



**Elders in Action Commission Meeting
Wednesday, April 20, 2016 – 800 NE Oregon
Draft Minutes**

Commissioners Attending: Tamara Maher, Elaine Friesen-Strang, Ray Johnson, Bobbi Yambasu, Dolores Hubert, Suzanne Hansche, CJ McKenzie, Bob Baskette, JoAnn Herrigel, Lisha Shrestha, Kate Cavanaugh, Steve Weiss

Commissioners absent: Mary Westfall

Guests: Lee Girard, Rebecca Miller, Adam Renon, Cheryll Brounstein, Will Fuller, Steven Clark, Barbara Bernstein, Eric Grahek, Joe Vandever, Alana Hein, Kristen McCall

Minutes – Tamara raised a concern regarding the minutes not reflecting the entirety of the meeting discussion. She stated Lisha was not at fault and wasn't sure if this was a linguistic issue. She said that regardless, everyone is responsible for accuracy of minutes. Lisha noted that she and JoAnn both took notes at the meetings and that their versions were very similar.

A motion was made to table the minutes until after they could be reviewed. (Tamara and Suzanne offered to provide input). The motion passed.

ADVS Response to Advocacy Questions regarding Advisory Committees

Lee Girard referred to the January memo that ADVS staff had shared with the Commission and a Q&A document, dated April 11 that addressed the questions raised by DSAC, MAC and EIA Commissioners. (See attached)

Lee noted that Steve Weiss and Joe Vandever had originally asked ADVS to clarify why there was a difference between DSAC and EIA with respect to allowable advocacy. Lee noted that there was no written guidance from past years that the County could find. ADVS staff asked their attorney to answer the question – Why can EIA advocate but DSAC cannot? Lee noted that ADVS had also received some additional questions from EIA and DSAC members that the attorneys had answered in the memo she had handed out.

Steve Weiss: Up until 2003, DSAC could do what EIA did but then we were told that we couldn't.

Rebecca suggested that this may have been due to the Area Agency on Aging being under the County rather than DCHS.

Lee continued:

- ADVS delegates authority to the agency, Elders in Action, to recruit and approve Commissioners but Multnomah County Commissioners are the actual appointing body.
- The County attorney has confirmed that the Elders in Action Commissioners are “public officials”
- Federal statutes speak to the definition of advisory commissions and notes that “advocacy = to inform and educate”.
- ADVS feels the commission should coordinate with ADVS staff and focus on advising on ADVS programs
- Regarding the question: can we take positions: No, advisory committees may not take positions on things that can be voted on. As individuals, members may take positions – but not as representatives of the Advisory Committees. Specifically, Advisory Committees may not take positions on ballot measures and candidates.
- They can track and educate on measures and candidates – just can’t take a position on them formally.
- ADVS is okay with Advisory Committees taking positions on legislative issues (not bound for the ballot) – but members are requested to coordinate with ADVS on that.
- It is okay to testify at hearings and do white papers, for instance.

Steve Weiss: Can DSAC and EIA both advocate on legislation?

Suzanne Hansche: On the Portland Gas Tax – sounds like we can educate but not take a position.

Lee: The Older Americans Act says that you are to educate and inform on issues.

Will Fuller: Might you use the definition of lobbying verses advocacy as a guide?

Lee: We would use the OAA definition of advocacy when directing the commission specifically. The agency is guided by a different set of rules regarding lobbying.

Tamara: We are only talking about the commission now. We would consult with ADVS, not EIA – right?

Lee: You could work with EIA but ADVS should be the focus. That is, advising ADVS.

Ray Johnson: We have two bosses. Operation is EIA and advocacy (advising) is ADVS. How does this all work with our bylaws?

Rebecca Miller: Bylaws are not discussed in the OAA or in statute. It is unclear how the bylaws are impacted here.

Bob: Does testimony all have to go through ADVS first?

Adam Renon: You don't need to say "we oppose" in testimony for the County Commissioners to understand what you are saying.

Elaine: What about taking a stand on the City gas tax?

Lee: You should coordinate with us on issues to avoid conflict.

Suzanne: There was a memo from ADVS stating that the EIA Board was to rescind, by today, a directive to temporarily cease advocating. What's the status of that? Was there a written communication from the Board to ADVS?

Lee: The Board has communicated with ADVS. ADVS will share the paragraph that the Board sent to ADVS on this. To summarize – EIA and DSAC have always been able to educate and inform – you just can't take positions on things that might be on the ballot (candidates and ballot measures).

Question about testimony on County budget and what the Commission may say in testimony.

Lee: Opinions may be expressed – you just can't tell the Commissioners how to vote.

Lee: Peggy Brey and Lee met with 3 EIA Board members. They acknowledged that contract language has led to confusion. ADVS will be clarifying contract language to state that the EIA Commission is advisory to ADVS. The Personal Advocate part of the ADVS contract with EIA will be spilt out into a separate contract. When this language is ready – it will be shared with the Agency and the Commission.

Staff Report

All budget hearings will occur between this meeting and the next Commission meeting – please let Lisha know if you plan to attend the hearings and if you need help with testimony.

Lisha noted that meetings with Commissioners Shiprack, McKeel and Bailey have been set up and handed out a schedule. Remaining dates are being set up.

Lisha reported that several commissioners had attended the dinner at Mekong with MAA representatives. She asked how this activity could be repeated and supported.

Bob Baskette: Seemes like language barriers are a big hindrance to those he spoke with and that disabilities are a problem.

Bobbi Y: It may be too soon to invite ethnic stream community members to attend commission meetings. We may need to develop more trust and they have a lot to learn. She suggested we invite people to come to observe our meetings and attend committee meetings

Elaine: Is transportation an issue for ethnic stream participants if we meet at the Multnomah County building?

Suzanne: Maybe we inform people of our meetings when we meet in their area?

Alana: Including people is a deliberate act. It doesn't just happen. This topic deserves forethought and planning. You can't just invite new communities to come to meetings – it takes more than that to have them feel included.

Kate: I spoke with a woman who speaks a Slavic language. I would provide rides to people if that helped them attend.

Committee Reports

- Ray Johnson encouraged commissioners to educate themselves on the City gas tax.
- Powell Rapid Bus Transportation Plan must be revisited.
- SW Corridor hearing was the next day at 6pm. Latest design would end in Tualatin and have no tunnels at all.
- Suzanne asked that information shared at the People's Forum be shared with the Commission.

Other Business

Tamara made a motion that Kate Cavanaugh be approved as a Commissioner. She noted that Kate has been a Personal Advocate and an Age Friendly evaluator. The motion was approved unanimously.

