

BELLEVUE NETWORK ON AGING

MINUTES

January 7th 2021

Virtual – Zoom meeting.

8:30am – 12:00pm

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Gazel Tan, Gina Johnson, Hannah Kimball, D’Anna Edison, Janet Jelleff, Mary Fredeen, Paul Bradley, Desiree Leigh, Diana Thompson, Abigail Brown, Linda Forshaw, Phyllis Smilen, Berta Seltzer, Catherine Wong.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Beverly Heyden, Bill Merriman, Judy Stenberg,

STAFF PRESENT:

Dan Lassiter, Bellevue Parks & Community Services
Betty Lee, Bellevue Parks & Community Services

GUESTS:

None.

PRESENTER(S):

None

RECORDING SECRETARY:

Betty Lee

WELCOME AND ROLL CALL:

The meeting was called to order by Gazel Tan (Chair) and the roll call taken.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Changes made on December minutes and approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

ADVOCACY COMMITTEE: *(Diana)*

The committee did not adopt a formal work plan as of yet, so today presented information based on what the work plan would have covered.

Committee Work Plan:

1. The committee will speak and write to state legislators about state legislative agenda. BNOA encouraged to attend “Senior Lobby Day” in Feb 2020 and the October Washington State Senior Lobby seminar.
 - Most Bellevue members attended senior lobby day in February 2020 and some committee members attended the Senior Lobby seminar in October 2020.
 - The committee is a joint committee of BNOA and Kirkland Senior Council.
 - Four items were on 2020 state legislative agenda. All requests were partly or fully funded or enacted by the legislature. However, the governor vetoed a new program related to dementia due to the reduction in revenue and added expenses due to the Corona virus.
 - In August 2020, emailed a letter to all state legislators thanking them for past support and asking that the funding for Washington’s Long-term Care Infrastructure be preserved. (Rationale for letter: Office of Financial Management had asked all state agencies to send in a description of what they would cut, if a 15% cut in funding was needed)
2. Speak and write to federal representatives about Federal Legislative Agenda.
 - Asked for reauthorization and adequate funding for the Older American Act which was passed by Congress in February or early March.
 - Scheduled an in-person meeting for early March 2020 with a high up legislative assistant in Maria Cantwell’s office but was cancelled due to pandemic. The views of the Trump Administration re Medicare and Medicaid, committee did not work on federal agenda for the remainder of the year.
3. Adopt a 2020 local legislative agenda.
 - Discussed several times but nothing adopted due to BNOA and KSC not meeting.
 - Supporting universal design had been discussed with one member not in support as the member was more concerned about affordable housing.
 - Looked into securing a change in King County rules regarding vouchers for construction of very low- income senior housing on eastside. According to Imagine Housing it’s now next to impossible to secure from King County vouchers, which they believe are necessary to construct housing for very low-income seniors. Research done by staff of Aging and Disability services indicate the King County rules governing such vouchers are controlled by federal agencies
4. Follow and discuss senior issues impacting seniors.
 - Large funds would be needed to construct affordable housing. Narrow walls and doors are a concern for wheelchair access. It is extremely hard to get funded for very low-income housing for seniors.
5. Adopt State Legislative agenda for 2021.

Accomplishments:

1. Wrote a letter to Governor Inslee focusing on two of the items on our 2021 state agenda.
2. It's possible the committee may discuss and suggest some changes beginning of February. Changes due to pandemic, new information, and the change in leadership in Alzheimer's Association and in the Dementia Action Collaborative

Challenges faced:

1. No physical site for meeting and encountered technical meeting challenges, due to lack of Otter until Nov 2020.
2. No ability to update Federal agenda, as BNOA was not meeting. Stayed aware of federal issues and suggested to Dan to resume regular BNOA meeting in November.
3. Lack of 1-1 contact with other BNOA and KSC members and members in other organizations. Used E mail, zoom, and otter but 1-1 conversation is preferable for multiple reasons.

Lessons learned:

1. How to use Zoom.
2. Due to the need to communicate by computer, learned about additional important senior organizations.
3. The BNOA advocacy committee relies on the BNOA having monthly meetings for purposeful action.

TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING: (Phyllis)

Transportation Work Plan:

1. Focus continues to be on older adults needing to have the means to get out of the house and attend to their needs and making their own choices using transportation of some kind.
 - It's hard to depend on volunteers. If people can't get to doctor's appointments, health can suffer. Social life is vital and getting things done is necessary for a full life.
 - Safety in traveling is a concern, lack of physical strength in walking or getting on a bus. It is a big deal for older adults to "hop" on the bus, physical issues are a real problem.
 - Other issues include lack of smart phones, inability to understand bus schedules, general fear of newness, pride in not wanting to admit needs.
2. No 'one' form of transportation is right for everyone; variety of offerings are needed. Crossroads Connect (new trial system) offers transportation in a specific area. Met with Franz Loewenherz who is the city's principal transportation planner. Had many meetings with EERC and Hopelink and learned the realities of what was holding up changes.

3. Committee members each reported how other cities handle transportation needs. Generally, they run at a deficit. Some places hand out brochures about what may be available but brochures without explanations are not enough. Cities report their funding is on hold. There is no collection data since 2011 and things are on hold during the pandemic.

Housing Work Plan:

1. Planning on a housing tour of the ARCH sites.
2. There is duality in needs: Keeping people in their homes, building more homes and lack of building sites.
 - There are assumptions that lower income housing will affect the neighborhood negatively. Highland Village where 2 families were living in one small apartment, the assumption was that the place would become a slum, and this has not happened. People had a place to live and children were doing well in school. There is nothing to fear from people who don't earn a lot of money.
 - Is the housing committee taking a position on this? Further discussion will be needed on how to collaborate and decide if we will be taking an official position.
3. We must learn more about zoning. There is a policy which would allow bigger buildings with affordable housing on religious groups sites. Existing examples of this are Kirkland Place for Families and Women which opened in 2019 and the New Bethlehem in Kirkland. City council is looking into options of possibly building affordable housing on faith-based land/building. This topic will be discussed again at a future BNOA meeting.
4. ARCH reports are supposed to be twice yearly to report changes in existing low-cost housing in our city. Rachael Rodriguez, because of Covid19, asked us to hold off on reports.
5. With the use of Universal Design, the aim is to have buildings, in and out, accessible to everyone and keep people in their homes. Builders may need allowance in building higher but there's concern for lack of parking. This issue needs work with Advocacy because laws dictate many areas of changes that needs to be made.
6. Issues of home elevator malfunctions and recalls, injuries and deaths involving children. Otis is offering to repair their brands for free, but the problems remain with other brands. Elevators maintenance needs to be addressed.
 - Linda's husband owns an elevator-related company, he would be happy to discuss issues with the committee regarding elevator issues and maintenance.

OUTREACH & EDUCATION COMMITTEE: *(Janet)*

During Covid, there was more freedom to get things done. Goals and accomplishments for 2020.

Goals

Accomplishments

Present slide show to St. Louise	Gazel was able to present virtually
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Vial of Life concerns for people	Medic One donated hearing loss stickers
Ask Mark Heilman of Neighborhood News to speak	Mark spoke at our BNOA meeting in November
Senior Day at the market	No senior days but were able to deliver weekly information to both Bellevue and Crossroads Markets
King County Library Resource fairs	Cancelled
Census information	Parties cancelled but BNOA was able to distribute Information through the Markets
Monthly articles for the Neighborhood News (NN).	Had articles in the NN 11 months in 2020. Variety of articles from different people.

- Committee was able to expand distribution of information by collaborating with the City of Bellevue and Bellevue School District. This can be expanded for 2021 by reaching out to organizations to create an information tree which Gazel has already begun.
 - Mark Heilman (NN) has been a good friend of BNOA and helpful in getting information out.
 - Gazel has started an information tree due to difficulty of gathering information regarding food and other resources. She is hoping to find a solution to receiving resources from COB in a timely manner. Hoping to expand the information tree to be able to access resources with ease. Gazel needs full cooperation of all members of outreach to reach this goal.
- In addition to the above list, following are new accomplishments outside of 2020 goals. Key was establishing good connections in the community allowing more partnership opportunities.
 - Partnership with Meals on Wheels and Bellevue School District to distribute Bellevue Resources information
 - Outreach and information sharing with low income housing locations
 - Obtained masks from the Chamber for distribution
- Taking on a project to get involved with BNOA has been a huge success for Janet and she's encouraging everyone to get involved with a project.

COMMITTEE GOALS & WORK PLANS: (*Gazel*)

Discussion on overall goals for 2021:

- *Mission Statement: BNOA is dedicated to healthy aging in our community by promoting awareness of needs and resources that support older adults through life's transitions.*
 - Mission statement needs to be updated at some point to include 'providing paths to solutions'
- How can BNOA be more effective in representing older adults in Bellevue in 2021? How can we promote awareness of needs and resources?
 - Who? Everyone; residents, decision makes, council members, legislators, inclusive of all generations, corporations, awareness of BNOA within COB throughout all departments, build partnership with other programs within the city such as Botanical Garden, Momentia Eastside walk.

- One by one we need to connect to more people who we are not connected to especially those that are not connected electronically.
 - Elevator speech needs created, building relationships, attend different boards, commissions and meetings accessible in COB webpage under ‘government’
 - Bellevue Patch – Is an upcoming events and Bellevue community calendar, also opportunity to post events.
 - Discussed possibility of BNOA to offer subscription through COB e-newsletter system.
 - Dan and Abigail are involved with Eastside Momentia, a memory-loss related activity group and can report to BNOA on program developments.
 - Advocacy committee takes a huge part of promoting awareness. BNOA needs to have relationship with organizations who provide resources.
 - Need better way of connecting and providing resources easily and quickly accessible with no or little barriers.
- How do people provide input to us? How do we represent BNOA under COB Park’s department? How do we know what the needs are in the community?
- BNOA represents the interest of the senior population. If something is being done, we need to ask the question “How does this affect the senior population?” Need persistence to keep asking for representation.
 - Suggested to have calendar of events for BNOA members to be aware of meetings to attend, who’s going to what awareness.
 - Look at what other cities are doing.
 - Sound Generations, Bellevue Fire social workers, invite other groups that are dealing with seniors and see what needs are not being met.
 - Social workers from Kaiser, Swedish, Overlake and other agencies, and ask what needs are not being met for older adults.
 - Need to look into working better with the Human Services Division of COB Parks & Community Services Department.
- How can BNOA be most impactful while dealing with many changes that are happening with Covid19? Suggested by Abigail to connect with other community agencies to partner with them and see what and where the needs are. What can each committee do to gather and provide needed information?
- 2-1-1 resource line; can be connected to many resources over phone, talking to a real person. Great for those who have challenges using technology.

Lessons Learnt in 2020:

- 14% of Bellevue residents are 65 years or older (approx. 21,000 residents)
 - Reminder to follow-up with Gwen and census, wanting percentages specifically on seniors rather than general population.
- 21% of people over 64 are low income (approx. 4,410 residents)
- How are seniors getting information during the pandemic? How are seniors getting the resources they need?
- Many older adults are getting to be more technologically savvy but there’s a continuous need for assistance.

- BSD Family Connection Center – information goes out to BSD students and families reaching multigeneration population.

Priority Initiatives for 2021:

- Digital Equity
 - Affordable internet access.
 - What are the needs of seniors?
 - KC Veteran’s Grant – trying to put together grants for equipment and training for older adults. How can BNOA get behind that and explore and see what can be done to expand it?
 - Need to find a way to have phone #'s available to people that doesn’t come in an electronic form of communication.
- Covid Vaccination
 - Bellevue Patch – loads of information on their website. Possibly extract phone numbers to add to BNOA’s phone tree.
 - Members commented that the information is available everywhere so BNOA can be more of a reminder rather than source of information. Agreed to monitor what’s going on and communicate reminders regarding vaccinations.

Committee Work Plans and BNOA purpose: Please refer to Gazel Tan’s Annual Retreat PPT that she sent out to committee members.

- Please think about your committees and how you want to go about working on a 2021 work plan and type of actions you can take to build out the plan through the year.
 - Some highlights – relationships, knowing what happens in the community. What would you do? What commission meetings will you go to? What Facebook groups will you follow? How will find out what’s going on in the community? What will you do to establish relationships? What partnerships are out there and how would your committees plug into them? Does everyone adopt a city council member?
 - Following up and finding a committee and group with what is needed for seniors and open up relationships.
 - Bellevue Essentials program provide direct line access, members encouraged to apply to be part of this program to network, build connections, and learn about the community.

Committee Commitment for 2021:

Gina – Advocacy

Diana – Advocacy and Outreach

Hannah – Outreach and Housing & Transportation

Janet – Outreach

Phyllis - Housing & Transportation

Catherine – Outreach

D’Anna – Housing & Transportation

Desiree – Advocacy

Linda – Outreach

Mary – Outreach, Housing & Transportation

Paul – Outreach

Abigail – Advocacy (primary), Outreach, Transportation

Berta – (Typically Housing & Transportation, Dan will check)

Beverly – (Typically Housing & Transportation, Dan will check)

Bill – (Dan will check)

Judy – (Dan will check)

- Housing & Transportation will decide on a plan for 2021.
- Outreach meeting will be on the 21st

- Dan's update regarding Diana's inquiry about older adult walking hours in the parks: Kirkland had this in the summer 3 days a week. It was non-enforceable and just a suggested time, ended on Labor Day. COB will not be looking at doing this. COB will post more signs reminding people of distancing and masking.
- Desiree has priority idea – prefers dementia initiative, not specific to DAC (Dementia Action Collaborative) suggesting looking at DAC only when it's appropriate.

Dan's list of ideas for subjects/speakers for 2021

- Alzheimer's Association (Mary Grace Becker, UW Brain Center)
- Universal Design
- Housing and property laws
- Elevator Safety
- Bellevue Fire Cares and other social workers regarding older adult needs
- Information line – 211, Sound Generations
- COB Park Board – how are they representing COB aging population, how can we help get info to them?
- Diversity
- Abuse on aging – AARP
- End of life issues, death with dignity
- Medic One – Vials rebranding program and other programs they offer
- SHAG director
- Demographics – Gwen and Kate

Meeting adjourned at 12:15pm