

BELLEVUE NETWORK ON AGING
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

July 12, 2007
8:30 a.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E -109

MEMBERS PRESENT: Valentina Kiselev, Lynne Robinson, Jim Messner, Eileen Putter, Eve Stern, Eileen Rasnack, Catherine Brallier, Dwayne Dilley, Howard Katz, Gary Dickerman

MEMBERS ABSENT: Christina Coulter, Stephen Lam, Berta Seltzer, Diana Thompson, Marjorie Todd

STAFF PRESENT: Cathy VonWald, Alex O'Reilly, Department of Parks and Community Services; Jullie Gray, Barbee Pigott Kirkland Senior Council

OTHERS PRESENT: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order at 8:34 a.m. by Chair Robinson who presided. All committee members were present with the exception of Christina Coulter, Stephen Lam, Berta Seltzer, Diana Thompson and Marjorie Todd.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. June 7, 2007

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

3. DISCUSSION

A. Kirkland Senior Council

Ms. VonWald introduced Jullie Gray and Barbee Pigott who screened for the group a video highlighting the work of the Kirkland Senior Council. They noted that the video is regularly aired on the Kirkland government television channel.

Ms. Gray said some 14 committees were formed in 2002 at the time the Senior Council was initiated. Each committee represented a different interest or project. By 2005 the Senior Council developed specific criteria for projects and narrowed the number of committees down to three: advocacy, visibility, and volunteerism.

The Senior Council was formed by the parks department at the direction of the City Council. The first step was the development of a needs assessment; that was followed by developing the Senior Council model. Essentially the same approach was used in Bellevue to create the Network on Aging, expect that the impetus started with focus groups and the parks department rather than the City Council.

Ms. Pigott said the basic annual work plan for the Senior Council is developed in January at a facilitated retreat. The list of projects developed is based on an understanding of the needs of older adults in the community. To date, the Senior Council has participated in the Stepper Program, which is a walking program for seniors; has been involved with the Active Living Task Force in Kirkland promoting physical activity for seniors; is helping with a state CERT program instructing seniors what to do in an emergency; and will participate in the Evergreen Hospital emergency preparedness fair in October. Senior Council representatives also attend local neighborhood association meetings and keeps updated regarding all Council and Park Board initiatives that might involve seniors.

Recruitment is an ongoing exercise for the Senior Council. Applications are considered outside of the designated recruitment time, which is the month of October.

Ms. Brallier asked how many members the Senior Council has. She was told by Ms. Gray that there is no set number and that there are currently 15. A certain percentage of the membership must be seniors.

The Council establishes the budget for the Senior Council, and there is no outside fundraising except for events requiring sponsors. The group has not applied for any grants.

Mr. Dickerman asked what the group's top recruitment tool is. Ms. Pigott said personal contact has proved to be the most effective approach. Notices are also published in the newspaper.

Ms. Pigott said the Senior Council sponsored the senior games, and Goodwill loaned its vintage swimsuit collection to the group. The Senior Council currently has two major projects under way: a program to prevent falls by seniors, and the Good Neighborhood Committee. The latter is a program that developed after the major windstorm when it was realized that seniors need more information about what to in emergency and disaster situations.

Ms. Gray expressed an interest in scheduling a joint meeting between the Kirkland Senior Council and the Network on Aging to explore ways to collaborate. Mr. Katz proposed that each group should appoint liaisons to attend meetings of the opposite city so that both groups can be better brought up to speed and kept informed.

B. Staff Report

Ms. VonWald reported that the annual city vs. seniors softball game is slated for Wednesday, July 18, at Hidden Valley Sports Park at 4:00 p.m.

Ms. VonWald provided the group with some written information on universal design. She said she recently toured a home built by a retired couple that was designed to permit them to live there for the rest of their lives. The home includes support for grab bars that will be installed later when needed, has wide doorways, lower counters, wider hallways, and more room around the toilets. She said the builder explained that it does not cost a lot more to incorporate universal design principles.

Alex O'Reilly said there is a local group that specializes in retrofitting homes using universal design principles.

It was suggested that a tour for the Network would be helpful. It was agreed that the housing subcommittee should arrange it.

Ms. VonWald provided the members with copies of the Aging and Disability Services area plan update. She urged them to contact her with suggestions for what is missing from the matrix.

C. Committee Reports

1. Transportation

Mr. Dickerman said the committee is attached to the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative (EERC) and is spending much of its time and resources on that effort. The program includes the Bus Buddy Program which will be funded through Sound Transit.

Mr. Dickerman said funding for the Dial-A-Ride project has also been received. The EERC will work to develop the program scope.

The transportation subcommittee has remained in contact with King County Councilmember Jane Hague and City Councilmember Claudia Balducci to keep them apprised of all activity and progress.

The transportation subcommittee wants to have some input with regard to the downtown circulator project as it moves forward. The subcommittee is specifically interested in knowing if the route can be expanded or made as flexible as possible.

Ms. O'Reilly said a memo has been drafted on behalf of the EERC which will recommend an alternative.

Mr. Dickerman said an RFP from the National Center on Senior Transportation has been received. The intent is to obtain some technical assistance. Hopelink would like to have a mobility manager and hopes the technical assistance can be utilized for networking and marketing to that end.

Ms. Stern suggested the list of resources uncovered to date by the subcommittee should be posted to the website.

2. Housing

Ms. Stern said she represented the housing subcommittee at the recent Eastside King County homelessness workshop. She said it was disturbing to find out how many homeless there are on the Eastside; there are some 8000 homeless in the whole of King County. The majority of the homeless have jobs earning minimum wage, which is insufficient to be able to afford housing.

Ms. Stern said a large percentage of the homeless have been victims of domestic violence, which means it is often women and children who need a safe place to live during the transition to getting on their own feet. One option for them is senior and adult homeless foster care, a program offered by the state. The housing committee believes it should tap into the work already done on both temporary and long-term affordable housing, providing incentives for developers, and extending existing programs.

Ms. O'Reilly said the Congregational Church in downtown Bellevue opened a women's drop-in center. The program is open five days a week from about 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Women can gain access to showers, food, and case management through the YWCA. About ten women per day avail themselves of the service.

Ms. Stern commented that too often people simply do not know how to access the services that are available to them.

Ms. Putter pointed out that affordable housing is a huge issue facing the Eastside; there just are not enough places for low-income individuals to go to get the housing they need.

Ms. O'Reilly reported that a group called the Housing Development Consortium, a King County organization that develops non-profit housing, will be sponsoring a conference in September focused on affordable housing and its link to employment. The target will be the business community. Several recognizable persons in the business community will speak.

Mr. Katz asked how the committee to reach out to older homeless adults. Ms. O'Reilly said there are a number of older adults taking advantage of the Congregations for the Homeless shelter program. The program can house between 20 and 30 men at a time. A phone call to the program directors for Congregations for the Homeless and the women's drop-in center would be the way to find out what the committee can do.

Ms. Stern said the committee is working to develop a survey to be sent out to assisted living and residential care adult family homes on the Eastside to gain a better understanding regarding waiting times, occupancy, and the criteria for acceptance. The goal is to send the survey out in September and publish the results by the end of the year.

3 Support Services

Chair Robinson said the Support Services subcommittee conducted a focus group on June 28. Agencies with support services available to seniors were invited to attend. There were representatives from the Eastside Cultural Navigator Program, Senior Services of Seattle/King County, Bellevue and King County EMS, the Kirkland Senior Council, and a caregiver specialist from Crisis Clinic. The purpose of the focus group was to gain input from agencies currently providing seniors with resource information and services in an effort to determine the best avenues and methods for improving system.

The focus group participants suggested that the 1-888-4ELDERS number is the best one to advertise widely in the senior community rather than 2-1-1. Ways to promote a single phone number to seniors will be explored.

Ms. Brallier commented that her husband has low vision issues but would be able to dial 2-1-1; she said he would not be able to handle calling a much longer number seeking services.

Mr. Katz said the focus in the community has been on promoting 2-1-1. The agency answering the phone at 2-1-1 should have the ability to press a button and transfer the call directly to Senior Services instead of directing callers to dial 1-888-4ELDERS. Ms. VonWald allowed that the 2-1-1 system does not have the funding it needs to be open seven days a week.

Chair Robinson commented that 2-1-1 would not have the ability to handle all the calls it would get if their number were to be widely advertised in the senior community. Senior Services does have that ability. The 2-1-1 system is not just focused on the needs of seniors the way Senior Services is.

It was clear that EMS first responders are not always knowledgeable about non-medical services available to seniors. Gatekeeper training is also a great need for people who are

involved with seniors in the course of their daily work; the conclusion reached was that the city should sponsor gatekeeper training.

The workshop also pointed out the shortage of chore services available to seniors.

4. UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS

Chair Robinson reviewed with the group the list of possible topics to discuss at upcoming meetings.

There was consensus that the Network on Aging should avoid stretching itself too thin by trying to attend every event and fair. There was agreement that the primary focus should be on gathering information and formulating strategies.

5. ADJOURN

Chair Robinson adjourned the meeting at 10:30 a.m.