

BELLEVUE NETWORK ON AGING
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

March 1, 2006
8:30 a.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E -120

MEMBERS PRESENT: Christina Coulter, Valentina Kiselev, Lynne Robinson, Jim Messner, Eileen Putter, Eileen Rasnack, Berta Seltzer, Catherine Brallier, Dwayne Dilley, Diana Thompson, Howard Katz, Gary Dickerman

MEMBERS ABSENT: Margorie Todd, Eve Stern, Stephen Lam

STAFF PRESENT: Cathy VonWald, Alex O'Reilly, Department of Parks and Community Services

OTHERS PRESENT: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order at 8:39 a.m. by Ms. VonWald who presided. All committee members were present with the exception of Margorie Todd, Eve Stern and Stephen Lam, all of whom were excused.

2. KIRKLAND SENIOR COUNCIL

The presenter for this item was unable to attend due to inclement weather.

3. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Transportation

Mr. Dickerman said the purpose of the transportation subcommittee is to support the mission of aging services in Bellevue through effective and systematic outreach, regional collaboration, and community involvement. He said the subcommittee has chosen to work with the Easy Rider collaboration, including the Bus Buddy program, the development of a brochure called *Explore Your Transportation Options*, a Dial A Ride project, and a downtown circulator.

The committee last met on February 13 and among other things discussed upcoming events in which the committee wants to participate.

Ms. VonWald said the Easy Rider Collaborative will make a presentation to the Bellevue Human Services Commission on March 6 at 6:30 p.m. She also noted that during the month of March the Collaborative will find out if their grants to the Washington State Department of Transportation for the Bus Buddy, information brochure and Dial A Ride program have been approved. The downtown circulator is a study being undertaken by the city's Department of Transportation in collaboration with King County Metro. The Easy Rider Collaborative will be working with the Department of Transportation on the circulator study.

Ms. Robinson asked why Metro does not currently serve the South Bellevue Community Center. Ms. VonWald explained that the location of the community center is not along Metro's fixed route. The site is further challenged by topography and by the fact that it lies within unincorporated King County.

Ms. Thompson asked about Metro's plans to expand its routes in Bellevue. Ms. VonWald said the final outcome is unclear; no changes have been finalized. The Easy Rider Collaborative will be looking at non-fixed route issues.

Alex O'Reilly, Human Services Planner, explained that the Dial A Ride project will be initiated only as a pilot program in East Bellevue; it will not affect the area where the South Bellevue Community Center is located.

B. Housing

Ms. Rasnack said the housing subcommittee met during the month of February to define and narrow the focus of the group. The primary task of the committee is to gain a much clearer sense of the number of people in Bellevue who are needing low-income housing and what the availability of the housing is in the city. Part of the research will include looking at what has been done in Bellevue since the *Housing Our Seniors* study was done in 1988.

Associate Planner Janet Lewine said a meeting between staff in the planning department and ARCH has been planned to focus on the issue of senior housing. The topic fits well with some of the initiatives the city is currently undertaking, including housing in the downtown and in the Bel-Red corridor and Crossroads areas. The housing subcommittee will be asked to be involved as well.

Ms. VonWald said she is working with Arthur Sullivan of ARCH to organize a housing tour for the Network on Aging members. Mr. Sullivan will also provide an update regarding what has happened since the 1988 housing study and what is happening currently.

Answering a question asked by Ms. Robinson, Ms. VonWald said the universal design standards is something the committee could talk about.

C. Support Services

Ms. Coulter said the support services subcommittee met on February 26 and concluded that the Network should partner with the Overlake Hospital and Medical Center *Home Sweet Home Fair* in lieu of creating a new senior provider forum. The fair focuses on seniors, their families and providers.

Ms. Coulter said the committee received a report from Mr. Katz regarding his experiences with the 2-1-1 line. There was a discussion of phone numbers available to seniors in need of assistance, and it was reported that 1-800-4-ELDERS is the contact number for a 2-1-1 service in Texas; locally, the number to call is 1-888-4-ELDERS which connects to Senior Services. Overlake Hospital and Medical Center has its own senior support line which connects callers to Senior Services.

The group also discussed the possibility of having emergency first responders distribute magnets or stickers with the 2-1-1 line on it, along with a packet of information for seniors. Many seniors who call 9-1-1 seeking help do not need to be transported to the hospital and thus will not be seen by social service professionals.

Mr. Katz said the 2-1-1 Community Information Line is manned locally by the Crisis Clinic and is funded by United Way and the state. Every county is covered by the service by providers across the state. There is a movement under way by 2-1-1 providers to get the federal government to fund the program nationally.

Ms. O'Reilly said the Human Services Commission was given a full update regarding the 2-1-1 system at its February 22 meeting. She noted that the program began 24/7 operations within the last month.

Ms. VonWald pointed out that the information available to the 2-1-1 operators is only as good as the information they receive from providers and government entities. All of the city of Bellevue information is a part of the database.

Ms. Coulter said callers to 2-1-1 in King County will be given the 1-888-4-ELDERS number to call. She said the best approach would be for the 2-1-1 operator to either be able to patch the caller through or have access to the same database of information so the caller will not have to make a second call. Ms. VonWald said the database is available to anyone online so should be accessible by the 2-1-1 operators.

Ms. Coulter said the subcommittee was given a report that the Washington AARP newsletter is willing to publish an article regarding the focus and work of the Bellevue Network on Aging. She said Mr. Messner has agreed to draft the article for the full Network to review and approve.

Ms. VonWald said she found out that the Network can include a brief message on the utility bills, though there is an eight-week lead time required. An insert can also be included with the utility bills, but that would take even longer.

Ms. Coulter said the support services subcommittee engaged in a conversation about the role of the group and its obligations to the Network as a whole. The trigger for the conversation was whether or not the committee has the authority to approve a collaboration with the *Home Sweet Home Fair* and support the use of City Hall as the venue without approval by the full Network.

Ms. VonWald said the Network's decision-making process was decided at the retreat. The conclusion reached was that if a subcommittee wants the entire Network to engage in something, it must bring a proposal forward for a vote of the Network. The specific criteria for making such decisions as established at the retreat are: the proposed project is in line with the mission of the Network; at least three persons have committed to working on the project; the role of the Network in the project is clear; the project will not jeopardize the ability of the Network to complete projects already committed to; the majority of the Network believes the project has value; the Network has voted to pursue the project in the name of the Network.

Ms. Robinson asked the Network to vote on the proposal of the support services subcommittee to partner with the Overlake Hospital and Medical Center *Home Sweet Home Fair* and to host it at City Hall in November 2007. Ms. VonWald suggested bringing the proposal to the next Network meeting with a full listing of exactly what the Network would be expected to do as part of the partnership. Mr. Robinson stressed the need to make a decision sooner rather than later and asked if the vote could occur by email instead, and Ms. VonWald said that could be done.

Ms. Thompson suggested that the proposal to partner with Overlake is clear enough and should be voted on right away. Ms. VonWald allowed that that could be done under the criteria.

Ms. Seltzer asked how the *Home Sweet Home Fair* compares to the *Active Aging* fair that is slated for March 10. Ms. Robinson said the two events are similar, though *Active Aging* is more about physical activity, while the *Home Sweet Home Fair* is specifically focused on seniors who want to age successfully in their homes.

Ms. Robinson explained that the *Home Sweet Home Fair* is put on every year by Overlake Hospital and Medical Center and is open to everyone. They have a variety of vendors who participate, and they have all the support staff they need. All they are missing is a venue. By offering them City Hall, their goals and the goals of the Network will be served. The vendors are charged a fee and the money is used for supporting the senior services program at Overlake. Overlake has already taken the step of booking City Hall.

Motion to have the Network on Aging co-sponsor the Overlake Hospital and Medical Center *Home Sweet Home Fair* at City Hall in November, which will be open to all of Bellevue, was made by Ms. Putter. Second was by Ms. Robinson and the motion carried unanimously.

4. STAFF REPORT

A. Ped/Bike Plan Update

Senior Planner Franz Loewenherz said the Department of Transportation is gearing up to update the ped/bike plan; the plan was previously updated in 1993 and again in 1999. The work to update the plan will kick off in March and will wrap up by the end of the year. The intent of the effort is to reach out to the community to find out what their priorities are by way of pedestrian and bicycle enhancements, which is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan goal of developing a multimodal transportation system to support the growth and development of the city and improve livability in the neighborhoods.

The first part of the study will focus on the gaps in the existing sidewalk and bicycle system. Two online surveys will be launched, one centered on walking and one centered on biking; the surveys will be posted in about a week on the ped/bike project website. The survey will be noticed in *It's Your City*, the *Neighborhood News* and *Parks Connections* newsletter. The data will provide staff with a starting point and will be rounded out with targeted outreach to various community and user groups of all ages and abilities. A discussion with a subset of the Network on Aging would be appropriate.

Mr. Loewenherz said the second part of the study will actively involve the Transportation Commission, the Planning Commission and the Parks and Community Services Board to help inform the prioritization of the various system links. Finally, it will all be brought together through a review of the existing policies, programs and practices, a review of the design guidelines, prioritizing the projects, cost estimating, funding strategies, and performance monitoring.

Mr. Katz asked if Bellevue will partner with other jurisdictions if in fact the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe right-of-way becomes available for use as a trail system. Mr. Loewenherz said that likely will be the case. Ms. VonWald said Bellevue staff are already working with King County to coordinate the efforts.

Ms. VonWald suggested contacting the mall walkers at Bellevue Square, Factoria Mall and Crossroads Shopping Center. She said their input would be useful in informing the process. Mr. Loewenherz took note of that and said he is wanting to tie in with targeted events such as

the Strawberry Festival. Ms. VonWald said Group Health is sponsoring a *Forever 50* event at Crossroads Shopping Center on May 11.

Mr. Dilley asked if city staff has any firm idea of how many seniors are actively involved in cycling groups. He suggested that if they are not, the information garnered from bicycle groups will be skewed toward non-seniors. Mr. Loewenherz said he does not have those figures.

Mr. Katz offered to forward to Mr. Loewenherz information about Dr. Maynard who is an expert in senior biking.

Ms. Rasnack suggested the Fourth of July event in Downtown Park would be a good place to generate feedback from a lot of people. Ms. Putter pointed out that a lot of seniors participate in the annual breast cancer walk, and noted that there are other walking events that occur in the city.

Ms. Kiselev highlighted the need to have benches strategically placed along pathways and sidewalks for seniors to use.

Mr. Loewenherz thanked the Network members for their input.

B. Human Services Needs Update

Ms. O'Reilly explained that the Human Services Needs Update is updated every two years. Staff is currently in the comprehensive process of collecting data from a variety of sources for the report that will be published in January 2008. A scientifically controlled telephone survey is under way; the information garnered from the survey informs the process with regard to the top human service household and community needs. The telephone survey will be followed up with an online survey of providers, an online survey of the faith community, and an online survey of the business community focused on the human service needs of employees.

In addition to the survey work, information will be gathered through informal community conversations with various interest groups, including mall walker groups. While not scientific, the information will round out the data from the telephone and online surveys. The Network members were invited to participate.

Ms. O'Reilly listed the opportunities for BNOA members to participate in Community Conversations to be held throughout the city for more qualitative information. These were: Bellevue Square Mall Walkers, City of Bellevue EMS staff, and Overlake Hospital Care Team Staff Meeting. Ms. O'Reilly will send the information about the dates and times by email so people can sign up if they want to join.

Ms. O'Reilly also mentioned that she had forwarded an online survey from the ADS in Seattle/KC that asks about the needs of older adults. She encouraged members to complete it and send it in.

Ms. Thompson commented that in filling out the survey she found the questions too broad as they relate to seniors. She said the needs of those who are 65 to 75 years old are totally different from the needs of those who are 75 to 85. Ms. VonWald agreed and suggested the Area Agency on Aging should be made to realize that.

C. General Announcements

Ms. VonWald informed the group that the Focus on the Future forum on April 5 will be held at City Hall from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Given that the meeting is the same day as the Network on Aging meeting, she asked the members their preference relative to rescheduling the Network meeting or conducting it as slated on that date in order to allow for attending the Focus on the Future forum.

Mr. Katz pointed out that the Council is set to proclaim May as Older Americans Month. They will make a fuss about it and will expect older citizens to be present. He suggested the Network should take the opportunity to outline for the Council the work being done. The April 5 meeting will be needed so the message to be given can be crafted.

Ms. VonWald suggested time should be taken at the next Network meeting to finalize the 2007 workplan so it can be provided to the Council. She noted that no mission statement has yet been identified. She proposed "Making Bellevue a Great Place to Grow up and Grow Old" and the statement was unanimously accepted by the group.

It was agreed that the Network should meet at its regular time on April 5.

Ms. VonWald provided the group members with the handout materials from the Aging and Disability Services annual retreat that was conducted in January.

5. ADJOURN

Ms. VonWald adjourned the meeting at 10:15 a.m.