

City of Ashland
ASHLAND PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION (APRC)
ASHLAND SENIOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ASAC)
Meeting Minutes
July 12, 2021

Committee Members Present:

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

Staff Present:

- Michael Black
- Isleen Glatt
- Natalie Mettler

CALL TO ORDER

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

OPENING

Citizen guests present: Jackie Bachman (OHRA, Housing and Human Services Commission), Rob Casserly (OLLI), Connie Saldaña (RVCOG Lifelong Housing Program).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Theis/Bellegia m/s to approve the minutes from May 3, 2021. Voice vote – all AYES. Minutes approved.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA

Glatt announced that Johnson would be late to the meeting.

PUBLIC INPUT

None.

PERMIT PROCESS FOR HOME MODIFICATIONS TO SUPPORT AGING IN PLACE

Steve Matiaco, Building Official with the City's Community Development Department, gave a presentation on the permit process for home modifications, to answer questions about the process and forms for home modifications that came out of the March 8 ASAC meeting presentation about the City's age-friendly housing initiatives. See documents included in meeting packet that outline four possible scenarios for home modifications to support aging in place: 1) ramp addition, 2) ramp addition with bathroom remodel; 3) ramp addition with two bathroom remodels; 4) addition of master bedroom with bathroom. Permit fees are based on valuation. The examples reflect the higher end of project costs to show possible permit and systems development charges (SDC fees); they are not actual project costs. An additional document explains the City's procedure and requirements for residential additions/remodels over-the-counter permits. Staff from the City's Community Development Department are available to review such project plans with applicants.

Gardiner asked why the State charges a 12.5% fee for new construction. Matiaco responded that the State's building codes cover residential buildings; the set fee is uniform across the State and building types.

Hersh voiced concern that many Ashland seniors live in older homes that may not be suited for modification; he asked if the City provides any free home evaluation for modification capacity. Matiaco clarified that the City cannot offer consulting or advice, but will review submitted plans in terms of code-compliance. Hersh followed up asking what ASAC can do to amend these rules so that at-risk seniors can get free consulting. Matiaco responded that unfortunately, homeowners who need more consulting have to hire professional evaluators. Gardiner added that this issue is better put to Bill Molnar, the Community Development Director, or even the City Council, who has the power to change ordinances. Hersh countered that Ashland Fire & Rescue offers free home evaluations for fire safety, and perhaps other Departments could offer similar service to low-income-qualified seniors? Bellegia mentioned that Rebuilding Together Rogue Valley works on home modifications to support aging in place and might have some capacity to meet the needs Hersh highlighted. Saldaña, as Lifelong Housing Expert, added that, through the Housing Authority, the County offers a home loan program for the remodel of older homes.

Bellegia asked Matiaco how much of the permit fees underwrite the cost of the Building Department (part of Community Development). Matiaco answered that Building Departments are required by statute, and that collected fees must cover the costs of the Department. Extra revenue is kept as a reserve for bad years, to ensure consistent service and continued operation. Gardiner sought clarification on whether it is the contractors or homeowners who need to procure required permits. Matiaco answered that that depends on the case, but that City staff can spend more time with homeowners who are unfamiliar with the process.

PARKING AT ASHLAND SENIOR CENTER AND IMPACT OF WALKER ELEMENTARY PARKING LOT PLAN

Black presented on the potential impact of Walker Elementary's planned parking lot construction might have on Ashland Senior Center, and efforts to mitigate that impact. The Ashland School Board has asked APRC for an access point to Walker Elementary from Hunter Court, a private road owned and managed by APRC. Hunter Court provides access to Hunter Park, the Daniel Meyer Pool, and tennis courts, in addition to the Senior Center. APRC concerns and mitigation efforts include:

- Increased traffic on Hunter Court by making the road narrower and increasing potential conflict points. Mitigate by widening Hunter Court into Walker Elementary property near the corner of Homes Avenue, allowing ingress and egress without impacting parking designated for the Senior Center (including Disabled Parking spots).
- Dangers to pedestrian safety. Mitigate by creating a pedestrian and bike pathway on the school side of Hunter Court, which will connect to the Central Bike Path.

In addition, there will be a fifty-year cross-parking agreement, where Senior Center and park amenity users will have access to school parking spaces outside of school hours.

Bellegia asked for clarification about parking reserved for Senior Center patrons. Black responded that, in conjunction with Glatt, they hope to reserve all parking spaces on the Senior Center side of Hunter Court, from Homes Avenue to Daniel Meyer Pool. The APRC Commissioners will have to approve this plan.

Motion: Bellegia/Theis m/s to recommend to APRC reserving the parking spaces adjacent to Ashland Senior Center exclusively for Senior Center patrons, particularly during Center operating hours and events. Voice vote – all AYES.

Gardiner asked about enforcement of the reserved parking spaces. Black responded that the Ashland Police Department can ticket offenders, but APRC will probably start first with honor system and putting notes on

offending cars. He also agreed that posting signage would be helpful, and offered that APRC could paint the curb to indicate restricted use. Glatt also reminded all that school traffic is concentrated around drop off and pick up times, for which there is not significant conflict with Senior Center programs. Black added that school buses will still enter from Walker Ave, thereby not adding to traffic congestion on Homes Ave and Hunter Court. Gardiner added that this project will increase available space and most likely provide overall benefit to the Senior Center.

Bellegia asked if the construction process itself will cause issues with blocking off parking, and how future pool reconstruction will also affect ingress and egress from Hunter Court. Black clarified that once approved, almost all the school construction will be on Walker Elementary's property, with only the street paving and widening on APRC ground. The full timeline for construction is about two years. The pool construction will have greater impact, so ASAC can revisit that issue when it arises. Pool construction has been delayed due to budget, but there should be a new timeline and construction beginning in the next few years.

ELECT VICE CHAIR FOR 2021-2022

There were no volunteers for ASAC Vice Chair role, so this item will be revisited in the September meeting. Glatt asked Bellegia and Theis if either would be willing to serve as interim vice-chair. Theis agreed and Gardiner appointed her to the role.

NEW MEMBER RECRUITMENT NEEDS

A Vice Chair may be recruited from among new members. Bellegia advocated for ASAC membership to represent a broader cross-section of Ashland residents, in concert with the City's newly established Social Equity and Racial Justice Commission, while also ensuring a good representation of seniors, especially those who understand senior issues and relevant community resources. Outreach to potential candidates is ongoing to fill two open positions.

Glatt highlighted Bellegia's contributions as an informal recruiter for new SAC members. She reminded all that recruitment is more effective when combined with personal outreach. ASAC members who have suggestions should contact Anne Bellegia to plan recruitment.

STANDING REPORTS

a. APRC Update

Gardiner did not give an update, as it was covered in Black's presentation on Walker Elementary's parking lot plan.

b. City Council Update

Seffinger reported that the City's evacuation zones information has been mailed to all Ashland households. The City is currently interviewing for an interim City Manager, as well as seeking a new City Attorney, and has named Ralph Sartain as Fire Chief.

c. Education Report

Mettler shared about upcoming educational programs: Computer Labs for Older Adults, a partnership with Jackson County Library Services) pilot in-person session on August 18, with 4 more sessions planned for September and October; Dementia Conversations, presentation by Alzheimer's Association Oregon and SW Washington Chapter, via Zoom on August 25.

d. Senior Services Superintendent Report

Glatt referred to her report included in the meeting packet. She expanded that staff are transitioning last year's Senior Phone Buddy program to a volunteer-caller program, rebranding as Ashland Senior Phone Buddy. This will be a long term program to provide social connection for older adults, combatting isolation and loneliness. Two volunteer trainings are planned for later this summer. Glatt invited ASAC to help recruit volunteers for the program.

In addition, as of today, Ashland Senior Center office is open to the public on Monday-Thursday, 10am-2pm. Staff plans to resume in-person programs incrementally, with a full return to regular programs by September if pandemic conditions allow. Congregate dining will likely resume later. Staff are being cautious as there are currently no state requirements for masking or social distancing. Staff will post that masks are recommended. More specifics will be in the August *Senior News* newsletter.

ITEMS FROM ASAC MEMBERS AND WORK GROUPS

a. Update on Ashland Emergency Food Bank (Hersh)

Masks will be downgraded to "recommended" for visitors to and volunteers at AEFB starting July 19. N-95 masks are available for staff and volunteers due to smoke concerns. AEFB currently has lots of food available and is doing more home deliveries. In September, the AEFB Board will discuss returning to "customer shopping mode," hopefully by October.

b. Livable Ashland (Theis)

The Livable Ashland steering committee is continuing to invite and engage diverse groups in discussions to increase livability for all in Ashland.

Next meeting – Monday, September 13, 3:30-5pm in-person, conditions permitting.

Adjournment – 5:04 pm

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