



Clark County Commission on Aging
1300 Franklin Street, 6th Floor
Vancouver, Washington

Meeting Notes

Tuesday, May 20, 2014

4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Gary Beagle, Chuck Frayer, Patti Gray, Bob Holdridge, Kathy McLaughlin, Lisa Rasmussen, Kiersten Ware, Karin Woll

Staff: Colete Anderson, Jacqui Kamp

Welcome and Call to Order

- Chair report:
 - This is the last meeting for Commission member Kathy McLaughlin. Her term expires May 31st. She chose not to reapply.
 - Two new commission member terms begin June 1st, with two returning members. New members will attend the June meeting.
 - Gary met with Commissioner Mielke on May 6th. He was appreciative of the commission's work and is looking forward to the joint BOCC/CoA meeting June 17.
 - Thanks to those who helped on the 50+ Expo. We were a bronze sponsor. 150 surveys on Timebanking were handed out. Participants seemed more engaged in asking questions this year.
 - Gary, Colete and Jacqui spoke to a joint legislative executive committee in Olympia yesterday and spoke about the Aging Readiness Plan, along with related events happening in Clark County. They played "The Big Idea in 4 Minutes—Coming of Age in Aging America" video and discussed implementing some of the ideas and concepts the commission has been working on such as Timebanking, shared housing, Universal Green Design, weatherization, land use and zoning changes, volunteer sidewalk program, accessible transportation coalition initiative and Telehealth. Thank you to Rep. Paul Harris, who represents Clark County, for his assistance and compliments on our endeavors in working with the aging population.
 - Gary reviewed the list of upcoming events for June (found on the meeting agenda).
 - Meeting agenda was unanimously approved; meeting minutes from April 15 were unanimously approved as submitted.

Open Issues

- Recycled Arts Festival June 28–29, booth will be in the park this year, Lisa and Patti are volunteering. If there is any art leftover, it can be auctioned at a future commission event.

- Strategic and Work Plan: Final plans have been developed and will be presented at the June meeting. Many thanks to Bob Holdridge for all his effort in putting the plan together.
 - **Action: Bob motioned to approve both plans, seconded by Lisa, unanimously approved.**

Presentation: Returnment, by Jay Bloom, Bloom Anew – Portland

- Jay worked on the Age Friendly Community action plan passed by city of Portland and also the State of Active Aging Vision for Hawaii, passed by the governor and legislature there. Experience: Executive Director for Morrison Center and interim director for many other organizations including United Way.
- Returnment concept is about encouraging older adults in their retirement years to use their skills, resources and knowledge to benefit the greater good. Timebanking is a good example of intergenerational volunteerism, young and old, neighbor to neighbor exchange rather than seeking help through a professional group. Tutoring also a good example where a retired educator can provide that service in trade for a service they need.
- Majority of retirees now regard retirement years as a new, active stage of their life, not an extended vacation. Life's timeline phases are changing with the increase in the number of boomers. Some are working into their 70's, not retiring at 65, and using their knowledge and skills to find a better balance between work and leisure. Average longevity is greater than previous generations and will continue to increase. What do we do with that healthy, productive aging?
- Compression of morbidity – or active life expectancy: the time between illness or chronic disease and death; it's an extension of middle age rather than an extension of old age. Aging is based 1/3 on genetics, 1/3 on lifestyle, 1/3 on engagement (reason to live longer).
- Fastest area of growth in psychology is positive psychology, or well-being. 40 years ago community development focused on the deficits or what they couldn't do. Now building on assets or strengths. Aging is one of the last areas in this country that is still based on a deficit model rather than a strength model and poses a major challenge. The challenge for a group like Commission on Aging is figuring out how to build on the strengths of this part of society, not the deficits. How do you want to be engaged in the world?
- Bridge Meadows: Development in Portland for low-income seniors and foster children, living together and helping each other. Everyone benefits.
- Two major challenges for extended middle age and this phase of life: Who am I, what is my primary identity? And how am I going to stay engaged in the world? Other aspects of preparing for aging, like financial planning, have a model to follow. There is no model for this, one has to answer the questions for themselves and it varies from one individual to another.
- Hierarchy of needs:
 - Body work (physical health): exercise, diet, rest, all in moderation
 - Finances: basic security and livelihood

- Love work (emotional support): network of family and friends, relationships. Number one risk factor for any age group is isolation.
- Mental work (brain use): life-long learning; its now proven that we can grow new synapses until the day we die.
- Passion work (connection): paid or unpaid, engagement can be a variety of work.
- Spiritual (purpose/meaning): what are you meant to do?
- Major question: Where am I going to spend my time if I have 25 years left? Can't rely merely on travel, grandchildren, recreation. Important to find meaningful engagement. Be open to rebalance every 2-4 years, just like investments.
- Task force on Vital Aging report, Portland 2008: Good reference for this group. Noteworthy item in report: a change in language – boomers don't think of themselves as seniors. Centers around the country looking to change name from senior or elderly. More acceptable terms are elder, older-adult, mature, or experienced. People think of older as 10 years older than themselves.
- Challenge for non-profits is managing people. Can apply good HR practices when dealing with volunteers such as provide a good job description, training, orientation, supervision, evaluation and terminate when needed. Variety of ways to think about compensation – bartering, trading, stipend alternative.
- Major paradigm shift: think of older adults as problem solvers, not problems; contributors, not clients; returnment, not retirement; rather than risk factors, see them as an asset to be cultivated.
- One of the best barometers of an age-friendly community is how they treat older adults.
- Q & A:
 - How do we as a group connect with boomers? We're trying to work for them and create awareness but they don't relate to being old or a senior.
 - The challenge is to realize, it's us!
 - There's such a large cohort of people, no one size fits all. Variety and differences in the population make it difficult to decide what part to engage in and serve.
 - Younger kids these days are responsible for grandparent care, no sandwich generation present. Reported to be 1-1/2 M of these kids nationwide. Have you started to see any of this in Portland?
 - There's lots of variety in living conditions and housing for older adults, co-housing, intergenerational housing, shared housing, villages (age in community) and ADU's.
 - One challenge we face is trying to find a way to communicate with community members 40-50 year olds about the resources available so they don't have to reinvent the wheel when they're taking care of their parent. How do we spread the word?
 - Have real conversations in a number of places. Many are dealing with care giving issues, be open and share the struggles.
 - Use term multi-generational instead of intergenerational, more inclusive.
 - Engaging people in their 50's is difficult because they don't want to relate to 60+.

- Provide multi-generational opportunity, not age-segregated. Example is schools in the future becoming more like community centers rather than used 280 days of the year. Use them for classes and gatherings.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn was unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned 6:00pm.