

BELLEVUE NETWORK ON AGING
MINUTES

October 1, 2015
8:30 a.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E-121

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ethan Crawford, Jeanne Grote, Beverly Heyden, Howard Katz, Hannah Kimball, Bill Merriman, Eileen Rasnack, Berta Seltzer, Diana Thompson, Janet Zielasko

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dan Aznoff, Jullie Gray, Arnold Kern

STAFF PRESENT: Dan Lassiter, Parks & Community Services Department

GUESTS: John Barnett, Ombudsman Program Volunteer, Rose Floyd, King County Ombudsman Program

RECORDING SECRETARY: Teri Ekstrom

WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 am by Chair Rasnack. Roll was taken and all members were present with the exception of Dan Aznoff, Jullie Gray, and Arnold Kern.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS – None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – September 3, 2015

Ms. Thompson indicated that she had two changes: p. 6 (in the paragraph just before Outreach and Diversity Committee) . . . the “not” should be deleted from the end of that sentence to read “. . .but will be able to help do a lot of planning for it”; p. 7 (under Washington Senior Lobby) it should read “Ms. Thompson said Washington State Senior Citizens Lobby will be supporting HR 1571”. There was a motion to approve the minutes with Ms. Thompson’s two changes. The motion was seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

OMBUDSMAN EASTSIDE TRAINING INFORMATION – JOHN BARNETT AND ROSE FLOYD, KING COUNTY LONG-TERM CAE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

John Barnett, Volunteer, King County Ombudsman Program said that he has been a volunteer since 1999. Rose Floyd works with King County Ombudsman Program as an advocate for older adults. Their program is available to everyone and part of the safety net that helps older adults access the network and navigate the system for problem-solving. The program is available free of charge. In Bellevue there are two nursing homes (183 residents), 127 adult family homes, and

eleven assisted living facilities. They have the potential of helping 1,600 people in these facilities. They resolve 90% of problems before they become bigger problems. Their program has four staff people in King County and 50 certified volunteers. We are need of more volunteers. They would like to partner with BNOA to help to get the word out to the people in the community about their program and to become volunteers. Trainings for volunteers are planned and it would be great to get the word out. It is a four day training in order to be a certified volunteer. Each volunteer needs to volunteer 4 hours/week. It is a very rewarding opportunity. Ms. Thompson asked what other groups they were contacting to help get the word out of their need for volunteers? Ms. Floyd indicated that the contacted NBCC, an Indian group, plus others. If there are groups BNOA think would be good to contact, let them know. Mr. Katz indicated that it would be good to contact the other Bellevue Community Centers.

Mr. Merriman asked what happens with the 10% of issues/problems that aren't resolved. Ms. Floyd said that some of the issues are too severe and beyond their scope of work and they refer them to other places to resolve.

Facilities are required to give the ombudsman information to each client. There is an Ombudsman information poster posted in every facility. Ombudsman visit facilities each week and make themselves available regularly to people that live in the facilities. We have 24 hour access to enter each facility and observe. We partner with the facility staff to address any issues that may arise. Help us to help our loved ones in Bellevue.

[PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION] ARTHUR SULLIVAN, PROGRAM MANAGER ARCH – REGIONAL COALITION FOR HOUSING – UPDATE ON AGING ADULT AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Sullivan asked the group what affordable housing issues they would like to discuss? Ms. Thompson said she saw the article in the Seattle Times that said there wasn't enough affordable housing in Bellevue and that the City hasn't increased their amount of funding to ARCH in many years. Ms. Heyden asked what percentage of housing is affordable for older adults? Are builders getting perks to make it more affordable? The percentage of older adults is increasing, they are on fixed income, and so how many can afford the current rents. Mr. Katz indicated that Wright-Runstad has been just giving money toward affordable housing but doesn't have to provide affordable housing units. Could you explain how that works? Mr. Merriman said he wanted to know whether affordable housing is flexible for all ages and the needs of seniors. Need to make sure that the senior housing needs are being met. Ms. Zielasko asked how well are we doing with affordable housing? Is it addressing the needs in the area? Ms. Seltzer asked how the incentives (mandatory vs. voluntary) work, and what is our city doing in regard to these? Mr. Merriman stated that the City has affordable housing requirements, are they different for seniors? Ms. Grote indicated that knew of a groundbreaking for senior housing in Redmond, and wondered how we can get more of that in Bellevue.

Mr. Sullivan said that there are many housing needs in a community. Mr. Sullivan said that housing relies primarily on the private sector and how do we affect something that you aren't the primary driver for? The story is the same across the country. The City can affect what is built

by their land use codes and what it allowed. The first step is what the City allows and the diversity of housing needed (types, income). Can you manage the market to do the kind of housing we want/need? Government is really caught in the middle and fighting to make things happen. We as the city try to push the market in different areas of needs. The City writes rules and we ask for certain things to fill the areas where we think there is need and so we push the market into the area of need. Direct assistance impacts the builder and what they do.

Some of the affordable housing needs focus on seniors and also talk about the need of the overall populations. In regard to seniors, we have not seen the percentage of seniors increase yet. That will be happening but it hasn't happened yet. In 1990-2000 there was an increase in the percentage of seniors (13-14%) and that increased in the over 75 and over age group. We always hear that seniors need specialized housing and in the 75 and over population this is especially true. In East King County, the senior population is 11% and in Bellevue it is 14%. Statewide the percentage of seniors is 13%. The East King County communities with the highest percentage of seniors are Mercer Island (20%), Yarrow Point (21%), Medina (24%). These are all single-family neighborhoods that have the highest percentage of seniors.

Mercer Island has the highest population of Adult Dwelling Units (ADU) in single family neighborhoods. ADU's are a natural response to family needs. Neighborhoods are changing. The primary driver to the condos downtown is because of the changing neighborhoods. High-end condos in downtown Bellevue are being sold to empty nesters and older adults. PACE Centers are being built (Medicaid), which are housing communities that have services on-site, and are designed to help people stay in their home. Designed to allow people to stay in their homes.

It is very difficult and a challenge to keep housing facilities like Evergreen running (affordable & assisted living). Heavily service oriented and it is a very specialized skill set. It is better when the market tries to meet the community needs.

ARCH should exist and City's should care about affordable housing because we need housing for people who work in our area. There are certain things/services that people want in their community and we need people to staff these things/services that we want in the community. We need housing for our workforce. Our income profile has not changed in this county in the last 25 years. 24% of households county-wide are under 50% of median income, 18% are in the 50-80% of median income range. In the moderate income (\$30,000-60,000 range) there is some new affordable housing available but we aren't matching it very well with the profile of the population. With the low income, we are not even doing a quarter of the affordable housing that we need. The market has never really addressed those \$40,000 and below income earners. We have not been doing as much in the last ten years. Section 8 has not addressed housing for this income level need either. Rents in King County are high. They set a limit as to what you can pay for rent. Since the Housing Authority has a good rating, people in the area are allowed to pay more if in different parts of King County, depending on the average rents. There are a whole lot less vouchers being used in east King County. It is also hard to find private landlords who deal with Section 8 in King County. There is a law in Bellevue and Kirkland, and now in Redmond, that states that landlords cannot discriminate against Section 8. Landlords have to

comply, so they sometimes just raise their rents so they don't fit into the Section 8 parameters. Overall, we have a long way to go with affordable housing . . . it affects the "cost burdened" residents the most (more than half of their income is going to housing).

For the average area rent, what income is needed to be able to afford it? On average you need 60-70% of median income to afford average rent. This year, average rent is now 80% of median income because income has been stagnant and hasn't gone up. This is affecting the housing market, and this is why there have been several articles written on this topic recently. There are a lot of "for hire" signs in businesses in the area. The turnover of teachers in the schools is big and there are mainly older teachers and younger teachers. The younger teachers will move to areas that their families can afford.

We can make something happen with affordable housing with "Accessory Dwelling Units". Mr. Sullivan said that ARCH keeps information available for people such as the "Senior Housing Options" brochure that help people understand their housing options. Information is the key to good choices. It is an important task that the BNOA has done to keep this information up-to-date for the community. Not all people are computer savvy and so we need to continue having the information in written form and distribute it at community events. We help people who are trying to understand housing options.

There are some programs for builders to meet requirements for affordable housing – if built, it has to meet 80% of median income, etc. More times than not it is regular housing that is being built. All eastside cities have some areas of their cities that when you build you have to do some portion that is affordable to certain income levels. The most "cost burdened" population are seniors or young renters. These affordable housing units are available to everyone. There are different ways for builders to meet incentives for affordable housing . . . builders can build units that are affordable or to give money for affordable housing . . . both of which are good options. We can take the incentive money and build the needed housing in the community. It is always the city's choice as to what the builder's incentives they do. Bellevue has a separate account for affordable housing and it is tracked carefully. Bellevue has a special account for all of the eastside city's money for affordable housing. Some kind of affordable housing will be done with the incentive money. There are current City Council negotiations for the 130th Station in which Sound Transit needs a lot of land where the station will be built, in which the City will most likely be able to build affordable housing there or in the Bel-Red area. Affordable housing is a very complex issue. Mr. Crawford asked how does the consumer understand all of this affordable housing information? Mr. Sullivan said that is why they have the affordable housing brochures in paper form and the website available also. Both help the community understand what is available in the community regarding housing and will give ideas of where to find it and what the basic rules are.

Ms. Thompson asked again about the Seattle Times article that indicated the City contribution to ARCH has been the same for years. ARCH takes whatever resources given to them by the city to provide affordable housing. The City has the growth management act to address. Mr. Sullivan said that Bellevue contributes to the ARCH Trust Fund. All cities give General Fund funds and some give Federal funds also and then we pool our funds together for the best plan on

what affordable housing to use it for. The contribution level has been flat for the last ten years and we have started internal discussions regarding these levels. These conversations will discuss budget ideas or different pots of money to come up with additional funds. Each city's City Council decide what funds will go to the Trust Fund. We try to get community support through business, faith communities, and other avenues. We try not to raid the funds of private businesses.

Just because we double the funds that the cities give, doesn't mean that we can double the production that we do, because the other sources of funds aren't doubling. We try to get other sources to get money to land in east King County, which isn't the natural thing to do because of housing costs. The housing costs on the eastside makes it more of a challenge to do affordable housing, but it also creates opportunity. Land use incentives work better here because when we are able to give developers more capacity then you are giving them land value.

Chair Rasnack asked how the BNOA can support ARCH? Mr. Sullivan said that the City Council responds to the community. As part of the community, you can let the City Council know that affordable housing is an important issue. BNOA can continue to help with updating the housing information. The BNOA members could also participate in discussions about Accessory Dwelling Units. Mercer Island has been very successful in supporting these by writing regulations to do them inexpensively. It got so much attention and people liked it and did it. They have many more Accessory Dwelling Units than we do. Why don't we have more ADU's? Accessory Dwelling Units are a way that Bellevue could really increase the affordable housing in the city.

Chair Rasnack thanked Mr. Sullivan for coming to speak to the group.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Memory care (reported by Mr. Crawford)

Mr. Crawford said that they had a great turnout at the last Alzheimer's Café. They really loved the entertainment. Ms. Thompson is going to be coming in October to do the music. He indicated that they have brochures available and the Alzheimer's Café are the fourth Tuesday of every month.

Transportation/Housing Committee (reported by Ms. Grote)

Ms. Grote said that they had three speakers at their meeting last Monday.

Michael Gardner gave an update of his ElderMove Alliance. They give seminars to help seniors and their families plan for the future "Moving to a Simpler Life Seminar". They help seniors transition as they age and help them organize their finances, wills, end-of-life choices, moving or aging in place, etc.

Ms. O'Reilly gave them a review of the City's Home Repair Program, which provides 0% loans/grants to help people do safety/health repairs on their homes, such as roof repair, stairs, plumbing, electrical, etc.

Ms. Lewine, City Planning Department shared with us updates on ARCH-East King County Downpayment Assistance Program which helps residents get a down payment to purchase houses for qualified buyers. She also updated us on Multi-Family Property Tax Exemption Program which helps to encourage builders to build affordable units in which they do not have taxes for 20 years.

The next Transportation and Housing meeting will be October 26th with Officer Scott Montgomery talking about safety, driving, walking, riding the bus, and dealing with new traffic challenges.

Advocacy Committee (reported by Ms. Thompson)

With regard to Imagine Housing, Ms. Thompson said they wrote letters and sent them out to King County, ARCH, and the Housing Trust Fund regarding funding of the planned senior affordable housing facility in Kirkland

Ms. Thompson said support of the "improving Access to Medicare Coverage Act of 2015" is one of the two items on the Federal agenda of the Washington State Council on Aging.

The Legislative Forum is December 2nd from 4:00-6:00 in Kirkland. Please put it on your calendar.

The United Way problem continues to exist. The resolution that we passed at the last meeting is not appropriate since Aging and Disability Services is no longer taking an active role since it is a conflict of interest for them. A new resolution is needed. She proposed we have a motion to support or become involved with efforts to convince United Way to continue focusing on programs for seniors. Ms. Seltzer said that she believes the United Way funding is a done deed and their funding has already stated the changes. Ms. Rasnack and Ms. O'Reilly concurred that these changes are already starting to happen.

Ms. Thompson made a motion stating that "The Advocacy Committee will monitor the United Way funding issue and take any appropriate actions as needed". The motion was seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Outreach & Diversity Committee (reported by Ms. Grote)

Ms. Grote said she attended the Neighborhood Leadership Gathering. The City Council has set aside 5 million dollars to work with neighborhood groups over the next five years. It is matching the funding for neighborhood projects. The first neighborhood they will be working with will be Lake Hills.

Ms. Grote said she talked with several people encouraging them to apply for the open positions on the BNOA.

The first Cultural Conversation meeting will be held at Crossroads on Tuesday. VIVA Volunteer Fair is coming up for Kirkland Senior Council on Saturday October 24th at Kirkland Peter Kirk Community Center from 10:00-2:00. This would be a great event to have in Bellevue sometime.

Chair Rasnack indicated that since the time has gone over, it would be great if the other reports could be sent out via email.

Ms. O'Reilly said that on December 9th is the EHSF Annual meeting at NBCC and the topic will be "The New Funding Landscape". There will be a panel of people from United Way, along with other foundations, etc.

Staff Report/Upcoming Agenda Items

Mr. Lassiter said that he received an email from Mr. Aznoff indicating that he will have to resign his position on the BNOA immediately since he has moved to Mukilteo, but that he has really enjoyed working with the BNOA. Mr. Lassiter said that there are four position open and so far there are four applications that have been receiving. Tomorrow is the last day to submit applications. They will be meeting next week to go over the applications received and then interviewing them. They will bring forward the candidate decisions at the next meeting.

At the next BNOA meeting, November 5th, Angela Miyamoto with Senior Services will present on Community Living Connections.

Ms. O'Reilly said that she has heard several presentation regarding "Community Living Connections" which will be run by Senior Services. We would like to give some good input on how it's developed. She is arranging a meeting with Senior Services staff and will let the group know when this meeting is going to be.

New Business

The next meeting is November 5, 2015, 8:30am-10:30am.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 am.