

BELLEVUE NETWORK ON AGING
RETREAT MINUTES

April 2, 2015
8:30 a.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E-121

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dan Aznoff, Bill Cahill, Ethan Crawford, Jullie Gray, Jeanne Grote, Beverly Heyden, Howard Katz, Arnold Kern, Bill Merriman, Eileen Rasnack, Diana Thompson, Mary Watkins, Janet Zielasko

MEMBERS ABSENT: Hannah Kimball, Bob Megargel, Linda Salter, Berta Seltzer, Diana Thompson

STAFF PRESENT: Alex O'Reilly, Parks & Community Services Department

GUESTS: Harisa Paco, Julie Gray's guest, UW student; Naoko Ulstein, Mary Watkin's guest, Nikkei Concerns; Sonia Doughty, Senior Services

RECORDING SECRETARY: Teri Ekstrom

WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 am by Chair Rasnack. Roll was taken and all members were present with the exception of Hannah Kimball, Bob Megargel, Linda Salter, Berta Seltzer, and Diana Thompson.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – March 5, 2015

Ms. Heyden indicated that she was not present at the March meeting and that should be indicated. There was a motion to approve the minutes with that one addition. The motion was seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

CHARITY & SCAMS [PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION]

Ms. Sarah Shifley, Assistant Attorney General, Consumer Protection Division, Attorney General's Office was introduced to the group. She said she would talk about what to look for when it comes to charitable contributions and how to give smart. You can mail, call or email a complaint with a business to the Attorney General's office. If you have any questions about the complaint process, call the Attorney General's Consumer Resource Center toll-free at 1-800-551-4636. There is a great free informal voluntary complaint resolution service available to help consumers and businesses resolve complaints. You can contact the Consumer Resource Center if there is a complaint regarding a charity also. Even if you don't want money back, please call

them with the complaint. Their office tracks and monitors the calls. If they see repeat issues they can deal with those. It is a quick and easy process to submit a complaint.

The Attorney General's office is the House council for the State. In the Consumer Protection Division there are 15 attorneys that enforce the Consumer Protection Act which helps keep people free of deceit and unfairness through enforcement, education & problem-solving. Their office enforces the Charitable Solicitation Act and the Charitable Solution Act. The Attorney General's office doesn't represent specific individuals. They represent the people as a whole. They cannot give individual legal advice. We can seek restitution for consumers though. We don't have criminal enforcement but refer those cases to the Prosecutors office.

In 2015 the Attorney General's office received 100 complaints about charities. There are a lot of complaints from seniors because seniors are solicited more than any other sector of the population. Charities have to register with the Attorney General's office. They have to make disclosures and can't make misleading promises/statements. If the Consumer Protection Act is violated they could be subject to civil penalties (up to \$2,000 per each penalty). Solicitors must tell you their name, who they are soliciting on behalf of, if they are working for a commercial fundraiser, and give information about the Secretary of State registration if requested. If they don't give disclosures, then you can report it to the Attorney General's office. Again, they cannot solicit unless they are registered.

Mr. Katz indicated that solicitors take advantage of people with memory loss and will hit up the same person several times for funds . . . we need to do something about this. Ms. Shifley said this is the first time that she has heard of this and would like to talk with Mr. Katz afterwards regarding this.

Solicitations cannot be deceptive or misleading and they are only allowed between the hours of 8am and 9pm.

A lot of times, charities do not do their own solicitation. They have commercial fundraisers – paid people who work for a for-profit organization. It is not illegal to do this. They have to tell you how much of your money will be going directly to the charity. They also have to tell you who they fundraise for. Telemarketers sometimes keep up to 60-90% of the money collected. Give directly to the agency if you want it all to go to the charity. There is a report available through the Attorney General's office that lists the commercial fundraisers and who they fundraise for. You can also see if they are registered.

You can get your phone number on the "Do Not Call" list but charities and politicians are not covered through this. If they call, tell them to take you off the list. Some charities will even buy local phone numbers with local area code numbers and local PO boxes, so it looks like your money is going to stay local.

Ms. Watkins asked if disputes with charities can be resolved? How are they resolved? Ms. Shifley said that they are successful in getting resolution but that they can only take on so many cases and wish they could do more. Consumer education is very important so citizens know how

to protect themselves also. She said that they don't typically get money back from a charity, but they get injunctions against the organization and they are no longer able to operate or run a charity in Washington State again. She indicated that if they do get restitution they can't give consumers their money back, so they will have a grant application process and the money will go to an organization/program similar to what the money was originally intended to help.

In regard to fundraisers: There are 7 fundraisers that return more than 80% of contributions to the charities. On average, less than half of the money actually goes to the charity, and some charities have actually lost money through fundraisers. There was one fundraiser where 100% did go back to the charity. Give directly and be smart about your giving.

Protect your contribution . . . listen, ask, learn, call, give safely. Look them up on the Secretary of State's website to make sure they are registered and find out details about the charity.

There are some charities that target seniors, such as large charities that claim to benefit veterans, cancer, or are tragedy-related (i.e., Oso). Don't be fooled by a name . . . some charities will tell you names that are similar to another large familiar-named charity. You can go to the Secretary of State website to search charities (<http://www.sos.wa.gov/charities/donors.aspx>).

You don't need to register if you are doing a personal or individual fundraiser (i.e., for a person's medical expenses, family loss, etc.) or if it is below a certain monetary threshold.

For scams, such as the Nigeria bank scam, you should report it to the Attorney General's office. If they can't help you, they can connect you to who can help.

If you get tons of charity solicitations, contact Donelle @ 206-464-6562. Those aren't always registered charities.

Ms. Rasnack thanked the presenters and indicated that Ms. O'Reilly was going to give a couple of updates before the break.

Ms. O'Reilly said that BNOA member Linda Salter passed away. Her husband called to let us know. There is a card that is circulating for BNOA member signatures that we will send to him. Ms. O'Reilly indicated that she also found out the reason for the room change for the BNOA meetings was to accommodate Ms. Salter's wheelchair. Since that won't be needed, it will be looked into changing the meetings back to their original room.

Ms. O'Reilly said that they are interviewing people this week and next week for Ms. Du's position and hope to have that position filled soon.

BREAK

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Memory care (reported by Mr. Crawford)

The Alzheimer's Café will be meeting at the Crossroads Tutta Bella Pizzeria on May 26th from 3:00-4:30 for the first time. There will be a flyer available later that will be distributed. They will meet the fourth Tuesday of every month.

Also, tomorrow there will be a Behavioral Health & Memory Care meeting from 9:00-11:30 at Bellevue City Hall.

The Memory Care AdHoc Committee meets the third Tuesday of the month and everyone is welcome. They meet at Ms. Watkin's workplace . . . Brookdale – 15241 NE 20th St.

Mr. Crawford said that Overlake has been a great resource . . . with life kits, complimentary table at the upcoming Health Fair, etc.

Outreach & Diversity Committee (reported by Ms. Grote)

Ms. Grote said at their meeting they mainly discussed getting a table at the Senior Fair. Ms. Heyden said that the NBCC Board approved getting a table. Darrian was going to fill out the application and see about getting the check for the table registration. But, with the possible complimentary table Overlake was going to give the BNOA, the table situation needs to be determined before the next meeting.

Ms. O'Reilly said that she got some more BNOA flyers printed for the Behavioral and Memory Care event tomorrow. The supplies should be inventoried at the NBCC.

Transportation/Housing Committee (reported by Mr. Aznoff)

Mr. Aznoff said at their meeting they discussed housing and housing security . . . storm doors, locks, etc.

It was stated that the Eastside Friends of Seniors has cut back their services to Bellevue. They have no volunteers to serve Bellevue.

Ms. O'Reilly also said that the SHAG housing complex is being built at Crossroads by the golf course and will provide 189 housing units.

Advocacy Committee (reported by Mr. Katz)

Mr. Katz said that in regard to hospital observation he and Kirkland Senior Council members went before the Senate Health Committee. Judy Clibborn talked first and then they spoke regarding the issue. The information was very well received. The Senate started questioning us on the issue. We had someone with us from a nursing home and she was able to tell them client experiences with hospital observation and their care not being covered. The hospital observation issue is currently in the Rules Committee and we met and lobbied all of the Senators to hopefully get it to the floor.

Mr. Katz also indicated that prior to the hospital observation discussion at the Senate Health Committee they discussed caregivers and how it is hard to find people because of the C & A restrictions.

Mr. Katz also indicated that he went to an event in Bellevue last Friday and talked about hospital observation and Leader of the House McCarthy didn't seem to know what he was talking about. It appeared to Mr. Katz that Representative Reichert was filling Representative McCarthy in on the issue. If this HB 1186 passes we will be the 5th state to get regulations in place in regard to hospital observation. You can go online and make comments. April 15th is the deadline to get this bill through.

Ms. O'Reilly said that the House and Senate budgets are out and you can look them over and make comments online in regard to any issues that you are interested in.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS REPORTS

Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative (reported by Ms. Grote)

Ms. Grote said their meeting was cancelled and so there is no report. Ms. O'Reilly said that the Orca Lift Program (reduced bus fares for low-income) has begun. You can get a card at Crossroads Mini-City Hall and in Redmond at Together Center.

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

The Eastside Human Services Forum June event will be a breakfast on June 10th from 7:30-9:30am at Mercerview Community Center.

Aging & Disability Services (reported by Ms. Heyden)

Ms. Heyden said their meeting was at Maple Valley Community Center and they had a speaker regarding "Aging in Place".

Timebank (reported by Ms. Grote)

Their Welcome Spring event is Thursday, April 9th at Redmond City Hall in the Bite Café.

Washington Senior Lobby – no report.

Staff Report/Upcoming Agenda Items

Ms. O'Reilly covered these items before the break. She did ask to have the Transportation/Housing Committee meeting information sent to her and Ms. Grote said that the next meeting is

April 27th and they will have Amanda Jensen, Bellevue Police whose specialty is “neighborhoods” presenting to the group. Anyone is welcome to attend.

The next BNOA meeting is May 7th and Camron Parker will be talking about the Diversity Plan. The BNOA Diversity group might want to look online at the Diversity Plan that was just passed and see where they would be interested in working with the City’s diversity group.

New Business – no new business.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 am.