

BELLEVUE NETWORK ON AGING
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

May 3, 2006
8:30 a.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E -120

MEMBERS PRESENT: Christina Coulter, Valentina Kiselev, Lynne Robinson, Jim Messner, Stephen Lam, Eileen Rasnack, Catherine Brallier, Dwayne Dilley, Diana Thompson, Howard Katz, Marjorie Todd, Gary Dickerman

MEMBERS ABSENT: Eileen Putter, Eve Stern, Berta Seltzer

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Nancy Amidei, University of Washington; Peter Maxim, Parks Board

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order at 8:33 a.m. by Ms. VonWald who presided. All committee members were present with the exception of Eileen Putter, Eve Stern and Berta Seltzer.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. April 5, 2007

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Mr. Dickerman. Second was by Mr. Katz and the motion carried unanimously.

5. STAFF REPORT

Ms. VonWald reported that because of city policy the group photo will not be posted to the website.

Ms. VonWald said she attended the May 1 meeting of the Human Services Commission to provide an update on the Network on Aging. She noted that Berta Seltzer, Valentina Kiselev and Catherine Brallier were all present.

On Monday, May 7, the City Council will be presenting a proclamation for Older Americans Month. Ms. Kiselev will be present to accept it on behalf of the Network and to make a few announcements. The Council has been provided with the Network's work plan.

Ms. Thompson said her husband is active with Senior Net, an organization that teaches seniors how to use computers. It was agreed that if he or someone from that group were to attend the May 7 Council meeting it would be appropriate for Ms. Kiselev to recognize them.

Ms. VonWald said a presentation will be made to the Parks Board on Tuesday, May 8. She said she will provide a short introduction of Older Americans Month, then the North Bellevue

Senior Center Advisory Board will present a memorial brick to the wife of Ran Dunnell in honor of his contributions.

Ms. VonWald said the Forever 50 fair is slated for May 11 from 3:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Crossroads Bellevue. The event is being coordinated by Group Health in partnership with Parks & Community Services.

Alex O'Reilly, Human Services Planner, reported that the planned community conversation with the Crossroads Mall walkers will be canceled in favor of talking with seniors at the Forever 50 fair. She provided the Network members with copies of a written survey that is routinely used by the Human Services Commission every two years to supplement the telephone survey done as part of the Needs Update. Ms. VonWald invited the Network members to participate.

Ms. Robinson asked if there is any attempt made to reach people who are more homebound. Ms. O'Reilly said some may be contacted as part of the telephone survey but not specific attempts are made to reach that group. She agreed it would be a good idea. Ms. Robinson proposed having home service agencies distribute the surveys as they make their visits. Ms. O'Reilly said the surveys are also available at the Crossroads mini City Hall, the Hopelink food bank, at the Eastgate public health clinic, and at all community centers. In addition, the surveys are handed out at all ESL classes.

Ms. Brallier said low-vision seniors are regularly transported to the North Bellevue Community Center to receive services. That should provide a good opportunity to hand out the surveys to that group.

Ms. VonWald reminded the Network that the Overlake Senior Housing Fair is scheduled for May 12 at the North Bellevue Community Center.

Ms. VonWald said she is continuing to work on getting an introduction to the Network included in the monthly utility bills. She said including a line or two of print takes less lead time, and inserting something in the bill takes more lead time and is more expensive. It is possible to do either and/or both. Information about the Network can also be included in the *It's Your City* newsletter.

Ms. VonWald informed the Network that she received notice on May 2 from Visiting Nurse Services that they will be discontinuing their foot care program at the North Bellevue Community Center. She asked for suggestions for other providers so the service can be continued.

Mr. Dilley said he would contact the city of Renton to see who provides the service there, and Ms. Todd suggested a lead. Ms. Robinson proposed checking into whether or not the service could be provided through a grant, and Ms. VonWald said she would check into that.

Mr. Katz reported that applicants are being sought to serve on the Senior Advisory Board at the North Bellevue Community Center. He noted that persons of any age can apply.

3. THE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

Ms. VonWald introduced Nancy Amidei, Director of the Civic Engagement Project at the University of Washington School of Social Work.

Ms. Amidei said she is a democracy junky and came to the role following a Peace Corp assignment and the opportunity to work as an intern with Congress. She said her internship

was followed by regular employment in the US Senate and as a political appointee in the Carter administration. She said she now teaches half time at the University of Washington. The Civic Engagement Project is designed to get people involved in government. She said once a year she works with the Children's Alliance to run a three-day advocacy camp to grow new child advocates around the state. She added that during the state legislation session she sends out regular updates focused on the process.

Ms. Amidei said it is surprising how few people are aware of how the legislative process works and how to have a voice in that process. Consequently, most adult Americans are reluctant to speak up to a legislator, and the result is fewer and fewer people participating in government. Recent surveys have found that of the general public, only about 20 percent had contacted any elected official; for those who regularly follow the news, the number was between 25 and 30 percent.

During the last mid-term election in the state of Oregon, the average age of the voters was 60. In the last presidential election in Oregon, the average age of the voters was 50. Oregon has an all mail-in voting system, so it cannot be argued that the younger voters are less likely to be able to get time off work to go and vote or that retirees find it easier to go to the polling places. Many non-voters indicate they know they should vote but do not know who to vote for, or that they do not think it will make any difference.

Ms. Amidei explained that there are three levels of government – federal, state and local – and three branches of government – legislative, executive and judicial. The legislative branch is called Congress at the federal level, the legislature at the state level, and the city or county council at the local level. The executive branch headed by the president and vice-president at the federal level, by the governor and lieutenant governor at the state level, and by the mayor and deputy mayor or county executive at the local level. The judicial level of government is made up of the federal, state and local courts.

Anyone with access to a computer can easily find out who represents them. In addition, the League of Women Voters annually prints a brochure titled *They Represent You* and makes it widely available for free. The brochure includes contact information for every level of government up to and including the president of the United States.

The state of Washington has a legislative information center in Olympia. It is staffed by very helpful people who are willing to answer any question put to them regardless how challenging. The official state website has a great deal of information, including a link to all legislative actions. All information on the website is available in Spanish as well as English.

Ms. Amidei said everyone should know capitol math. In Washington state there are 49 legislative districts; a majority therefore is 25. There are 98 state representatives, two per district, thus a majority in the Senate is 50. Anything that passes the Senate and the House must be signed by the governor, who is allowed to sign, veto or section veto bills. Every individual citizen can influence every step in the legislative process by simply speaking up. The same formula works for every level of government, including the local level.

Ms. Amidei offered five easy ways to get involved, beginning with signing up to receive a good legislative alert. The alerts keep their readers information as to specific issues and indicate when it is time to speak up; often sample messages are provided to make it easy.

The second way to get involved is to telephone or write elected officials. Washington state offers a toll free line with operators ready to write down messages and deliver them to the proper persons, including the governor.

Ms. Thompson asked if it is more effective to contact a legislator directly by email or phone call than to use the hotline. Ms. Amidei said most love the hotline because the messages can only come from their own constituents. The preferred method of contact, however is always a personal choice. Messages to legislators should always be personalized. Most legislators keep a running tally sheet of comments received on individual topics and take those comments into account.

Helping others become better informed is the third way to get involved. That can be done by making cardstock “telephones” with the capitol website and phone number on them or by setting up “take five” information tables with handouts. The fourth way to advocate for an issue is to wear or carry something calling attention to the issue. Finally, people can get involved by taking every opportunity to mention key bills, issues and budget items.

Ms. Robinson asked how legislators filter out the information coming from quacks from the valid points. Ms. Amidei said every office knows who the perennial quacks are, but they also recognize that even the quacks have valid points to make and good information that cannot be dismissed out of hand.

4. BELLEVUE NETWORK ON AGING LOGO

Due to the hour, it was agreed to postpone discussion of the logo to another meeting.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Transportation

Mr. Dickerman said the subcommittee is continuing to focus on the Easy Rider Collaborative and three specific programs: Bus Buddy, marketing, and Dial A Ride. He noted that the city is currently taking another look at operating a circulator in the downtown core, so the committee is keeping an eye on that.

Mr. Dickerman said the subcommittee will be meeting soon with King County Councilmember Jane Hague to discuss transportation issues facing seniors in Bellevue.

About 500 Bellevue residents who completed the survey in 2006 indicated their willingness to share more information if contacted. Mr. Dickerman said a project is ramping up in which people from the survey list in three different zip codes will be invited to be interviewed during the first week of June. The data captured from that process will be very useful.

B. Housing

Ms. Rasnack said the subcommittee had a meeting with Bill Morton and Bellevue city planners. The planners provided an overview of what is coming down the pike relative to housing development and talked about what the city has been able to do in terms of affordable housing. Mr. Morton shared some of his plans as well.

Ms. Rasnack said the city is in the process of up-zoning some areas of the city, including Wilburton, Crossroads and the Bel-Red corridor. Housing is contemplated for the Crossroads Mall site, the Lake Hills Shopping Center site, and the Factoria Mall site. While none of the new units will be low-income housing, some will be affordable at various levels of affordability. The city is on target for meeting its goal for housing at the 80 percent of median income level, but is having difficulty meeting its low-income housing targets. The city offers developers incentives to provide low-income housing, but the incentives are not often utilized.

Ms. Thompson suggested that rather than just doing an upzone in areas like the Bel-Red corridor, the city should consider allowing developers a higher zone if they agree to create certain amenities, such as affordable housing. That is the approach Redmond has taken.

Ms. VonWald noted that ARCH proactively works with developers in seeking an increase in the number affordable units. She suggested the subcommittee should seek a better understanding of approaches used by the city in the past and the incentives currently on the books.

The Network was informed that the Bel-Red corridor steering committee is currently working to on finalized its preferred alternative for study in the Final Environmental Impact Statement. Their recommendation will ultimately be delivered to the City Council, which will then direct the Planning Commission to work on the appropriate zoning issues.

C. Support Services

Ms. Coulter said three subcommittee members are on the Overlake Home Sweet Home Fair planning board. The event is scheduled for November.

Ms. Coulter informed the Network that the subcommittee decided to conduct a focus group for Bellevue and King County emergency first responders and 2-1-1 operators from the Crisis Clinic on June 28. The idea is to get a better idea of what services are currently being provided, any gaps, and what information is being shared. Another focus group for area hospital and healthcare workers on July 26. The Kirkland Senior Council will be invited to attend an observe.

Ms. Coulter reported that she, Ms. O'Reilly and a member of the Human Services Commission met recently with Bellevue EMS staff. It was discovered that most EMS personnel are not very informed when it comes to social services. Those who participated did not know about senior information and assistance, about adult protective services, or about the 2-1-1 line. A jurisdiction in Florida offers what amounts to short-term case management for social service emergencies; they go out and make sure people reported by EMS personnel get connected with the services they need, and Ms. O'Reilly has agreed to research the approach.

Asked if meetings with all EMS personnel are held regularly, Ms. VonWald said they are not and added that it would take a massive effort to schedule such a meeting. However, the Bellevue EMS personnel could all be contacted via email with pertinent information about social services and who to contact.

7. ADJOURN

Ms. VonWald adjourned the meeting at 10:20 a.m.