

BELLEVUE NETWORK ON AGING  
REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES

February 5, 2009  
8:30 a.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Room 1E -120

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lynne Robinson, Eileen Rasnack, Berta Seltzer, Dwayne Dilley, Diana Thompson, Marjorie Todd, Gary Dickerman, Bill Merriman, Jullie Gray, Bob Megargel, Heidi Ressler, Hannah Kimball

MEMBERS ABSENT: Howard Katz

STAFF PRESENT: Cathy VonWald, Department of Parks and Community Services  
Gwen Rousseau, Planning & Community Development

OTHERS PRESENT: Molly McNees, Megan Horst, Sustainable Seattle

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

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 Howard Katz.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. January 8, 2009

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

COMMUNITIES COUNT: SOCIAL & HEALTH INDICATORS ACROSS KING COUNTY  
– 2008 REPORT

Molly McNees with the Seattle/King County Department of Public Health explained that Communities Count is an initiative that involves eleven partners, both public and private organizations. Public Health does the technical work of putting the report together. King County is divided into four regions: north, south, east and north, and the report attempts to highlight specific local data as much as possible, though in some cases the data is from the county or the state generally. All of the indicators in the report fall within the categories of safety and health, life changes, community, environment, and arts and culture.

Ms. McNees said the Communities Count report is intended to serve as a report card on how the area is doing in meeting the health and social needs of the community. The report was first conceived in the late 1990s with a series of forums and focus groups to determine what residents saw as valued conditions. Content experts were consulted to determine how to best measure valued conditions, and their suggestions became the indicators used in the report.

The report was first published in 2000 and was subsequently published in 2002, 2005, and 2008. The approaches used in compiling the data are kept as uniform as possible so changes over time can be accurately tracked.

The 2008 report shows several areas in which there has been improvement; adequate food is one of the areas. However, it should be noted that the report was put together in late 2007 and through 2008, and since then things have changed dramatically. While the report shows improvements, the food banks are reporting just the opposite. The next report, and any possible interim updates done in the meantime, may show that the category has in fact not continued to improve.

The report shows that violent crimes, domestic violence and auto theft have all gone down. Infant mortality and teen births rates are down generally but not for specific populations. Use of tobacco by adults has continued to drop at the state and national levels. There has been some improvement in air quality and in people's perceptions of neighborhood safety.

Some categories in the report have gotten worse or have not improved, such as affordable housing. Median home prices are dropping, so the trend may have improved since the report came out. There was an increase in the percentage of children living in poverty, and a drop in the number of adults living without health insurance. Obesity continues to increase. The binge drinking and discrimination indicators have stayed the same since the first report was published.

Ms. McNees said inequities based on race, ethnicity, income and education continue to persist at about the same level shown in the 2000 report. There are 19 indicators by which differences by race can be measured, and 13 of them show disparities. Of the 19 income indicators, 15 showed disparities. For education there are 17 indicators, and of them 10 showed disparities.

The areas with disparities by race include adequate food, income distribution, poverty, social support, discrimination, hate crimes, homicides, motor vehicle deaths, teen births, infant mortality, stress, tobacco and alcohol use, overweight and physical activity, limitation in daily activity due to health, health insurance, pollution in neighborhoods, and academic achievement.

The differences by income are similar, with the exception of motor vehicle deaths, affordable housing, participation in life-enriching activities, neighborhood social cohesion, and neighborhood safety.

The list is shorter for differences by education: adequate food, discrimination, reading to small children, participation in life-enriching activities, stress, tobacco and alcohol use, overweight, physical activity, health insurance, and involvement in community organizations.

With regard to inequities, Ms. McNees said the 2008 report no longer shows a difference by race with regard to perceived neighborhood safety, neighborhood social cohesion, and involvement in community organizations. However, adequate physical activity occurs less often among people of color, those with lower incomes, and those with lower educational attainment.

Ms. McNees said housing affordability is looked at several different ways. One measure is whether or not the family pays more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs, which is a measure of housing affordability recommended by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. About 45 percent of renters, and about 41 percent of homeowners who have mortgages, are paying more than 30 percent of their incomes for housing costs. That figure

has remained fairly stable over time, though it has been rising for homeowners with mortgages. Since 1990, the proportion of households with unaffordable housing has increased from just over a quarter to just over a third.

Another measurement is whether or not families can afford the average rent for an area. The affordable rent for a median renter, who is someone making about \$45,000 per year, is a little more than \$1100 per month. The report shows that median renters could afford the average rent in nearly all parts of King County, with the exception of Kirkland and Redmond. The affordable rent for very low income renters, or a family earning about \$20,000 per year, is about \$500 per month. In every region of King County, the average rent is higher than that. Even a low-income renter making about \$45,000 per year would have difficulty paying the rent in about half of the county.

Housing affordability is also measured by looking at the gap between a median income and a median home price. Even with home prices falling, the average household would have to go above what they can truly afford in order to purchase a house. The same is true for first-time homebuyers, even though starter homes are generally less expensive.

The income and poverty category data compares what a household has and what a household needs at the various income wage levels. The 2008 report incorporates the use of a new measure developed by the Northwest Federation of Community Organizations that is focused on the concept of a living wage. In essence, the measure contemplates a wage that meets the cost of living for households of different sizes and compositions. A household having two adults who are working, and two children, one of whom is a toddler and needs childcare, needs to be earning more than \$71,000 per year just to meet their basic expenses. The same household, if the two adults are making only minimum wage, will bring in just over \$33,000. Countywide, 46 percent of all jobs do not pay the wage the household would need to meet its basic expenses; each wage earner would need to make more than \$17 per hour. The situation is far grimmer for other household types, such as where there is only one adult who is working and there are children in need of childcare; for households with a single wage earner, one toddler and one school-age child, 76 percent of the jobs do not pay the wage that would be needed.

Ms. McNees told the Network that in 1989, 8.9 percent of children were in poverty. By 1999 the figure had increased only marginally to 9.9 percent. However, by 2007 the figure had jumped to 14.3 percent, which equated to more than 56,000 children in King County.

The report takes all the income earned in King County and divides households into five groups. For the lowest to the high middle 20 percent of household groups, income has actually been going down since 1979. The richest fifth in the county have seen their incomes rise slightly over the same period of time. The report also compares the percent of median income earned by different race/ethnic groups against white incomes. African-American households in 2000 earned 63 percent of what white households earned; by 2007 the figure had dropped to only 51 percent. The pattern is similar for all other race/ethnic groups except for Asians. The percentage drops are not due to a decrease in earnings by the race/ethnic groups but rather to an increase in white incomes. The local trend follows national statistics, though the percentage drop in King County is slightly higher than the national average.

Ms. McNees said about a third of the measures used in the report come from a survey conducted in King County about a year prior to putting the final report together. The random sample telephone survey serves as the only source of data for some of the indicators. Some qualitative research is also conducted to specifically reach households that are traditionally underrepresented in telephone surveys.

With regard to the discrimination measure, the Network was informed that the indicator is one of three where health planning areas can be used to look at data for smaller areas. Ever since the Communities Count report was first published, it has been seen that around a quarter of the population reported that within the last year they had experienced some type of discrimination. She noted that in the south county and Seattle areas people are reporting experiences with discrimination. In King County as a whole, the east and the north regions report lower levels of discrimination.

Turning to the health and safety section, Ms. McNees noted that several of the indicators show some improvement over the previous report. People over the age of 65 reported the highest levels of feeling safe in their neighborhoods; adults 18 to 24 reported lower levels of feeling safe. The south region reported the lowest overall feeling of safety. Violent crimes have been going down, except in the east region where it has traditionally been quite low. Auto theft has been going down as well in all regions, though identity theft is pervasive and growing.

With regard to the data concerning motor vehicle deaths from crashes, it was noted that the figures are higher for men than for women in all age groups. The figures were very high for men age 75 and older. Ms. McNees pointed out that the data is based on where people live, not on where the automobile accidents occurred.

Ms. McNees said the data with regard to the average level of stress comes from the phone survey. For King County as a whole, the level of stress is not terribly high. The scale runs from a low of five to a high of 20, and for King County the report indicates an average of eight. For people 65 and older, the reported stress level averages 6.8.

Ms. VonWald suggested the stress numbers will increase in the next report because of the financial situation over which people have no control.

Tobacco use has been decreasing in the area for all regions, particularly among older adults; of the residents 65 years old and over, only six percent are smokers, which compares to 13 percent in King County as a whole, and nine percent in the east region.

Levels of overweight have been fairly high over time, and an increase in obesity is indicated by the data. The report shows that 54.6 percent of King County adults are either obese or overweight. The obesity rate, however, begins to decline at age 65.

In King County overall, 55 percent of adults meet the recommended level of moderate to vigorous physical activity. No regional differences were detected. Only 49 percent of older adults meet the recommended level.

The percentage of adults who have limitations in their daily activities for 14 to 30 days per month due to poor health is 6.8 percent; over time, that figure has been gradually increasing. The number is only four percent in the east region, and eight percent for those over the age of 65. Ms. McNees stressed that the data is not an indication of disability; disabilities do not necessarily limit one's activity.

The report indicates a very slight increase in the percentage of people who use public transportation, work at home, or bike/walk to work. Over two-thirds of the population drives alone in their cars to work. The percentage of adults who are satisfied with their commute times actually decreased for the first time since the report was first published, from 78 percent to 69 percent. There was also a decrease in the number of persons satisfied with their access to public transit, from 70 percent to 76 percent. Not surprisingly, people living in Seattle use transit much more than the other geographic areas of the county.

Ms. McNees said the percentage of people who participate in artistic, cultural or literary activities is fairly high at 79 percent. Additionally, 29 percent indicated they had made music or danced within the last month. She added that King County stacks up very well in terms of the number of arts and culture establishments per thousand residents when compared to other counties of similar size and demographics.

Ms. Thompson asked which data of the major indicators came from the phone survey. Ms. McNees said the phone survey yielded the data regarding social support, freedom from discrimination, reading to children, participation in life-enriching activities, perceived neighborhood safety, stress, neighborhood social cohesion, involvement in community organizations, community service, ease of access to shops and services, satisfaction with, and participation in arts and culture. She added that to get 2000 completed interviews it is necessary to make as many as 15,000 calls.

Mr. Dickerman asked which major organizations use the data in the report. Ms. Horst said funders certainly use the data, as do cities. Presentations on what the report says is given to all sorts of different groups, including non-profits and city and county workers. Both Burien and North Bend reapportioned their budgets to address different projects based on data in the report; in both those cases the data had to do with children and young people.

Ms. Kimball asked if any of the survey is conducted online. Ms. McNees said there was no online survey conducted.

Mr. Megargel suggested it would be helpful to have the data from the various categories ranked against findings from other counties to see how King County stacks up. Ms. McNees said that is something that could possibly be posted on the CommunitiesCount.org website, though there could not be true comparisons for each data point.

## BELLEVUE NETWORK ON AGING MAINTENANCE

### A. Public Relations

Chair Robinson said a small article about the Network on Aging was included recently in the Wilburton Community Association newsletter. She said there are also opportunities open to speak at the Surrey Downs, Somerset, Newport Hills, Lake Hills, Horizon Crest and Bridle Trails neighborhood associations.

Ms. VonWald said state Attorney General Rob McKenna has been invited to talk about identity theft and other issues he is working on that affect older adults. He has been scheduled for Friday, March 20, from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. in City Council chambers. A flyer is being developed for release. All boards and commissions from the city will be invited, along with the Councilmembers, key staff, the Kirkland Senior Council, the Mercer Island Senior Advisory Group, and providers operating throughout the county. The event will be billed as being sponsored by the Network on Aging.

### B. Partnerships

Ms. Thompson suggested the group should decide what course of action to take with regard to attending the monthly Kirkland Senior Council meetings. She recommended voting in favor of having a Network representative attend all of the Kirkland meetings.

Chair Robinson asked if the joint partnership with Kirkland on the Vial of Life project would be continuing, or if a new project should be selected in partnership with Kirkland. Ms.

Thompson said the joint committee has not met recently. The Vial of Life program certainly was worthwhile, though the supply of vials will soon run out and the Network has no budget for buying more. Given that the vials can be purchased for only one dollar, giving them out free at first was a good way of getting people to be aware of the program. Medic One is considering new sponsorships to continue financial support of the program.

Mr. Dilley said it was his understanding when the Network originally voted to send a representative to the Kirkland Senior Council the intent was just to have an observer. Involvement in the Vial of Life program ended up taking a lot of time and served to make others feel that if they were asked to go to a Kirkland meeting that they could also be caught up in a time-consuming project. He said he would be all for sending someone just to observe.

Ms. VonWald agreed that those appointed to observe the Kirkland Senior Council should not expect to be involved in joint projects. Their primary focus should be to observe and report back to the Network.

Motion to appoint a person from the Network each month to attend the Kirkland Senior Council meetings to observe and report back was made by Ms. Thompson. Second was by Mr. Dilley and the motion carried unanimously.

### C. Legislative Issues

#### 1. Adult Day Health

Ms. VonWald provided the Network members with copies of a letter distributed by advocates of adult day health. She noted that the Governor's supplemental budget, which runs through May 2009, has cuts for adult day health programs. The two-year budget developed by the Governor does not include funding at all. She said the Network could potentially add its signature to the letter, which asks that adult day health be included in the Governor's supplemental budget and the next biennial budget.

Ms. VonWald allowed that the issue is a complicated one. She explained that the budget cuts are proposed because most feel those who benefit are already in an institutional setting where they will receive adult day health services. Adult day providers have a different view.

Ms. Thompson said a large number of agencies have elected to sign the letter. She offered her own letter as an alternative and something the Network could sign and send to legislators.

Ms. Seltzer suggested that if the Network and a large number of agencies choose to send the same information to the legislators, the impact will be quite large. While the individual Network members could send letters on their own addressing the issues, the impact will not be as significant.

Ms. Ressler proposed the Network should tie the statement in the letter that adult day health caregivers assist family caregivers in a way that allows them to continue providing care in their homes, to the new legislation regarding continuing education for caregivers because they will have to leave their homes to take the classes.

Ms. Ressler suggested any letter the Network signs onto should address the issue in the broadest possible terms. She said that would mean addressing adult disability issues generally, which would cover anyone from 18 years old and up. Chair Robinson disagreed, suggesting that would be above the focus of the Network.

Ms. Thompson called for the Network to sign both letters and that her letter specifically be sent to the legislators charged with overseeing the Eastside district specifically.

Motion to add the signature of the Network to the letter aimed at preserving adult day care in Washington state was made by Ms. Seltzer. Second was by Mr. Dilley.

Ms. Thompson argued that the dates and facts in the letter should be verified and revised if needed. Ms. Seltzer pointed out that the Network was being asked to sign on to the letter which had been written by someone else. Accordingly, the Network would not be able to change what the letter says.

The motion carried unanimously.

**BREAK**

### **STAFF REPORT**

Ms. VonWald reminded the Network that the 2008 volunteer recognition event is scheduled for February 11 at the North Bellevue Community Center from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.. She asked those wanting to attend to let her know before February 6. Ms. Thompson will be recognized as volunteer of the year.

Ms. VonWald said a community workshop put on by the neighborhood association division of the Department of Planning and Community Development would occur later in the day. The focus of the workshop, speaking to boards and commissions, will include advocacy materials for the Network.

### **EAST KING COUNTY COALITION ON AGING REPORT**

Ms. VonWald informed the group that the East King County Coalition on Aging is an organization whose membership is comprised of providers. The group will be meeting about twice a year.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **A. Advocacy Committee**

Mr. Dilley reported that the group has not yet met. He said by the next Network meeting the group will have met and will have a report.

#### **B. Research**

Ms. Rasnack said she met with Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly to gather information about the needs assessment. She said the group will be assisting Ms. O'Reilly in compiling data. The Network will have the lead role in collecting data concerning older adults for the Needs Update document through setting up community conversations.

#### **C. Education**

Ms. Thompson reported that the group had its first meeting on January 26 and plans to have its regular meetings on the fourth Monday of each month. The group members have all watched the video initially put together by Ms. Gray and will at the next meeting discuss any changes that should be made.

## NEW BUSINESS

### A. Mission Statement

Chair Robinson asked for a quick vote as to whether or not the mission statement should be reworked. The consensus was that the mission statement should not be changed.

### B. Housing

Ms. Rasnack distributed a handout entitled "Spread the Word" and noted that it dealt with the Housing Trust Fund, the federal program that serves as the basis for a lot of affordable housing development. She said the issue was the need to contact legislators to ask them to keep the fund at its current level.

There was consensus to have the Network add its name to the list of those calling for maintaining the funding for affordable housing.

### C. Vial of Life (continued discussion)

Ms. Thompson suggested that during the community conversations with seniors the participants could be asked if they are familiar with the Vial of Life program. The vials could also be handed out. Ms. VonWald said she would check with Ms. O'Reilly but said she would not want to do anything that would dilute the information gathering process for the Needs Update.

Ms. Rasnack said it would be helpful to know what the work plan for the Kirkland Senior Council is for 2009. If they have projects that intersect with the Network's agenda, it might be fruitful to work jointly with them. Ms. Ressler concurred.

Chair Robinson pointed out that Mercer Island, Bothell and North Bend are all forming senior councils, and the Network might want to keep track of what they are doing.

Mr. Dickerman suggested that if the Network intends to pursue a joint project with Kirkland, it should be a completely new project rather than an existing project.

Chair Robinson proposed that all projects undertaken by the Network need a way to gauge their success.

## PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

## UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS

## ADJOURN

Chair Robinson adjourned the meeting at 10:25 a.m.