

JUNEAU COMMISSION ON AGING MINUTES

August 15, 2023 1:30 pm

Zoom Webinar



<https://juneau.zoom.us/j/81491760970?pwd=bkFwWk42Mllmazl0aFdMS3ArTG5qZz09>

Or Call In: 1-253-215-8782 Meeting ID: 814 9176 0970 Passcode: 858248

A. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Chair Emily Kane called the Juneau Commission on Aging (JCOA) meeting to order at 1:31 pm.

Present: Emily Kane, Linda Kruger, Kathleen Samalon, Carol Ende, Jennifer Carson, Sue Warner, Deborah Craig, Ann Stepetin, and Jennifer Garrison.

Absent: None

Others present: Michelle Hale, Assembly liaison

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved after a short discussion on a proposed cruise ship dock in Juneau. Emily Kane questioned the city's public process for leasing the associated tidelands and suggested adding the topic to the agenda if time allowed.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The July 18, 2023, JCOA minutes were approved.

D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

There was no public participation on non-agenda items.

E. AGENDA TOPICS

1. Proclamation of Senior Citizens Day

Linda Kruger explained that August 21 is nationally recognized as Senior Citizens Day and many municipalities celebrate on that day. She suggested that the CBJ mayor make an official proclamation and recognize the value of Juneau seniors. Emily noted a draft proclamation in the commission's packet and said the mayor has a copy, but the JCOA can still amend it. Carol Ende asked if other Alaska communities have made the proclamation, and Emily asked if it needs to be repeated each year. Linda said yes to both. Carol suggested preparing more events for next year. Emily noted that Grandparents Day is September 11 and suggested that Juneau provide senior awareness activities around the two dates. Carol added that the United Nations has an international elder appreciation day in October, and certain countries "go way over the top" to celebrate.

2. Subcommittee Updates

Building Design. Emily noted that the flier on senior-friendly construction concepts needs to be printed and distributed to builders. Kathleen Samalon said builders will see that the goal is for "universal design." Emily provided funds to create the three-fold design, but printing will incur a cost. Carol said they hope CBJ will print them, as suggested by Charlie Ford at CBJ. Michelle Hale offered to ask the city manager. Kathleen suggested printing at least 200 to distribute to builders, trade shows, and libraries. Carol added that the subcommittee has a second brochure to print. Emily expressed appreciation for all the time expended by Carol and Kathleen.

Fitness and Social Opportunities. Sue and Carol met with George Schaaf, CBJ Director of Parks and Recreation (P&R). Sue said George expressed interest in providing more opportunities for seniors. When asking for more access to school gyms since CBJ does not have a recreation center, and the CBJ long-term plan directs P&R to

work with schools for more community use, George suggested JCOA talk to the school district. Michelle commented that she is chairing a committee discussing the repurposing of schools, but any decisions will take a few years. George was more responsive to the idea of seniors using the covered outdoor areas found at all Juneau school playgrounds. All areas need some work to be safe. With regard to exercise classes in P&R facilities like the Zach Gordon Youth Center, Dimond Field House, Jumbo Gym, Centennial Hall, etc., George was supportive but funding and finding staff is a problem, and the department is getting away from running programs. Carol said George was in a box whereby he did not have much influence, and she asked what window there was for P&R senior activities. He said he will look at our suggestion that the current P&R winter pass be discounted for seniors and asked us to tell him what other Alaska P&R departments were doing for seniors.

George did not discount the idea of part-time staff to coordinate senior programs. Carol said that would say a lot to the community. Linda added that CBJ should have a senior advocate who would cover all municipal departments. Emily said JCOA might push for such a position in the future. Michelle warned that a new position would be difficult and suggested sharing the idea with the mayor and new city manager after the new year. She offered other ideas that include the Assembly retreat and talking to the finance department. Deborah Craig suggested first listing how the position would serve the community.

AARP Age-Friendly Community Designation. Linda welcomed others to work on the compiled data from the AARP Juneau listening sessions, as she has been working on organizing upcoming workshops. Emily said JCOA can work as a team in October and November on the data and the report. Linda stated that the plan is due a year from December, but it would be nice to pull together a draft by the end of 2023.

Southeast Regional Eldercare Coalition (SREC). Deborah noted that the SREC director started work. After a steering committee leadership meeting this Thursday, JCOA should be getting regular updates. She added that based on a number of negotiations, SREC did not get an office in Teal Street Center. Emily said that SREC evolved out of JCOA, which deeply supports training and placing in-home care providers. It is a huge need and will allow many aging residents to remain in Juneau. She asked how JCOA can help SREC have long-term success. Deborah explained that SREC needs to be successful in this first round of funding, but it has not started on a good foot. It is months behind and there are concerns about fidelity to the original proposal. She met with the new director to provide the “founders’ perspective,” because there have been discussions about reallocating funds and significantly changing the project. Deborah said that JCOA should stay connected and help support SREC’s original goals.

Michelle was asked about her offer to meet with JEDC regarding its role. Michelle said she has had some conversations, but it is very sensitive and it is not JCOA that is dealing with JEDC—it is SREC. It doesn’t work for JCOA to influence a project that is already running, she said. Deborah countered that JCOA’s role is to provide input, but there should be open communication in both directions. Emily said she feels that JCOA should help SREC be as successful as possible while helping it move to a more appropriate financial home rather than JEDC. Deborah explained that SREC is a separate entity from JEDC and might have been its own nonprofit except that Juneau has so many nonprofits. The group is working to maintain autonomy. Emily asked how SREC is trying to be independent. Deborah said by managing the meetings and moving projects forward with other partners. She said SREC is a separate entity from JEDC and the SREC director is an employee of the JEDC.

Michelle said JCOA is too focused on SREC, and the Assembly might not want that. It makes her uncomfortable because of the conflict that has occurred. She asked for more separation between JCOA and SREC.

3. Wrap Up

Linda invited JCOA members to be involved in two upcoming workshops in Juneau tied to age-friendly communities. There will be a pre-planning meeting for the 8-80 Workshop on August 23 at noon, and the workshop itself will be on September 16 at Bartlett Hospital and Twin Lakes. All interested people are invited. She added that she has been working with the university on a brain health series that will start on October 13.

F. NEXT MEETING DATE

Tuesday, September 19, 2023 at 1:30 pm

G. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:40 pm.