

**BELLEVUE NETWORK ON AGING
MINUTES**

April 4, 2012
8:30 a.m.

Bellevue Art Museum
Auditorium

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jullie Gray, Jeanne Grote, Beverly Heyden, Peg Jones, Howard Katz, Hannah Kimball, Bill Merriman, Susan Posten, Eileen Rasnack, Lynne Robinson, Berta Seltzer, Diana Thompson, Terri Wilson, Janet Zielasko

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tomas Corsini, Bob Megargel

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Ken Kroeger, Pam Fehrman, Ian Toms, Janet Lewine, Lorrie Leland, City of Bellevue Staff; Pat Chiarelli, Community Liaison for Congressman Adam Smith's office; Hank Myers, Redmond City Council, Chris Degrassi, Operations Manager @ Bellevue Art Museum; Cheri Perazzoli, Hearing Loss Association of Washington; Spencer Norby, Hearing Loop NW

RECORDING SECRETARY: Teri Ekstrom

WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Chair Grote who presided. All committee members were present with the exception of Tomas Corsini and Bob Megargel.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – March 7, 2013

There was a motion to approve the minutes as written. The motion was seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

SHARE THE SOUND: LET'S LOOP SEATTLE [Presentation]

Cheri Perazzoli, Director of Advocacy, Hearing Loss Association of Washington was the featured speaker for today's meeting. Ms. Perazzoli stated that the Hearing Loss Association of Washington is a volunteer, non-profit organization representing those people who have hearing loss.

Ms. Perazzoli shared that she was traveling eight years ago in Dublin. Their group was at a train station, which is a very noisy place, and she was letting everyone else deal with getting their tickets while she stood back. As she leaned against the wall she could clearly hear a conversation. Then she saw a sign that said "Hearing Loop installed – switch hearing aid to t-

coil". She was so excited by the hearing that she was experiencing. This hearing loop was almost everywhere in public spaces and was indicated by signs. She was able to hear the tour guide very clearly when she had been unable to in the past. She began to wonder why we didn't have the induction hearing loops installed in public places in the United States. She became very interested in this system and subsequently attended the 2nd International Looping Conference in Washington, DC in 2011. She learned a lot about the system, the varied applications, and how it can make communication accessible to all people. To demonstrate, she provided headsets around the room for all to try and see how clearly you can hear with them on.

When you start to lose hearing you lose high frequencies first. When you lose these high frequencies you also lose the ability to hear consonants. Hearing loss impacts daily communication for 1 in 7 people of all ages and is growing mainly because it is a very noisy world we live in. It is the most common disability in the military and is the most common birth defect in infants. Hearing loss is an invisible disability and our culture promotes it being invisible. The associated stigma hinders acknowledgement, promotes denial, and prevents people from getting the help they need. Our society needs to make it easier for people to talk about hearing loss so that more people are aware of it and address their own hearing loss. Bringing it out in the open makes it easier for others to talk about it.

ADA defines hearing access (accommodations, auxiliary aids, assistive technology, and services) and has established guidelines (what are Assistive Listening Systems and the types of Assistive Listening Systems). However, in the US, when you have a hearing disability you have to go out of your way to use Assistive Listening Devices (ALD) when you go places. You must seek, locate, and check out the ALD. ID must be surrendered which can prove problematic should you want to order a drink or need to evacuate quickly. The Paramount Theatre and the 5th Avenue Theater both have listening devices, however, lack of signage complicates the check-out process. Infrared listening systems operate by a direct line of sight: when someone stands up in front of you the signal is blocked. In addition, many of existing ALD's are not hearing aid compatible; you have to take the hearing aid out to use them; negating your prescriptive benefit and risking loss as well. The Hearing Loss Association advocates that there should be Real Time Captioning (CART) in place in all public meeting space such as City Council meetings, etc.

A Hearing Loop is a copper wire that loops around a room or area such as a pharmacy counter. It transmits an electromagnetic field within its loop, allowing a hearing aid or cochlear implant telecoil (T-Coil) to function as an antenna directly linking the listener to the facility's sound system. 70% of hearing aids and all cochlear implants have the T-Coil capability.

Ms. Perazzoli said she needs both hearing aids and listening devices to hear. It is all very expensive. A separate FM system costs \$1000.00 and the proprietary listening device can run as much as \$1000.00 also. A lot of people can't afford this and Medicare covers few if any of the expenses. A person wearing a telecoil equipped hearing aid or cochlear implant or headset with loop receiver can all enjoy the benefits of a hearing loop. Hearing loops block out background noise, and allow the user to clearly understand the sound coming through the hearing loop. It has many advantages for people with hearing loss, including allowing workers to stay in the workforce as they age.

Transient situations where critical information must be exchanged should all be equipped with hearing loops. Airports are very large noisy places and it is difficult to hear. The Hearing Loss Association is working with the Port of Seattle to get loops installed at SeaTac. London Transport including both Heathrow and Gatwick airports has induction loops along with British Post offices, pharmacies, retail stores, banks and fast food restaurants. When the cities are considering the Comprehensive Plan update and Universal Design, hearing access should be a crucial part of this planning.

Almost all seniors either have hearing loss or know someone who does. Current statistics indicate that at age 65, 1 in 3 have hearing loss that increases to 1 in 2 at 70. All programs and services that do not address hearing loss, especially those designed for seniors, are missing the audience if those people can't hear. Let's allow the seniors and people of all ages with hearing loss to be vibrant parts of the community. Mr. Katz stated that he has been talking with Sound Transit about the light rail station designs. He has suggested that they need to install flashing lights when trains are approaching rather than the bells that they are currently planning. He suggested that Ms. Perazzoli speak to Sound Transit about this.

Mr. Hank Myer, Redmond City Council, asked if the system could be installed in banks where just the customer and teller would hear their conversation. Ms. Perazzoli said that it can be set up that way. Ms. Robinson said that her dad has a coil that is attached to his TV and it goes to his recliner so that only he hears and others don't have to hear it. She asked what kind of cost it would be to integrate this system into the city. Ms. Perazzoli said that it is ideal and less expensive to install this system as a facility is being built instead of after the fact. It depends on the building materials used as to how well the system works also. At the Bellevue Art Museum the loop itself was \$4,000 and the microphones and conference calling system was \$6,000. It serves everyone in the room. Ms. Wilson asked if each area has to be looped separately or can an entire facility be looped? Ms. Perazzoli said that each area has to be configured separately. Each room has its own source. Ms. Zielasko asked if it is typical that hearing aids come with the T-Coil technology. She was told that the technology comes in 70% of hearing aids. Not all audiologists think you need it and they don't want to overwhelm you with yet another feature when you are first learning about a hearing aid. People need to ask for it and have their audiologist show them how to use it. Mr. Katz said that the City of Bellevue staff that are present need to take this system into consideration when looking at new community buildings. Ms. Robinson stated that many of her clients can't afford the hearing aids with the T-Coil in them.

Ms. Perazzoli said that in June there will be a Hearing Loss Association of America Convention June 27-30 in Portland and she would recommend anyone with hearing loss to attend.

BREAK

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a) **Ad Hoc (Hospital Observation Status) Committee** – (reported by Ms. Robinson and Ms. Thompson)

Ms. Thompson said members of the Ad Hoc and Advocacy committees will be meeting with Bellevue Network on Aging
April 4, 2013 Page 3

Representative Adam Smith on Monday at 10:00am in Conference Room 1E-109. Please let her know if you are able to attend. The committees drafted a letter in support of **S.569, H.R.1179 “Changes to Medicare Coverage”** which will provide for changes in Hospital Observation Status to give Rep. Smith at this meeting. The letter will also be mailed to Murray, Cantwell, Reichert, and DelBene. There was a motion to approve this letter to be given to the Representatives. The motion was seconded. Ms. Robinson said that she will be giving a verbal presentation at the meeting with Representative Smith and Kirkland Senior Council will give some testimonials regarding Medical Observation. Ms. Wilson said that money speaks volumes and wondered whether we have figures to give on this? She will be collecting some figures on the average cost people have to pay out of pocket and get the information to Ms. Robinson.

b) **Outreach Committee**

The next meeting is Monday at 9:00 in Conference Room 1E-110. Ms. VonWald will be sending out a reminder.

c) **Transportation/Housing Committee** – (reported by Ms. Wilson)

The committee reviewed the Housing element of the Comprehensive Plan and will review the Transportation Element at their next meeting. The committee will form a position on the Comprehensive Plan elements and bring them forward to the entire Network for approval. A member of the City’s Transportation Department will attend the next committee meeting to lend support and answer questions.

d) **Advocacy Committee** – (reported by Ms. Thompson)

The Governor’s budget came out and it is good for seniors. It is expected that the House will agree with the Governor’s recommended budget. The Senate budget is better than expected but not as good as the Governor’s budget. The Senate budget supports Medicaid expansion, restoration of some adult dental care, supports current level of funding for caregiver support, etc. There are also two bills that we have been in favor of: 1) Adult Family Home Improvement bill, and 2) The Age Wave Bill in which both received approval. The Senate budget reductions include: elimination of the Kinship (2.1 million) Program, Volunteer Chore was eliminated, the Aged, Blind & Disabled was eliminated, and TANF (Work Source) was reduced. Ms. Rasnack said she had a recent update in that one of their staff from Catholic Community Services presented in Olympia in front of the Senate Ways and Means Committee and they were told that the Volunteer Chore Program would be restored back in the budget. She also said that the State Food program was restored. Ms. Thompson said the committee has written two letters: 1) to Governor Inslee thanking him for his support of seniors, and 2) to the Senate (but this information has changed and continues to change). She is thinking they will only be sending the letter to Governor Inslee for his support. The Senate will be voting on Friday or Saturday so there will be an e-mail alert sent out to those on the Advocacy Committee. On a whole, senior groups have done a wonderful job of advocacy this session.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP REPORTS

- a) **Parks & Community Services Board** – no report.

- b) **Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative** (reported by Ms. VonWald)

EERC discussed the Sound Transit Open Houses and will continue to be plugged in & report back to the BNOA for input. The free bus passes given out at vehicle license renewal will continue for 1 more year. You can ask for them and donate them yourself, or indicate that they give them to human services agencies.

- c) **Eastside Human Services Forum** (reported by Ms. O'Reilly)

By the end of the month, EHSF will be releasing their marketing plan. It will help those who provide human services to engage the community in that supporting human services makes a healthy community.

- d) **Eastside Time Bank** (reported by Jeanne Grote)

The next TimeBank potluck is at North Bellevue Community Center next Thursday at 6:00pm and there will be a Special Eastside TimeBank Board meeting tonight.

- e) **Aging & Disability Services Advisory Council** (reported by Ms. VonWald)

The Council has been meeting in various locations throughout the County as part of their outreach and communications plan. There will be a meeting hosted in Bellevue but a date has not been confirmed. It is great to get the Council out in the community and especially on the Eastside.

STAFF REPORT/UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS

May – Attorney General to speak on Older Adult Initiatives

June – Nancy Kartes, Bellevue Botanical Garden will give an update on the garden construction & have a discussion about mobility at the garden

July – meeting has been moved to July 11th

Updates:

Make sure to take a look at the most recent Neighborhood News and mark your calendar for upcoming events. There will be a Spring Forward Expo highlighting City projects on April 24th, 4-7pm at City Hall, a Downtown Livability Initiative Walking Tour on April 27 & May 1, and two Parks Facilities will have groundbreaking events.

The University of Washington is hosting a “Working Together for Elder-Friendly Futures” Conference on September 11 & 12.

Community Conversations for the Human Services Needs Update that BNOA members will be attending:

April 15 – Circle of Friends

April 24 – YMCA

Ms. VonWald stated that Dick Englund has resigned from the BNOA indicating a good personal situation that he needs to focus on. She also indicated that the City Manager, after 12 years, has resigned. Brad Miyake is serving in the Interim City Manager position until the position is filled.

The Kirkland Volunteer Fair is this Saturday at Peter Kirk Park from 10:00-2:00.

The Northshore Senior Fair for Caregivers is Friday, May 10th from 10:00-3:00. The event is free and includes Wendy Lusbader as speaker, workshops and a free lunch.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Katz indicated that the Sound Transit Hospital Station is being considered a lower user station and so will not have several features that are need for seniors and disabled. We need to advocate for the features that the seniors and disabled will need at this station.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 am.