

**BELLEVUE NETWORK ON AGING
MINUTES**

April 7, 2016
8:30 a.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E-113

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ethan Crawford, Judy Dowling, Jullie Gray, Jeanne Grote, Beverly Heyden, Sandy Shaw Jones, Howard Katz, Hannah Kimball, Bob Megargel, Eileen Rasnack, Berta Seltzer, Diana Thompson, Linda Whitehead, Janet Zielasko

MEMBERS ABSENT: Robert Dalglish, Shellie Gehring, Philip Gough, Arnold Kern, Bill Merriman

STAFF PRESENT: Dan Lassiter, Parks & Community Services Department

GUESTS: Joanne Gainen, Donna Rae, George Twiss

RECORDING SECRETARY: Teri Ekstrom

WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 am by Chair Crawford. Roll was taken and all members were present with the exception of Robert Dalglish, Shellie Gehring, Philip Gough, Arnold Kern, and Bill Merriman.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – March 3, 2016

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS – None

**[PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION] CHERI PERAZZOLI, HLA-WA, AND
FOUNDER/DIRECTOR OF LET’S LOOP SEATTLE**

Cheri Perazzoli, Founder/Director of Let’s Loop Seattle was introduced to the group. She experienced benefits of hearing looping in the UK. Her message on hearing loss needs has been successfully shared with state legislators. They launched Let’s Loop Bellevue at the Bellevue Art Museum three years ago. The City of Bellevue has installed hearing loops in the Bellevue Chambers and in the Council Conference Room/1E-108. There are a couple of places in

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Bellevue that have also looped their facilities . . . Bellevue Youth Theatre, and Meydenbauer Theatre. The BNOA has helped to make this happen.

We have a hearing loss epidemic. It is invisible and many people are suffering. It does not have to be this way. We can help create livable hearing-friendly communities. We can help people with hearing loss, but we just have to change a few things.

Everybody knows someone with hearing loss. There are 48 million people with hearing loss. This number is under-reported. Everybody you know will have some level of hearing loss in their lifetime. The goal is to alleviate the stigma of hearing loss and normalize it. It is normal. More people have hearing loss than do not by the age of 50 or older. Hearing loss is not just a problem for seniors but birth defects account for a lot of people with hearing loss. Helping with hearing loss is much easier if you are open and honest and tell people what you need. It is hard at first to make this transition. The Hearing Loss Association (established 35 years ago) helps this population to stay connected with the hearing world. We help each other with tools and strategies. People get depressed when isolated. Social pain is the worst consequence of hearing loss. It also leads to other issues. Hearing loss is a very expensive thing if left untreated. People with hearing loss need to learn what they need to help them and learn to ask people to accommodate for them. The key to all hearing assisted technology is in the microphone . . . basic PA system, etc. You need basic amplification at meetings for seniors. We have integrated microphones into meetings that do not have the looping system.

There is a lot you can do for hearing loss, besides hearing aids, like basic personal amplifiers. Hearing aids are the easiest way to help with hearing issues though.

Treating dementia is expensive. If we can hold off treating dementia by treating hearing loss, it is a less expensive fix. We know the stigma of hearing loss is why people don't address their hearing loss. If it is easy to address hearing loss, more people will do so. If you have someone that you know who is struggling with hearing loss, make it easy for them and go with them to address it. Get a baseline hearing test at your normal regular yearly check-up.

How do you help people who don't hear well? Hearing aids are expensive. Hearing aids themselves don't cost much, but the research to create hearing aids does. In order to make ends meet, some hearing professionals need to sell the hearing aids. But, you can get your hearing tested at a hearing professional and then ask them if you can take that hearing prescription elsewhere to purchase the best priced hearing aid option for you.

We tried to get Medicaid to cover getting hearing aids reinstated in Washington State. Some of the state's neediest citizens don't have access to basic communication. Most health insurance companies do not cover hearing aids also.

Hearing loss is a civil rights issue. Ms. Perazzoli handed out a brochure. We have not been successful in getting hearing aids covered by Medicare or for it to be considered as a tax credit. Mr. Katz said that he would help her schedule an appointment with Congressman Reichart, who

is on the House Ways and Means Commission. She said she talked with Susan Delbenne but it would be helpful to meet with Reichart.

Different assisted listening technologies are available . . . FM and infrared. The 5th Avenue has infrared assisted listening. You take out your hearing aids and you use their devices. But they only have 10 devices available. The hearing loop is great because there is no additional equipment needed.

Universal Design is what we are trying to accomplish with the hearing loops. There are a lot of tools you can purchase to assist you with this. CART is words typed in a special stenographer machine. Some can be imbedded in PowerPoint presentations. It helps people bridge the gap. If people can hear and see the information it is very helpful.

Loops and CART are hearing-friendly technology. We are hoping to get this installed in places everywhere so that people don't have to ask for accommodation. Some movie theatres have captioning available. All opera is captioned.

Communication access is required by law . . . it went into effect with ADA in 1991. Most people with hearing loss don't think of it as a disability. Assisted listening technology devices are mandated and required in Federally-funded facilities (Title 2).

When you go places, where do you see the universal hearing loss access symbol? If present, it shows that there will be hearing access in the facility. Our goal is to make this symbol as recognizable as the disability symbol.

We are trying to get the information out about hearing aids. Hearing assisted technology must be hearing aid compatible. We are trying to get government and public facilities to provide the kind of equipment we need in order to participate easily. People will come to our meetings, in which we have all kinds of hearing assisted technology, and find tools that they didn't even know were available to them. . . such as telecoils. Telecoil is a little device that is in 82% of all hearing aids. Not all hearing professionals encourage you to buy hearing aids with telepoles. They want you to buy the hearing aids and also buy separate extra-proprietary equipment to hear on the telephone. The telecoil in the hearing aid is what makes you able to access the technology in public places. There are five states in which health care professionals are required to explain to you and demonstrate how the telecoil works in public places.

A hearing professional should do a hearing needs assessment. You need to hear face to face. You need to be able to talk on the phone (telecoil). You need to be able to hear in public places. Very few hearing professionals will talk to you about hearing in public places. This is a good question to ask about. You can get brochures from the Hearing Loss Association on the different hearing aids. Hearing aids have come a long way and are great. Work with the health care provider to get the correct hearing aid for you.

If we give people the tools they need to be able to communicate, participate and stay actively engaged, then they will do it. No one wants to stand out and be different, so we need to help to

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eliminate the stigma of hearing loss. We need to learn how to talk to a person with hearing loss by slowing down the conversation and managing the communication and meetings that are hearing friendly.

Mr. Katz indicated that the public transportation systems back east have lights that indicate when a train is coming. We have been working with getting Sound Transit to do the same in the Bellevue transit stations.

Ms. Perazzaoli said that we all need to be ambassadors for the hearing loss community because she can't attend every meeting where hearing loss issues need to be brought up. We are building a good coalition. Representative Tom Rasmussen was an advocate for hearing issues while he was in office, and now that he is out of office he will continue.

All of the meetings where hearing loss issues need to be addressed do not have hearing loss technology available, so a lot of people do not attend.

Ms. Perazzaoli said her goal is to have a hearing friendly looped community with accessible transit (lights, signs, accessibility).

Mr. Megargel asked about the hearing app that was available (Bioaid) where the phone acts as a hearing aid. This is a good first step for a person who is experiencing hearing loss and apprehensive to buy a hearing aid. He was wondering whether there might possibly be a cell phone that might have additional hearing loss assistance. Ms. Perazzaoli said that iPhone has made some hearing aid phones that are very expensive. There will be a lot of hearing loss tools happening with phones.

Ms. Thompson said that there is an app available named Jacoti that she tried out but it said that her hearing loss was too bad to use it. She went to a conference where they talked about the cell phone apps as hearing aids and when using them you cannot use inexpensive ear buds, you need to invest in some good quality ones to make it work.

Ms. Zielasko said that another part of the discussion with hearing loss is how to prevent hearing loss.

As stated before, there is a correlation between dementia and hearing loss. When you are unable to hear, your brain works differently and gets strained and then it just stops trying/working. It is important to get that sound to the brain.

Mr. Crawford talked about his recent training to be an ombudsman that he just attended. The facilities that he went in to have the universal symbol for patients' rights. We can become ambassadors for this if we have the right tools. Ms. Perazzaoli said we all need to be trained on how to talk to people with hearing loss. The Hearing Loss Association has lots of programs and classes available. The City of Bellevue does not have their signage up yet, but it should be up soon. It was stated that it would be great if the placard explained what the symbol means.

Seattle Rep is launching a program (April 24th) and they are offering \$25 tickets (code: Sherlock loop) and they will have captions that night. They really are dedicated to doing this. When you make the sound system better for people with hearing loss, then you make the system better for everyone. The overall sound is better and everyone benefits. The microphone makes a difference. There are lots of handouts and information available for everyone. We need people to join us (The Hearing Loss Association), even if you don't have hearing loss.

Mr. Katz asked if she had talked with people at the City of Kirkland. Ms. Perazzoli said she has talked with them and is currently waiting to hear back from them. She got positive responses from the City of Kirkland in the past.

Ms. Perazzoli handed out her cards and said that their website is available on the information she provided.

BREAK

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Advocacy (reported by Ms. Gray)

Ms. Gray said that our Advocacy Committee changed where the meetings will be held. We are meeting in Kirkland at Merrill Gardens. We are currently monitoring an issue regarding the cost of prescription medications. It is very complicated. We talked about the possibility of asking the Insurance Commissioner to come to talk at our regular BNOA meeting. We are monitoring, in the Federal Legislature, the reauthorization of the Older American Act, which has to go back to the Senate because there was an amendment. The Care Act passed. There was a bill that was attempted that related to stronger criminal statutes for vulnerable adults that did not pass.

In regard to housing, we are keeping an eye on it and staying in the loop to see if there is anything we need to advocate for. We suggested having Janet Lewine come and speak about housing on the eastside at the regular BNOA meeting. We are also watching hospital observation status and improving access to Medicare Coverage Act.

Outreach & Diversity Committee (reported by Mr. Crawford)

Mr. Crawford said that Memory Care is still part of this group, along with other things. Sandy is working on Fall Prevention. Ms. Grote said that participate in the Senior Fair. We have two things coming up: 1) Resource Fair (at library) – May 14th, 11:00-3:00, in which we will have a table/area for our BNOA information, and 2) in the Neighborhood News, they talked about having Better Together Conference, May 21st, all day. You need to sign up for it, and the cost is \$35.

Mr. Crawford said the Westminster Fair was well attended.

Ms. Thompson said we had a ½ table at the Fair, which was inadequate. We should indicate that we will need to have a whole table next year. There is a \$50 cost for the whole table. Mr. Crawford said that he can possibly talk with Overlake to get a whole table. Ms. Thompson said that there was a supply of Vials of Life's at each Fire Station. We should check with them on their available supply.

The Alzheimer's Committee met with Karen Mack, social worker at Greenwood Community Center in which they have many memory programs. She said that we really need a trained professional to have additional memory care programs other than the Alzheimer's Cafe. We are meeting with Melinda Franklin, active in the Alzheimer's Café, on Thursday to get some memory care ideas. We don't know what ideas will come out of this meeting and what is actually out there in the community for the memory care population. There is something on the internet called "Momentia" which lists the events/activities for the memory care population.

Transportation/Housing Committee (reported by Ms. Kimball)

Ms. Kimball indicated that they did not have a meeting. They are in the process of updating the ARCH website. We will complete that by April 25th and give it to Kristin Gullidge, ARCH. Mr. Kern attended the Eastside Housing Affordability Coalition (EHAC) meeting and he is going to report back on opportunities that we could possibly have to advocate in more places and encourage affordable housing. The next meeting is April 25th, starting at 8:30.

Public Relations Committee (reported by Ms. Whitehead)

Ms. Whitehead said their last meeting was a work session. They reviewed the information sheets that BNOA typically hands out at events to make sure everything was up-to-date. This was in preparation for the Westminster Fair.

Ms. Grote said it was great to have the updated information for the Fair.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS REPORTS

Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative (reported by Ms. Grote)

Ms. Grote said they attended the first meeting with the new director. She passed out information to members. The group is going to do a map for different areas for people to get around (different maps for different areas). There will be a free shuttle developing in downtown Redmond for seniors to get around. Our next meeting will be May 31st.

Eastside Human Services Forum (reported by Ms. Thompson)

Ms. Thompson said she is on the EHSF Advocacy Committee and during their meeting they wrote thank you notes to those involved in the issues that they support. They will not have a meeting in April.

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Time Banks of Puget Sounds (reported by Ms. Grote)

Ms. Grote said the next meeting will be North Bellevue Community Center, Thursday, April 14th @ 6:30. There is a potluck and cultural exchange and then you share what your specialty is . . . teach someone how to cook, etc.

Aging & Disability Services Advisory Council (reported by Ms. Heyden)

Ms. Heyden said there is no report.

Washington Senior Lobby (reported by Ms. Thompson)

Ms. Thompson said there is no report.

Mr. Crawford said that we are only as strong as the participation that we can bring forth, so it is important that you let the others know when you cannot attend meetings. Ms. Grote said that they used to get a monthly list of the meetings and when they will be and where. It would be great to get this again. Mr. Lassiter said that he could send out a monthly meeting notice. Others suggested that it would be great if the meeting information was just added to the bottom of the monthly agenda.

Staff Report/Upcoming Agenda Items

Mr. Lassiter said thank you for everyone's hard work this month. On May 2nd (Older American's Month) is the first Proclamation that will be presented in front of the City Council. We will need a couple of people that will present this to Council. The second proclamation coming up has not been scheduled yet, most likely in the middle of June (Elder Abuse Awareness Day). Mr. Lassiter said it was great in the past when we had some cases that we talked about at these presentations. Ms. Gray said that she would talk with people to get some cases and would be happy to present at the City Council meeting in June. Ms. Whitehead said that she would present the proclamation in May.

The Resource Guides were very well received. People snatched them up quickly and it has a lot of good information in them. This is a good way to get our BNOA name out there.

In regard to Fall Prevention, Mr. Lassiter has been working with Natasha Grossman. They got a grant for helping prevent falls, and are involved in getting people involved in exercise programs. They are looking for people that might possibly need medical equipment that helps keeps them ambulatory. They get this grant every year. We need to get the word out.

Anyone can attend the Memory Care meeting on Thursday at 2:30. If the BNOA can get a guide that shows the memory care programs available on the eastside that would be great. This would be a good thing for the Outreach group to do in order to get the BNOA name out there.

Ms. Thompson asked if Evergreen Group Health had anything on memory care/dementia. Mr. Lassiter said that he did check and they do not have anything available. Ms. Thompson also asked if we have Fall Prevention flyers available at North Bellevue Community Center. Mr. Lassiter said that they do have them now.

Mr. Lassiter said that he is always looking for other ideas for speakers to have at future BNOA meetings. Next month we have the gentleman talking about architecture for aging adults. What do people need to do, in earlier years, as they are building?

Mr. Katz said it would be great to have Lynne Robinson's husband, Dan Watson, who is the Deputy Director for King County Housing come and talk with the group about housing. Mr. Lassiter said it has also been talked about having the insurance commissioner, an AARP presentation, and a speaker on the State Alzheimer's Plan.

Mr. Lassiter said that with the presentation today by Cheri Perazzoli she was interested in us doing a membership drive for the State Hearing Association. This might be something we could work on.

New Business

Mr. Katz said that when we were established we report to the Park Board. The Park Board has no interest in us. We need to elevate our status. Mr. Lassiter said that he sends Jennifer Robertson, Councilmember the BNOA meeting minutes and agenda's. Mr. Katz said that Ms. Robinson, Councilmember said that once a month BNOA should have someone update the Council on the BNOA issues.

Mr. Megargel said that we can have our own official Facebook page now. We can friend independent living facilities, seniors, etc. Might be something to look at to get the BNOA word out.

Bellevue's Neighborhood Conference on May 21st . . . flyer was passed around. Please attend.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 am.