

City of Ashland
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
AD-HOC SENIOR PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ASPAC)
MEETING MINUTES
December 11, 2017

Committee Members Present:

- Laura O'Bryon, RVCOG representative
- Anne Bellegia, OLLI Program Director
- Katharine Danner, Ashland At Home representative
- Jackie Bachman, Citizen Member (Senior Program patron)
- Marion Moore, Citizen Member (Senior Program yoga instructor)
- Mary Russell-Miller, Citizen Member (SOU faculty member)
- Rob Casserly, Citizen Member (SOU, OLLI Program Manager)
- Stef Seffinger, Ashland City Council
- Mike Gardiner, APRC Commissioner

Facilitator Present:

- Jon Lange, Jon Lange Consulting

Staff Members Present:

- APRC Recreation Superintendent Rachel Dials
- APRC Executive Assistant Susan Dyssegard

Committee Members and Staff Member Absent:

- Peggy Byrnes, Citizen Member (Senior Program patron)
- Jim Lewis, APRC Commissioner
- Michael Black, APRC Director

I. CALL TO ORDER

Facilitator Jon Lange called the meeting to order at 3:15pm at Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main Street in Ashland.

II. REMINDERS (Lange and Dials, 2 minutes)

Lange referenced the list of previously established ground rules posted again for review. He reminded everyone to speak into the microphone. Dials thanked all the volunteer committee persons for their service and time.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (ASPAC, 5 minutes)

Bachman moved, Danner seconded approval of the meeting minutes dated November 13, 2017.

Suggested Amendments:

Bellegia of OLLI said page three included a reference about her encouraging ASPAC Committee members to “access the website.” She said the site she’d referred to was the SOSashland (Save Our Seniors) website. She also clarified a remark on page nine – a characterization attributed to her about “many” OLLI members being frail or otherwise physically challenged. Bellegia said the number was not large. She suggested restating that as “...some of whom....” She also said the list of OLLI members could not be provided, as the minutes reflected, due to the sensitivity of OLLI’s relationship with its members. Finally, the statement on page nine about OLLI’s outreach “as part of RVCOG” was incorrect. Corrected language was provided: “...as does RVCOG.”

Mary Russell-Miller asked that her name be included on the list of Survey Subcommittee members.

O’Byron of RVCOG said the minutes indicated, on page seven, that she had met with Senior Program staff; however, it was the RVCOG Senior Disability Services Direct Client Program Coordinator who met with Senior Program staff.

By unanimous vote, the ASPAC Meeting Minutes for November 13, 2017, were approved as amended.

IV. PUBLIC INPUT (20 minutes total; 3 minutes each)

Sandra Sawyer, Ashland, OR

[See full testimony](#)

Gwen Davies, Ashland, OR

[See full testimony](#)

V. GOAL OF ASPAC (Bachman, 15 minutes)

Bachman said that given the number of public comments regarding the goals and objectives of ASPAC, she wished to address the matter. She said the sole goal of ASPAC was to make program and services recommendations (related to the Ashland Senior Program) to the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commissioners. To do that, ASPAC was carrying out three key objectives: 1) gathering public input through listening sessions and a community survey; 2) using the knowledge and expertise of ASPAC members; and 3) seeking out and examining best practices and national standards of excellence for senior programs.

Bachman gave historical information on the establishment of senior centers in the United States as well as two organizations: The National Council on Aging (NCOA – established in the 1950s) and the National Institute for Senior Centers (NISC – established in 1970 based on established national standards of excellence). She said the first senior center was founded in 1943 in New York City. From that one center, 15,000 senior program were in place across the nation. She talked about the differences between senior centers and senior programs as they related to these two organizations. She said the goal of the NCOA was to work toward identifying benefits, health, independent living, jobs and active living opportunities for older

Americans. She said NISC enhanced the lives of seniors through its promotion of national standards of excellence and other guidelines.

NISC best practices were reviewed:

- Information and referral services
- Meal programs
- Health and wellness
- Social and community action opportunities
- Educational opportunities
- Arts and humanities programming
- Intergenerational activities
- Employment assistance
- Transportation services
- Volunteer opportunities
- Financial and benefits assistance

Bachman talked about each best practices category in terms of its current fulfillment level at the Ashland Senior Center. She said the best senior centers across the nation included such best practices elements in their service and program offerings. She hoped the group would keep these categories in mind as they moved through the process of establishing recommendations for the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commissioners.

Discussion

Gardiner commented that APRC had its own volunteer coordinator and it was possible to expand volunteer opportunities using her expertise. He said the current Ashland Senior Program had some portion of best practices in place and it would be possible to expand them.

Danner said she had been interested in hearing the definition of a senior center versus senior program—moving away from a one-location program to other areas at which services might be provided.

Bellegia acknowledged that there were probable limitations for growth based on funding for staff. She suggested being realistic about what might be possible for offerings based on staffing levels in coordination with volunteer efforts.

Bachman said the Standards of Excellence were the framework for this process and they went hand in hand with the best practices.

VI. SENIOR PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORT (DIALS, 5 MINUTES)

Dials provided an update on recent efforts and work associated with the Ashland Senior Program. A partial list included ongoing regular programming and services at the center, open 8:30am to 3:30pm Monday through Friday; annual Thanksgiving dinner held on November 20 with over 80 people in attendance, sponsored by Ashland Fire and Rescue; Food & Friends meals operated Monday through Friday from 11:30-12:30 at the center; Rogue World Music singing carols on

Wednesday, December 6; a holiday party coming up, sponsored by Ashland Rotary; and a lasagna holiday lunch scheduled for December 26. RVCOG bus passes and Valley Lift passes and coupon books were ongoing via regular mail and walk-in distribution. 160 ALIEAP (low income utility assistance) applications received so far; an open house scheduled at the center on Monday, December 18, providing the opportunity for the public to hear more about programs and services at the center and tour the facility. Dials said additional fun activities and events were planned at the center for 2018. An intergovernmental agreement was underway with RVCOG (Senior Disability Services) for utilizing one of their staff one full day per week, providing interim support services and referrals.

Bellegia asked Dials to comment about a reported decline in utilization and participation levels at the center, something she'd heard from community members, possibly caused by the absence of previous staff. Bellegia asked Dials whether she believed this to be true. Dials said she had noticed a slight decrease in the recent past; however, it appeared that things were back to normal based on figures noted in the "binder" and in her conversations with staff at the center.

Bellegia asked how people could channel their concerns if they felt they were not receiving the information they wanted or needed. Dials responded that they could call her directly or talk to the current full-time staff person at the center. She provided phone numbers for each.

Gardiner said he felt that some of the evening's public input was misplaced, in which it was stated that some of the photos or filming of Senior Program patrons was out of line on the part of APRC. He personally felt that APRC was trying to promote Senior Program offerings and services. In his conversations with a staff member at the center, it was perceived that participation levels were the same as before. He encouraged everyone to go to the City of Ashland website, read the monthly newsletter and visit the Senior Center to learn the programming and service offerings.

Speaking to what was perceived as the inappropriate use of images of seniors at the center, Bachman said that in some recent promotional materials for the center, a photo was included of seniors seated at a table. She asked whether a confidentiality standard had been broken with the use of that photo. Dials referenced a photo disclaimer that runs in every APRC PlayGuide, three times per year, stating that APRC may take and use photos of patrons in their publications and promotions. Dials acknowledged that staff needed to be more mindful of requesting whether people wished to have their images used; Bachman agreed and said this was another example of why the Standards of Excellence would serve as a strong guiding tool.

VII. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS (SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRS; 15 MINUTES)

A. Partnerships Subcommittee (O'Bryon): O'Bryon said the Partnerships Subcommittee, consisting of Danner, Casserly, Bellegia, O'Bryon and Dials, met for the first time on December 8. She said regional partnerships were brainstormed, with some acknowledged as already established through the Ashland Senior Center. The center itself would continue to be the hub as services were expanded. Expanded support staff would assist with this growth. Leveraged resources would lead to enhanced services. She said the next Partnerships Subcommittee meeting was scheduled for December 13.

B. Community Assessment Subcommittee (Moore): Moore said the Community Assessment Subcommittee consisted of Bellegia, Russell-Miller, Byrnes, Moore and Black. The

group was handling just a portion of assessment: the survey portion. Moore acknowledged three other relevant community surveys in recent years: 1) the 2016 Ashland Senior Program Satisfaction Survey; 2) the 2015-16 Senior Needs Survey by RVCOG / SDS; and 3) the 2016 Ashland Community Livability Survey. She said ASPAC had already issued one survey about the people visiting the Senior Center, about which she reported at the last ASPAC meeting. She said the goal of the subcommittee was to collect information about needs within the senior community as well as those outside the senior community. She said this fairly broad scope of participants would be considered in terms of distribution methods.

Moore said the subcommittee felt that the feedback from the listening sessions should also be reflected in the survey. An initial survey was created and feedback was discussed. Another subcommittee meeting would be held, after the last listening session, to incorporate discussion points into the listening sessions. The goal there was to have the next subcommittee meeting and then prepare the survey by the next ASPAC meeting on January 8. Once presented to and approved by ASPAC, the survey would be prepared for distribution.

Moore said the survey would be conducted primarily through Survey Monkey, with a link posted on the City of Ashland / APRC and Ashland Senior Program websites. Flyers promoting the survey link would be posted at the Senior Center and elsewhere: retirement living communities, the library, The Grove, the Senior Center and so on. Paper surveys would also be available for mailing or bringing to the center upon completion. Survey input would also be accepted by telephone, with volunteers and staff receiving the calls and entering the data into Survey Monkey. The subcommittee had a goal to receive all responses by January 26, with data analysis conducted in time for the February 12 ASPAC meeting. Volunteers would be encouraged to assist with the survey process. The subcommittee also hoped that an article would be written and published in the local newspaper, including information about options for taking the survey. Currently, Bellegia was compiling / coordinating survey feedback from subcommittee members and including it within the draft survey.

Bellegia said OLLI members would have the opportunity to take the survey as well: approximately 1,100 people. As to the point made during public input about listening sessions taking place in December (inconvenient for some), Bellegia said public input *beyond the listening sessions* would also be included in the quantitative survey; members of the public were encouraged to call Bellegia, Dials or the center itself to provide their input.

Danner said the group was looking for input about how the Ashland Senior Program would enrich and enhance seniors' lives (beyond the senior facility); Russell-Miller said the subcommittee talked about the Senior Program being the focus of the survey, with the center being a piece of that program. Bellegia said the subcommittee also wanted to know what types of information or services seniors (on behalf of other seniors) were wanting to have when calling or visiting the Senior Center. Danner suggested also looking to the religious community for such input.

Speaking in her role as a City Councilor, Seffinger asked how the survey would interface with the structure of the City's vision, its strategic plan, its goals and objectives and actions to achieve them; i.e., senior needs in terms of the roles of City commissions such as Transportation, Public Housing and Emergency Preparedness. She spoke of the natural

disaster in Florida in which gaps in senior services were later clearly evident. She asked how to incorporate needs of seniors in City-wide planning efforts across all spectrums.

Bellegia said a question would be included on the survey about senior needs in terms of finances, transportation, housing, parking and so on—i.e., how people felt those needs were being served. As for City services for seniors, that goal might be better fulfilled through the City's 2018 livability survey (conducted every other year). She agreed that it was important to encourage City commissions to be sensitive to senior issues but felt those needs should be handled separately from how the APRC-managed Senior Program was operated.

Moore said the subcommittee hoped to keep the survey relatively short; however, it was already four pages long. In terms of tactically casting the survey net wider, Casserly suggested including the survey link in the monthly City Source newsletter provided to every City of Ashland utility account holder. Moore stated that she paid her bills online and didn't automatically see the newsletter but could find it on the City of Ashland website.

C. Listening Sessions / Open House Subcommittee (Bachman): Bachman said the listening sessions were scheduled for / advertised as December 13, 20 and 27, from 12:30 – 2:00pm at the Senior Center, with additional public input meetings held in January. She said the December schedule was not intended to get in the way of the holidays. The open house would be held on Monday, December 18, from 2:30 to approximately 3:30pm and again from 5:30 to approximately 6:30pm. The open houses were opportunities to provide information to families with elderly parents, seniors in the community wanting to know more about the Senior Center and Program and others with an interest in senior offerings. Dials said refreshments would be served and a comment and suggestion box available for anyone wishing to provide input at the open house sessions.

VIII. NATIONAL STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE FROM NATIONAL COUNCIL ON AGING / NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SENIOR CENTERS (Bachman, 15 minutes)

Bachman said the NISC developed the Standards of Excellence in 1978 as a reference guide for communities interested in developing senior centers. Over the years the standards became a guide for senior program self-assessments in three main areas: program development, program quality and program improvement. The standards were revised over the years and were now used as a senior program self-assessment accreditation tool. She said accreditation provided an opportunity for organizations with high community values to ensure that best practices were utilized while also holding up the standards for protecting best practices that could be evaluated and improved upon. This provided a measuring tool for self-assessment. She said the Ashland Senior Center already utilized many of the best practices outlined in the NCOA/NISC Standards of Excellence. The standards ensured that the best practices (necessary programs and services) were provided, evaluated and improved upon so that seniors' needs were addressed at the highest level. She reviewed the criteria within each standard:

1. Purpose and planning:

- a. Mission statement
- b. Planning document with goals, objectives and action plan
- c. Report of accomplishments, annual report

2. Community Connections:

- a. List of collaborative community partners
- b. Sample of cooperative agreement between Senior Center and Community partner
- c. Explanation of how the information and referral process is made available to seniors and the community
- d. Copy of marketing plan
- e. Copy of marketing materials
- f. News releases and news articles

3. Governance

- a. Documents or bylaws showing that the nine standards of excellence of the NISC are in progress of being met by the Senior Center Governing Board / Advisory Council
- b. Code of Ethics
- c. Conflict of Interest Statement
- d. List of committees/boards including members' names and affiliation or profession
- e. List of services that require certificates or inspections to be posted (restrooms, kitchen)

4. Administration and Human Resources

- a. Current resume for main administrator of Senior Center
- b. Job description for paid staff
- c. Organizational chart showing structure and lines of authority
- d. Personnel policies for paid staff
- e. Job descriptions for unpaid staff
- f. Volunteer Handbook for unpaid staff that includes policies

5. Program Development and Implementation

- a. Description of programs and services that meet Best Practices as described by NISC
- b. List of hours and locations of services and programs

6. Evaluation

- a. Senior Center's evaluation plan
- b. Examples of outcome-based evaluation, including baseline data, intended results, actual results, and how information was used in an improvement process.

7. Fiscal and Asset Responsibility

- a. Senior Center budget
- b. Monthly financial statements
- c. Current audits or financial reviews
- d. Written procedures for internal financial control
- e. Statement of insurance coverage
- f. Incident report form
- g. Disaster recovery or business continuity plan (Ex: fire, flood, earthquake)

8. Records and Reports

- a. Monthly or quarterly statistical report on programs and services
- b. Comparative year-end reports on programs and services for two separate years
- c. General participant record form
- d. Participant forms used for specific services or activities (Ex: field trips)
- e. Confidentiality policy
- f. Policies and Procedures manual

9. Facility and Operations

- a. Current pictures of Senior Center with outside signage
- b. List of transportation options
- c. Diagram of Senior Center layout
- d. Copy of safety procedures
- e. Preventive maintenance schedule
- f. Written procedure for rental to other groups or agreement for Senior Center to rent its space

Bachman said these nine major standards, all with measurable criteria, provided a framework for formulating ASPAC recommendations. As ASPAC coordinated the public comments and suggestions received from ASPAC meetings, listening sessions and so on, and analyzed the data received from the survey, each ASPAC member could consider the data viewed through his or her own specific knowledge and expertise. Committee members might be drawn to certain standards based on their specific expertise and knowledge. For example, a committee member might suggest revising the mission statement to allow the Senior Center to move toward a senior program standard. Bachman said these ASPAC recommendations would not be carried out by ASPAC itself but moved forward to the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commissioners, the Senior Program Manager, the standing Senior Program Advisory Committee members and staff. Bachman suggested that ASPAC members match their experience and knowledge to form draft recommendations to protect, build and improve upon the best practices, services and programs currently in place. Looking ahead, she suggested forming a subcommittee made up of the leads on ASPAC's current subcommittees: community partners, community assessment and listening sessions / open house. This subcommittee could be tasked with integrating the ideas and information into draft recommendations for the ASPAC February 12 meeting, with a goal toward finalizing the recommendations in March.

Bellegia asked for clarification: this subcommittee would not do the actual work of developing a marketing plan, for instance, but would define the ways in which these tasks could be handled. Bachman gave an example: the marketing toolkit was full of marketing plans. That reference tool could be used for creating similar standards for the Ashland Senior Program.

Danner said ASPAC was not empowered to handle the standards outlined by Bachman; it was not its own entity or able to operate at a grassroots level. Bachman agreed and said that was why it would be important to look for financial partners at the state, county and local levels. Gardiner said that before every biennium, APRC set its own biennial goals for structuring the APRC budget. APRC aligned its goals with City Council goals. There was an existing structure within the City for goal planning and monitoring.

Lange asked what kind of specificity would be needed by APRC for these recommendations? Gardiner said the recommendations coming out ASPAC would be front and center of the program management team. As a commissioner, he wouldn't be implementing the goal; Senior Program staff would be tasked with implementing it. Dials said the recommendations would need to be broader rather than more specific, utilizing a framework of the Standards of Excellence and Best Practices as outlined above.

Bellegia said the Standards of Excellence and Best Practices (framework) would help identify the qualifications needed for the Senior Program Manager recruitment. It would be an important part of adopting the goals. She said this would be useful to avoid the ambiguities of the program and the persons responsible for it.

Lange asked two questions based on Bachman's suggestions: 1) Form and 2) Structure. Dials said that in terms of structure, current City and APRC policies and procedures could be used / incorporated into documents. Moore said it would be good to think about recommendations that might be higher priorities than others. They could be more broad than specific. Bellegia asked for a definition of the process for recruitment of the Senior Program Manager and said the process needed to be open and handled with the greatest sensitivity. Dials said APRC was waiting for the ASPAC recommendations before moving forward with the recruitment process. She said APRC staff were currently working on the job description based on comments heard to date as well as a review of other similar positions in senior program agencies.

IX. ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS – ROUND TABLE (30 minutes)

Lange facilitated the round table comments of ASPAC members:

O'Bryon said ASPAC was fortunate in that this research on Standards of Excellence and Best Practices was already available. She said they would elevate the standards while assisting with identifying the highest priorities for the Ashland Senior Program. She said this was a rigorous timeframe but progress was being made and she thought the timeframe was achievable.

Casserly said he would need more time to process the information and formulate opinions about the matters under discussion.

Moore said the material before them established an excellent framework.

Gardiner said that the Standards of Excellence, number 3, "Governance," would be critical in terms of how the Senior Program functioned. Such a structure would help the commissioners help staff keep everything in line with the needs of the community and approved budgets.

Russell-Miller said that as a structure, this looked fine. She expressed concern that it sounded like ASPAC was almost starting from ground zero. She said ASPAC needed to be informed as to how the current elements looked; this was not a blank slate; ASPAC needed to know what was already in place.

As a former Parks Commissioner and now a City Councilor, Seffinger asked about the responsibilities of the Parks Commission in terms of providing recreation and social services to Ashland seniors. In the past, social services were the responsibility of the City and the county

and now they were on the plates of the Parks Commissioners. She asked whether APRC was given any funding from the City to provide such services. If they were the responsibility of APRC to provide, APRC would need to have additional funding.

Danner said she once served on a teen center advisory board; it became The Grove. She asked what the mandate was for the Senior Center within the City structure? The core issue was that the Senior Program was the only entity within the City with a finger in social services. She asked whether APRC was the best place to deliver such services and how large a staff would be needed to ensure that all of the social service components could be delivered for Ashland seniors.

Bellegia said Ashland had approximately 20,000 people so its Senior Program wasn't as robust as a larger city's but its structure and framework were adequate. An important element to consider would be referrals to social service organizations operated outside of the current Senior Program.

Bachman said carrying out the Standards of Excellence was achievable by looking at what was already in place and pulling elements together: current policies, procedures and so on. Once gathered, they could be reviewed in terms of being acceptable or needing upgrades or improvements. She said it was clear that the current Senior Program provided a very high level of value for Ashland citizens.

Gardiner said APRC worked through all of its processes via established goals and priorities. Changes to programs and services mid-biennium had budget impacts but were possible. He said recommendations, once established, needed to be realistic and prioritized.

Bachman said this was a lot of information. Most of the guiding information was located in the Standards of Excellence document. She suggested that ASPAC members look at that document, consider each member's experience, review the survey results once available, then form draft recommendations given each member's particular experience and knowledge. She suggested that the lead people from each subcommittee work within their subcommittees to pull together draft recommendations. ASPAC would work on the recommendations through December and January, with the goal of having a set of draft recommendations by the February 12 meeting. Once received from the subcommittees, ASPAC would prioritize the recommendations. In March, ASPAC would create and finalize the recommendations. Bachman spoke with concern about waiting to hire a Senior Program Manager until after the recommendations were completed. She said there was some urgency in doing this work well and getting it done. Given the knowledge on this committee, she felt this was achievable within the established timeframe. Bachman suggested using action verbs in creating the ASPAC recommendations. Once completed, Bachman said it would be up to the Parks Commissioners, Senior Program staff and the standing advisory council as to whether they wished to act on ASPAC recommendations.

Seffinger said some of the items on the Standards of Excellence list were under the control of the City Finance Department or other City departments.

X. NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATIONS (Dials, 2 minutes)

- January 8 from 3:15 to 5:15 pm – Council Chambers
- February 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