said there was a need for education toward providing awareness about this service. Byrnes asked how to identify those in need; Black said staff relied on neighbors, friends and family to reach out to find the right agency or resource for their loved ones, with the Senior Program serving as a resource for those efforts. Seffinger said Ashland Fire and Rescue took emergency calls and referred for services. O'Bryon said RVCOG operated a disaster registry for Jackson and Josephine counties, with staff and volunteers serving as counselors during disasters. They regularly checked with registrants to verify contact information. Danner said she took the options counseling training and that all community members held a responsibility to identify neighbors and community members in need and to make phone calls if necessary.

VI. Framework for Recommendations: The National Standards of Excellence (Bachman, 2 minutes)

Bachman talked about the distinction between the Senior Center and Senior Program. She said the Senior Center was clearly the hub and central location of activities, programs and services for the senior community while the Senior Program was the service umbrella encompassing partnerships and networks linking seniors to needed services that might be located inside or outside the Senior Center. An example she provided of an outside service (as part of the Senior Program but located within the Senior Center) was the Food & Friends lunch program operated by RVCOG.

Bachman reminded ASPAC about the National Standards of Excellence and said she'd asked Dials to fill out a checklist about those criteria in the standards that were currently in place at the program, in progress or missing at this time. Dials had completed the checklist and it was included within the meeting packet. Bachman said ASPAC would be using all the public input received throughout the process—from Listening Posts, ASPAC meetings, the open house and the community assessment in January. In addition, ASPAC would be using the expertise and knowledge of ASPAC members to form and inform the recommendations. Bachman said the framework of the recommendations would be categorized under either Best Practices or Standards of Excellence.

Cassery asked about the number of senior centers nationwide using those standards and Best Practices. Bachman responded that there were two in Oregon and approximately 300 around the country. She said she was not advocating for an immediate accreditation but would like to see it completed in a few years, after a framework was implemented. Byrnes said, as a layperson, that the standards were professional-sounding and might not appeal to the public. She said the Best Practices would be a better place to focus ASPAC's attention. Bachman said the standards could still be used but simplified.

VII. Subcommittee Progress Reports (Subcommittee Chairs; 20 minutes)

A. **Partnerships Subcommittee (O'Bryon):** O'Bryon said the Partnerships Subcommittee met twice since the last ASPAC meeting – December 13 and 29 – and completed a compilation of current partnerships and possible new partnerships that could enrich Senior Program offerings, including some that could lead to the underwriting of program costs or program revenues. She said establishing and maintaining partnership relationships took time and attention and required a fully staffed program to

evaluate and prioritize those worth pursuing. She said the partnership compilation would be placed into a binder for the new permanent staff, along with other documents of an advisory nature, rather than making it a part of the recommendation report. She said she was impressed by the committee members' interest in exploring potential partnerships and what they might have to offer. Bellegia said partnerships were an extension strategy for doing the most with what was available. Casserly said there was already a good foundation of partnerships, none of which would need to be removed, so the committee could simply add to the already impressive list of partnerships. O'Bryon said the list of potential additional partnerships would provide an expanded regional awareness of options for seniors. Bellegia said the funding for all programs, including for education and health, was finite and when partnerships were formed, advocacy was expanded for funding sources to support vulnerable individuals.

B. Senior Program Needs Assessment: Purpose and Planning (Moore): Moore said the Needs Assessment Subcommittee was formed primarily to allow for adequate citizen public input for the upcoming recommendations of ASPAC. The subcommittee consisted of Byrnes, Russell-Miller, Bellegia, Moore and Black. She said the inquiry was handled in two phases: a qualitative phase and a quantitative phase. She turned the topic over to Bellegia to describe the process.

Bellegia said the qualitative phase of the needs assessment was nearly complete. She described the work of this phase: attending Parks Commission meetings in August, reviewing the Ashland Senior Program "binder," reviewing the SOS website content, attending town hall meetings, listening to public commentary, holding individual conversations with stakeholders and holding three community listening sessions. She said qualitative phase input would be driving early recommendations to the Parks Commission and staff. Toward creating a community survey, Bellegia said the group reviewed / researched other local, relevant surveys, Ashland census data, needs assessments from senior communities in other locales and the NISC's Standards of Excellence and Best Practices. Toward designing the questionnaire, goals were to 1) optimize the response rate by limiting the number and complexity of questions; 2) phrase the questions in simple, unambiguous ways and 3) identify characteristics of the response for purposes of cross-tabulations. The group was particularly interested in learning about the extent of local older citizens' challenges around health, transportation, housing, finances and social connections; learning what mattered to Ashland citizens with regard to the Senior Program; prioritizing other programs' value to community members; and an opportunity to give extensive, verbatim responses on the survey. Given the large number of Ashland seniors or those with associations with seniors, she hoped for a broad survey response.

Moore talked about the promotion and distribution of the survey, which she said would span January 10 through 26. Flyers would be distributed, a press release issued to newspapers and radio stations and an ad placed in the local newspaper. To take the survey, it would be possible to click on an electronic link posted on the City of Ashland website and on APRC's Facebook page. The link would take people directly to the Survey Monkey survey. Emails would be distributed to Ashland members of OLLI and Ashland At Home members. Respondents would be welcome to take the survey in paper form or to call in their responses to staff at the Senior Center, with all responses typed into Survey Monkey. Paper copies of the survey would be distributed to the City of Ashland City Hall utility billing office. Tabling opportunities would occur on January 15 and 19 from 10:30 to noon at Pony Espresso coffee shop on Lithia Way. It would also be possible to distribute paper copy surveys with Food & Friends home meal

deliveries. Moore said she hoped ASPAC members would approve the recommended survey and assist with distributing flyers and surveys.

Motion: Danner moved / Lewis seconded approval of the ASPAC survey and its distribution as presented.

Discussion

Danner said she was impressed with the comprehensive nature of the survey and she thanked the subcommittee for their work. A member of the audience asked whether the surveys would be distributed to churches; the answer was yes, churches would be mailed the flyer and the survey, with additional copies provided upon request.

The vote was all yes

C. **Listening Sessions / Open House Subcommittee (Bachman):** Bachman said three listening sessions were held, with approximately 30 community members in attendance per session. Common feedback received from the sessions were for experienced, knowledgeable, qualified, compassionate staff possessing the ability to provide outreach and referrals. Experience working with seniors was considered a must. Program and service recommendations included transportation assistance for the meals program, bocce ball and many others. Longer hours were requested for the center along with additional classrooms for programs, including those not at the center. Alternative funding sources were suggested. A separate division for the Senior Program was recommended along with an accelerated recruitment and hiring process for a manager. Expanded public meeting notifications were suggested along with a focus on seniors rather than on recreation. A long-term plan was requested. Bachman said all ideas generated from the listening sessions would be referred to as ASPAC crafted its recommendations.

VIII. Organizational Structure for Senior Center: Separate Division (Bachman, all members, 10 minutes)

Bachman recommended, given the public input received, that a separate division be created within APRC for the Senior Program, reporting directly to the APRC Director. She said it was currently under the supervision of the Recreation Superintendent; however, the Senior Program was not a recreation program; it provided valuable services to seniors, far beyond recreational activities.

Motion: Bellegia moved / Byrnes seconded approval of creating a new division within APRC for the Ashland Senior Program, with the position reporting to the APRC Director.

Discussion

Gardiner said there were valid reasons for creating this separate division and he would welcome seeing the recommendation come before the Parks Commission. Bachman stated that as the job description was reviewed and revised, the level of expertise required would make it clear that this was not a simple senior program; it had the higher community value of a division. Gardiner agreed and said a direct reporting structure to the APRC Director would be of value. Danner said the new manager should become actively involved with city-wide planning activities while also supervising the activities, services and staff of the program.

The vote was all yes

IX. Discussion of Suggested Requirements of Senior Program Manager Position and Search Process (O'Bryon, all members, 10 minutes)

O'Bryon said the draft program description was created by a subcommittee and was based on Best Practices and research about similar positions in other agencies. It was a recommended template that would be refined by APRC. The position would provide oversight of the Senior Program, social services, budgeting, planning, programming and evaluation, among other duties. Given all the responsibilities, it would be important to have someone with comprehensive skills. She asked for feedback on the draft program description.

Discussion

If "public outreach" were considered an important element of the program, Moore suggested including it more directly in the program description; Bellegia agreed. Bachman agreed that other layers of review were needed, including by City of Ashland HR and Legal, but said these were the qualities ASPAC believed to be essential. O'Bryon agreed with Moore regarding adding "social service outreach" or "referrals to regional outreach services" to the program description. Bellegia said the position would also assist, not just refer for services. O'Bryon said some individuals could get all they needed from a phone call while others needed additional assistance, including possible referrals, for their needs to be met. Gardiner said he and Black discussed the job description and felt that other changes were needed before forwarding it to City HR and Legal for additional feedback. Bellegia said she would want to see the concepts that were included in the position description used as part of the selection process. Lewis asked for more details about the research conducted about other senior centers; Bellegia said a dozen were researched, including some outside of Oregon. The subcommittee more heavily weighted those reflecting values similar to Ashland's. Byrnes said she had a hard time with the job description; it seemed like an impossible job. She asked how the duties would be prioritized so the job could be accomplished. O'Bryon said she had developed job descriptions throughout her career in different domains. She felt that the search committee would be able to discern the most qualified candidates who would be the best fit. Even though a job could look complicated in verbiage, ultimately the process would reveal the most qualified candidates. Lewis spoke favorably about the excellent framework provided and said the work done so far was moving the process forward to the final document; Black agreed. Seffinger expressed that some of the items seemed to be overreaches—such as long-term strategic planning. The Senior Program Manager would not develop the plan but would work with the City of Ashland to assist. She asked for some of the language to be altered to reflect that the City had this broader responsibility of developing and maintaining infrastructure and an emergency response plan and APRC had its own promotions coordinator, in charge of social media, not the Senior Program Manager. Bellegia stated that this was not the final document; it was a framemark for the recruitment process. She asked whether a motion to proceed could be offered.

Motion: O'Bryon recommended and Bachman moved / Lewis seconded approval for 1) APRC to accept the recommendation from the subcommittee, as well as ASPAC, that encouraged them to use the proposed framework document as guidance in developing the Senior Program description and Senior Program Manager job description and 2) APRC to initiate and establish the search for the Senior Program Manager as soon as possible.

Discussion

Black said he was hearing a request for a higher level of management for the position. He said ASPAC was making a recommendation to the Parks Commission about essential functions needed for the position, some of which were at a higher level, and he appreciated the work completed to date. He felt that the

commission could work with this list of essential duties and qualities. Bachman asked if Black was comfortable with having the recruitment process begin right away, with the manager starting by July 1. Black said the job description required further refinement by City HR and Legal, as well as Dials and himself, but he would move the process forward as quickly as possible.

Suggested Amendment: Lewis asked for an amendment to the document to include the word “outreach.” O’Byron said she was thinking the same thing: include within the description one more bulleted item called “social services outreach” or “referral to regional outreach services.”

The motion was unanimously approved as amended

X. Discussion of Senior Program Budget (Bachman, all members 10 minutes)

Bachman gave a brief history of the Senior Program budget, stating that it was transferred from the City to APRC ten years prior, as the City had been financially stressed at that time and APRC was well funded then. The transfer had been conducted without any specific financial assistance from the City, nor was any assistance provided henceforth. This had created the current need for additional funding. In order to provide the appropriate level of staffing and the ability to link seniors to essential services while expanding programs and services such as referral information, outreach, transportation, additional classes and more field trips, more ongoing funding was needed in the APRC Senior Program budget for personnel. The current approved Senior Program budget for personnel for 2018-19 was \$151,000, including benefits, for one Senior Program Manager and two part-time, 10-hour-per-week office support staff (max). This would mean that the center would not be covered when the manager was off-site attending trainings or for other professional reasons. In order to hire at the level discussed above, the cost of personnel would be \$232,000 for a Tier 3-level PERS employee up to \$262,000 for a Tier 1-level PERS employee. These funds would provide from a 1.75 FTE level up to 3.0 FTE. This meant that APRC needed an approximate additional \$100,000 to fund the Senior Program at an appropriate level and to provide adequate services for Ashland seniors. She asked from where the funding would be generated. She asked for a joint APRC / City of Ashland strategic planning session about meeting the needs of Ashland seniors on an ongoing basis (not a one-time agreement). She suggested that APRC and the City of Ashland jointly provide a support mechanism to link seniors with needed services, especially for those in the 80+ category, the “Super Senior” group and the fastest growing subgroup of seniors in the 2010 Ashland census (coined the “silver tsunami” by Bellegia). She referenced a 2014 article written by Seffinger for the Tidings about the growth of the local senior population. Seffinger said she wanted to see the needs of seniors infused into all the City of Ashland departments along with strategic planning efforts. Seffinger said that as the 2017-19 budget currently stood, the Budget Committee decided what APRC would get for its needs and APRC determined how to spend those funds. Bachman said she was hoping to hear questions and comments about her presentation and to hear from staff about how the currently approved budget would be used to meet the needs of Ashland seniors.

Discussion

Lewis said a listening session speaker had talked about a community foundation in which foundation funds were used as an accessory to the property taxes budgeted for the senior program. Bellegia said she thought people in general did not understand the reality that they, or someone they cared about, would have serious, unanticipated, expensive needs in the future. She said those needs mainly required guidance toward resources. ASPAC had heard public testimony to this effect from many citizens. She said Ashland had a 46% population of seniors, an accelerated number from past years. Due to the accelerated

number and higher need, it had to become an accelerated priority for the City of Ashland. Gardiner said a biennial budget was approved in spring 2017 for BN 2017-2019. If someone were hired by July 1, 2018, that would be one year into the approved biennial budget. So to find an additional \$100,000 in the second biennial year would be squeezing those funds out of another category, providing a shortfall in the other area. Seffinger spoke about social service grants, established by council, which came out of the City of Ashland General Fund for non-profit organizations. She felt that it could be investigated but it would be a one-time grant for social services for seniors. Danner asked, for future meetings in which budgets were discussed, to have handouts about those figures in advance, both current budgets and proposed budgets. Bachman agreed and said she would work with Black to get the numbers and email the information out to the committee before the February ASPAC meeting.

XI. Items from Committee – Round Table (Lange, 30 minutes)

Lewis said the Parks Commissioners took ASPAC's recommendations very seriously.

Bellegia seconded the public input heard during the meeting about basing the selection of the Senior Program Manager on qualities such as empathy and warmth rather than artificial qualifications such as advanced degrees. She said job experience or personal experience could count quite a bit. Her second point related to outreach (within the program description, which was added to the document based on the meeting discussion). With regard to the survey, the subcommittee made sure to include many different mechanisms for taking it, including making a phone call or having someone else make a phone call on their behalf.

Seffinger said it would be important to decide how much of the new Senior Program Manager's time would be needed at the Senior Center in providing direct services versus whether the new person could develop volunteer services to meet some of those needs.

Danner said one-on-one services were wonderful but the work could also be done by others, still within the scope of the Ashland Senior Program.

Bachman said hard work had been going on behind the scenes. She said it was important to create a standing advisory board, with the ending of ASPAC in March, that could take over from there and continue with that work. She said she would be happy to assist staff with recruitment, publicity and an application process for those committee selections. She asked if she could work with staff on the criteria process and asked if a motion was in order. Black said it was not the norm to make motions if items weren't included on published agendas. He said it would be a policy decision at the commission level rather than an ASPAC action item. Bachman said she understood and would simply meet with Black and Dials about the application process, with the matter further reviewed by ASPAC at their February meeting.

Bellegia said a background binder was already underway based on the work of ASPAC. The binder items, which would be transferred to the standing advisory committee and the Senior Program Manager at the conclusion of ASPAC, would include such things as the survey, standards, community partners, facilities, transportation, fundraising and marketing. It would not be appropriate for ASPAC to take on those tasks but the binder would serve as a foundation for the future standing committee and the new Senior Program Manager.

XII. Next Meeting Dates and Location (Bachman, 2 minutes)

- February 12 from 3:15 to 5:15 pm – Council Chambers
- March 12 from 3:15 to 5:15 pm – Council Chambers

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Dyssegard, Executive Assistant
Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission