

City of Ashland
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
SENIOR PROGRAM SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
March 28, 2017

Present: Commissioners Gardiner and Lewis; Director Black; Superintendent Dials; Senior Program Manager Dodson; Executive Assistant Dyssegard; Senior Program Advisory Board Members, Volunteers and Participants

Absent: None

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Gardiner called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. at The Grove, Otte-Peterson Room, 1195 E. Main Street in Ashland.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mike Hersh, 932 Morton Street, a sixteen-year Ashland resident and fifteen-year volunteer with the Senior Program, said a Senior Program survey had been conducted for users of senior services. He asked for the survey results to be distributed to Ashland elected officials and posted on the City of Ashland website.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE GOALS

Gardiner said five Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission (APRC) goals were carried over from the January 24 Senior Program Subcommittee meeting. He read them aloud:

1. Through the gathering of information, gain a greater understanding of the Senior Program and the function it serves the citizens of Ashland;
2. Explore new ways of marketing and program innovation to ensure that the greatest number of citizens are benefited by the Senior Program;
3. Evaluate the organizational structure of the program and ensure that the organization of the Senior Program and the goals for innovation are aligned for efficiency and service delivery;
4. Seek advocates of the Senior Program and new ways to increase community involvement through volunteerism; and,
5. Evaluate the current Senior Program policies and create an official subcommittee of the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission reporting directly to the Commissioners to ensure collaboration and governance.

Gardiner said the goals had been shared with Dodson and others involved with the Senior Program. Number five was completed, with the formation of a Senior Program Subcommittee comprised of Parks Commissioners Lewis and Gardiner and staff support provided by Black, Dodson and Dials.

Gardiner reviewed the full meeting agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Performance Audit and APRC Goals

i. Review APRC Goals Related to the Senior Program

Gardiner opened the floor to Senior Program Manager Dodson and asked her to speak about how the Senior Program related to APRC goals. Gardiner clarified that she could begin with Performance Audit goals.

Dodson referenced a notebook she compiled called "Quality Review of the Senior Program" and referred to the section "Performance Audit Recommendations and Goals Summary." A goal on page 32 of the audit was read aloud: "Goals: Evaluate parks and recreation facilities and programs to ensure the quality of relevant programming and the highest and best use of facilities" along with its associated objective: "Evaluate expanded and alternative use of the Senior Center to meet community needs." Dodson said this was also an APRC goal. She asked what an alternative use of the Senior Center might be. Black said alternative uses could be any unmet community need or non-use of the center at the time of the Performance Audit. "Other uses" could be alternative or expanded options not currently provided through the program. Gardiner said a goal of APRC was full utilization of APRC facilities and budget in the most effective and efficient manner with a goal toward making new efforts to meet community needs. Dodson said new programs were regularly tried; some worked and others didn't. She provided four examples of new classes recently discussed. Gardiner asked for an example of a newly successful program at the Senior Center. Dodson said a program called "Local Talent" was doing well.

Lewis asked for a typical weekday schedule; Dodson provided the schedule and said she coordinated many activities after lunch hours. Most days the center closed by 4:30. When asked, Dodson said Tuesdays through Thursdays were busiest. When asked about staff duties, Dodson said a Senior Program part-time employee (retired case manager for senior services) worked one and one-half seven-hour days a week: Mondays at the center and Thursdays doing senior outreach. Dodson described program offerings requiring home visits, including requests for assistance through the Ashland Low Income Energy Assistance Program (ALIEAP) for 60+ or disabled persons. She said this City program was implemented by the Senior Program in terms of screening, approving and following through. She additionally talked about the Senior Utility Discount Program. Dodson said outreach visits were held in seniors' homes. During visits, connections were made, incomes verified, resources offered, evaluations conducted, needs assessments made and home conditions checked.

Lewis asked whether lunch participants were evaluated in terms of unmet needs; Dodson replied that the part-time Information and Referral Specialist at the Senior Program helped with those evaluations. Lewis asked how seniors were notified about program offerings and Dodson said there were several sources of information: seasonal APRC Rec Guides (three per year); monthly Ashland Senior Program newsletters; City of Ashland website (ongoing information) and monthly City of Ashland "CitySource" newsletters. In terms of capacity at the center, Dodson said 45 people could be seated in the dining room / activity room at one time and 90 could stand in either room. When asked, Dodson talked about computer instruction offered to seniors at the center.

Gardiner asked Dodson to speak in more detail about Senior Program staffing. Dodson said the Program included:

- 1 part-time Information & Referral Specialist – .25 FTE covering the front desk and lunch hours, three afternoons per week, four hours per day.
- 1 Senior Outreach Specialist – .7 FTE at 28 hours / week. Two temporary employees currently covering this position, each working two seven-hour days per week.
- 1 Senior Program Manager – 1.0 FTE

Dodson shared some of the work performed by Program staff:

- Responding to requests for information and referrals; pursuing resources for community members
- Coordinating services with other agencies

- Creating, mailing and posting monthly newsletters
- Maintaining mailing lists
- Coordinating classes and workshops; planning and implementing day trips
- Assisting with records management and supply inventories
- Screening for City assistance programs such as ALIEAP, Senior Discount, heating, bus passes, Valley Lift vouchers and others; delivery of some of the vouchers
- Records management
- Welfare and wellness checks

Dodson said new people visited the center every week, primarily for information and referrals and also for meals and programs. The suggested lunch donation for those 60 and older was \$2.75. When asked about charging a membership fee for Senior Program use, Dodson said a fee had not been charged over the years, for various reasons. Dodson suggested the possibility of charging a fee for the monthly newsletter: up to \$10 per year.

Gardiner said the APRC Performance Audit indicated that the senior population in Ashland was underserved. He asked what could be done to reach out to the entire senior community in Ashland and what could be done innovatively to advance APRC's goal of meeting the needs of seniors.

Black reviewed the 2015-17 Commission objective and work plan items directly related to the Senior Program:

Evaluate expanded and alternative use of the Senior Center to meet community needs.

- Action 1: Interview current staff to determine what is / isn't working.
- Action 2: Publish community survey on wants / needs for Senior Center programs.
- Action 3: Evaluate activities at site during on and off hours.
- Action 4: Evaluate current trends and best practices for multigenerational and intergenerational activities with a focus group.
- Action 5: Implement a program to address findings of above items.

Black said the two most important actions at this time were #1 and #2. Gardiner asked how to reach beyond core groups already identified as receiving services at the center. Dodson said service organizations and organizations associated with seniors could be contacted; Gardiner said Dodson should do that. He said the subcommittee was formed to proactively recommend changes, then facilitate those changes toward meeting audit recommendations. Lewis and Gardiner spoke about the suggested community survey and said Dodson should work with the Promotions Coordinator to facilitate the process. Dodson spoke about Senior Program satisfaction surveys conducted in past years. She said an SOU student helped with the biggest survey five or six years earlier (a Capstone project) but survey results were low. Black suggested working on a new community survey right away.

Black asked about other programs that might be offered through the Ashland Senior Program. Discussion ensued about Senior Program day trips and outcomes / numbers per trip. The used van (donated to APRC) was discussed in terms of use and reliability. It was stated that the van was not reliable enough for day trips of a greater distance. Black suggested purchasing a newer van with Ashland Parks Foundation (donated) funds. A possible partnership with Medford Parks and Recreation for senior day trips was suggested. When asked, Dodson stated that the APRC / YMCA partnership around senior trips had been discontinued due to an issue with the Y van.

Past and future fundraising events were discussed. Black and Gardiner suggested that Dodson talk with her staff and provide suggestions at a future meeting.

Gardiner stated the importance of offering new and creative programming through the Senior Program, starting now. He asked Dodson to take APRC Performance Audit recommendations seriously, with a good quality survey

constructed toward providing the best senior programs and services for the community. Lewis agreed and said direction would be provided by the subcommittee and Dodson would have sufficient time to complete the work before a re-evaluation occurred. Black again referred to the five action points listed above, which he referred to as a workplan, and said they could be used as a guide. He said this would hopefully lead to actions being implemented at the end of the subcommittee review process.

NEW BUSINESS, cont'd.

b. Senior Center Advisory Board

- i. Review Board Creation and Makeup**
- ii. Review Board Mission and Bylaws**

Lewis said he hoped to see the Parks Commission Senior Program Subcommittee working collaboratively with the Ashland Senior Program Advisory Board.

Black reviewed the history of the 2006 City of Ashland Resolution in which the Senior Program was transferred from City control to Parks control. At the time of the transfer, Black said the Advisory Committee was not transferred along with the program, although it was stipulated as an option in the Resolution. Additionally, no funds were designated by the City for APRC management of the Senior Program. Gardiner reiterated that at the time of the transfer, only the Senior Program was transferred, not its Advisory Board; however, it was understood that an advisory board could be established if the Parks Commissioners decided to create one. Dodson reviewed her memory of the transfer, including the lack of City funds for APRC's oversight of the Senior Program. Black stated that only two policy boards currently existed in the City of Ashland: Ashland City Council and the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission. Black suggested clearly delineating the line of authority from the Commissioners to the board and back again. He said it was now time to create a Senior Advisory Board with a makeup appointed by the Parks Commission Chair. The makeup could include two Parks Commissioners, two members at large and APRC staff. Gardiner said this was a high priority; Black said he would put this on an upcoming regular meeting agenda. He talked about other APRC subcommittees, including the Golf Subcommittee. Black said he would take the lead on working with Dodson about the Senior Program Advisory Board in the near future. Once formalized, it was acknowledged that board meeting agendas and minutes would be needed every time the board met.

c. Program Mission

d. Program Org Chart

In terms of Program Mission and board bylaws, Black said they could be initiated by the appointed Senior Program Advisory Board.

In terms of the Org Chart, Black said an Org Chart currently existed showing full-time and part-time Senior Program staff. Gardiner suggested cleaning it up so the chain of command between APRC and the Senior Center board was readily apparent. Gardiner and Black talked about the current Org Chart and the need to show only staff, not programs or services, as Org Charts were for people only. Black volunteered to assist Dodson with cleaning up the Senior Program Org Chart.

Gardiner recapped what had been discussed thus far in terms of action items:

- 1) Research how to create a comprehensive community survey about the Ashland Senior Program; possibly enlist APRC and City staff to assist with the process.
 - Once researched and drafted, bring it back to the subcommittee for review.
 - Once reviewed and completed, broadly distribute to the community by posting it online along with other distribution methods.

- 2) Brainstorm a marketing “toolbox” for successfully moving the Senior Program in a new direction. Solicit input from other senior communities, work with other community groups associated with seniors, be creative and develop new ideas.

Gardiner spoke about his earlier attendance at an ORPA workshop featuring a feature program in Oregon. The ORPA agency had presented about an impressive day trip program. He suggested thinking along those lines for the Ashland Senior Program. Dials agreed and suggested collaborating with other organizations, since Ashland was a smaller community.

- 3) Re-evaluate the makeup of the Senior Program Advisory Board; review the mission and bylaws; reach out to attendees like Ashland City Councilor Stef Seffinger about becoming a member of the appointed board.

Lewis asked about alternative uses of the Senior Center itself. Black said a sentiment commonly expressed in the community was that the Senior Center would be used more if it were multi-generational. Black said a survey would help the subcommittee figure this out.

Senior Program volunteer **Mike Hersh** said the Senior Center was the only place in Ashland for seniors; many seniors were not comfortable around children or those of other generations. He said if the Senior Program became multi-generational, seniors most in need would have nowhere to go.

Lewis said the survey would provide an opportunity to evaluate how close to capacity the program operated. He said APRC liked to run its programs at the highest possible capacity in terms of facilities and staff. Black said this type of evaluation was common practice for all APRC programs and offerings.

NEW BUSINESS, not completed:

- a. **History of Senior Program and Involvement in the Community**
- b. **Volunteers at the Senior Center**
- c. **Cost Recovery Review**
- d. **Ashland Parks Foundation Funds Dedicated to the Senior Program**

SET FUTURE MEETING DATE

The next meeting was suggested for approximately the third week in April. A meeting poll was requested of staff toward scheduling the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Dyssegard, Executive Assistant
Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission