

City of Albuquerque

Department of Senior Affairs

Advisory Council



Anna M. Sanchez, Director

1 Civic Plaza NW
Albuquerque, NM 87102

DSA Advisory Council, In-Person Meeting
Bear Canyon Senior Center (4645 Pitt St NE, 87111)
Monday June 26, 2023

Minutes

- I. Meeting Called to Order by Chair Evan Thompson at 12:00 PM
 - a. Present:
 - i. Advisory Council Members: Evan Thompson, Shiela Hundley and Havens Levitt
 - ii. DSA Staff Members: Anna Sanchez, Chris Sanchez, Nikki Peone, Angel Montoya, Tim Martinez, Agnes Vallejos, Maria ReQua, Tyler Dunn, Evone Gallegos, Jenifer Gonzales and Bernice Chacon
 - b. Not Present: Teresa Haering, Henry Shonerd, Ray Taylor, Martha Medina, Louis Carlentine, Dubra Karnes-Padilla, Steve Borbas and Lucy Contreras
- II. Approval of Minutes & Agenda
 - a. May Meeting Minutes and June Agenda were not approved due to not having a quorum of seven members.
- III. Public Participation- Ms. Cat Powers
 - a. Ms. Cat Powers directed concerns regarding transportation and meal services. She expressed transportation wait times are taking longer than usual. She also stated she has called the office and has not been able to successfully get connected to speak with someone. Ms. Powers also mentioned that the meals' size at senior centers are getting smaller and is upset because she has experienced menu items not being available even when they are listed on the menu.
- IV. Introductions of New Staff – Bernice Chacon, Executive Assistant and Evone Gallegos, Program Supervisor
 - a. Ms. Chacon introduced herself to the Advisory Council members and is excited to be part of the Department of Senior Affairs' team.

- b. Ms. Gallegos introduced herself as the Program Supervisor for Information and Assistance and has more than 25 years of experience in senior services to the department.

V. Center Manager Report – Tyler Dunn, Bear Canyon Senior Center

- a. Mr. Dunn provided a brief report of the Bear Canyon Senior Center to the board.
- b. Bear Canyon Senior Center's kitchen is currently under construction. Mr. Dunn advised the center has not being renovated since the 70's or 80's and is excited about the final product especially because the center will continue their transition to a meal site for 60+. The anticipated date of final construction project is end of summer.
- c. Mr. Dunn advised the center has not being able to host special events due to construction project. However, Mother's Day and Father's Day event were a success. Also, they will have an Independence Day event that will be open to the public; they are working on the coordination and will provide information within the next few days.
- d. Bear Canyon has been working closely with Yellowstone Landscape Company in the landscaping of the outside yard and getting the outside of the center look nicer. The parking lot has also been repainted.
- e. Bear Canyon has been purchasing technology equipment for members to utilize; a new smart board was purchased and is being utilized in classroom settings. Additionally, Bear Canyon is working on upgrading the network throughout the center to provide better internet access and to increase computer safety.
- f. Lastly, Mr. Dunn reported the center is fully staffed and is very grateful for them as well as appreciative of its volunteers; Bear Canyon would not be able to function without them.

VI. DSA Administrative Updates

- a. Agnes Vallejos, Strategic Program Manager
 - i. Ms. Vallejos advised DSA was approached by AARP with two technical assistance plans to look at our transportation policies. One is with Smart Growth America and they will be looking into the transportation piece and how it fits within the city's programs. The purpose is to see if we can make any recommendations policy-wise around transportation. This means they are taking a deeper look into the age friendly concept and the comprehensive plan. It is nice to have a group of subject matter experts, Ms. Vallejos added.
 - ii. The second opportunity is to work with a group in Seattle by the name Echo Northwest. Echo is going to be looking at demographics and conditions that lead to precarious housing for older adults in our community. They will be conducting an analysis and framing those results which will be a guiding document we can refer to. They will also be working with other departments such as office of equity inclusion, housing equity, specifically to city departments. The OEA

conducted a housing assessment that talks about the issues and what we can do about it. This will be beneficial as we are elevating work that we are doing, or work that has been done but we have not tried to elevate it.

b. Maria ReQua, Social Services Division Manager

- i. The division has finished with all of the seniors who requested their air conditioner's started services. Currently working with those whom did not make it to the cut. Social Services is reporting 75 more seniors served this summer compared to last summer.
- ii. The division has multiple new faces in the home services programs, mainly volunteers, these include interns and high school students that are going out with construction workers and learning a trade.
- iii. One of the projects home services is hosting on June 28th with Calvary Church along with the volunteers' help is to assist seniors who have been cited for not keeping up with their yard work.
- iv. Another project that is in the works is to help one senior whose been chosen for a painting project. Due to the division no longer offering cosmetic painting services, we will identify one senior who needs help through our case management program for property preservation purposes only, Ms. ReQua added.
- v. The Division will be hosting many more volunteer services from the Job Mentorship Program, which are students that sign up with the City through Family & Community Department. These volunteers are paid and it helps us to get the youth involved in senior services in order for them to learn about our department. Along with Sandia Presbyterian Church, volunteers will be helping the home services program and will be part of our partnership in cleaning the Bosque which at the same time, we are getting all the fire wood and keep stacks of it to later deliver to seniors in the winter.
- vi. The Case Management Program is almost fully staffed; we have a recommendation for a case management position which has been created a while back but hasn't been filled. The Case Management position will be helpful in decreasing our case load. The division is currently looking at how we assigned new clients to our case management program as it is set to assign per zip code, which this approach is getting problematic. Another item that we will start working on is the record retention project. This project will consist in scanning all documents and uploading them to Wellsky which is the confidential system used for the AAA funding and statewide. This will allow the division convert paper files to digital files avoiding having too many filing cabinets as well as paper files.
- vii. Recently, the case managers participated in a self-defense class. The purpose of this was to address safety concerns for case managers that are going out in the field. The class incorporated escape tactics in which we are hoping they will never have to be needed.

- viii. The division is working to incorporate interns who are working on their degree in social work, to pair them with case management.
 - ix. The 2023-2024 quick guides are almost ready to be distributed. Social Services will be mailing these out to our centers and facilities which is our internal distribution. Also, the Program Supervisor, Evone Gallegos, is working in distributing them to our community partners, organizations and agencies; most of the quick guides are also mailed out to seniors that call our information and assistance line and requests them.
 - x. Lastly, the division has recently received a report from the phone provider, Cisco Communications, in which reflects our phone calls have increased 30% in the last quarter. This 30% increase is coming from our Information & Assistance line from individuals needing assistance with utility bills, rent support, transportation and home services which is the most requested service, Ms. ReQua added.
- c. Angel Montoya, Recreation Division Manager
- i. The Recreation Division hosted a Senior Health & Fitness Day at North Domingo and was a huge success. A total of 300 people assisted. We had 14 different vendors; Blue Cross & Blue Shield was the main sponsor. Youth also participated in this event as it was hosted in the Multigenerational Center. Ms. Montoya stated we were concerned it wouldn't be a good idea hosting this event at this location as in the past, it's been accustomed to host events this type at the zoo and bio park. However, it worked well as this center is fairly big and people were going room to room familiarizing with its surroundings.
 - ii. The Pilot Program the division participated in about three months ago with NM Rail Runner, was also a success. This provided a total of three trips to a total of 105 seniors. NM Rail Runner provided the free trips to the National Cemetery in Santa Fe, CASA provided the 105 lunch meals and free transportation. In one of the trips, we had the oldest senior from one of our centers, he is 94 years old, Ms. Montoya added. He is a veteran from the Army and was very excited to participate. Deputy Director Sanchez and Angel Montoya will have a meeting tomorrow to discuss more about this program in the future as they would like to continue offer it next fiscal year.
 - iii. The Highland Senior Center is under construction as well. They were granted funds to build a brand-new multipurpose room. They will have their social hall and another facility that is approximately 800-1000 sq. ft to offer more programming. With this, they were able to do a new fitness center which is a room dedicated for fitness equipment and their billiards room was moved to its own private location. Ms. Montoya advised this project will be a quick project, we don't have an estimate completion date but as soon as we do, we will communicate it.

- iv. Last week, Associate Director Alan Armijo spoke at the unveiling of the composting unveil at Barelvas Garden, which we will also have one a North Valley. They are doing composting for the community; it is a collaboration between the garden, the kitchen, Recreation Division and of course, the Office of Sustainability.
 - v. In the month of May there was 668 new members who joined our senior centers and 624 renewals. Bear Canyon had the highest number of renewals which was 120 of that 624 and the highest for new members was in North Domingo, with 286 of that 668.
 - vi. Multigenerational centers very soon will have a game component for adult and seniors. We will be incorporating play stations and virtual reality games. The purpose of this is to entice older adults to utilize technology, as we are in a tech era, and to encourage them to exercise. Often, many individuals don't want to go into big groups for physical activities, therefore, we are hoping this will drive them to participate and exercise in a different setting. The goal is also to get more seniors out of their homes and be able to have physical activities and socialization options.
 - vii. The division's youth program started on June 12, 2023; in the first week we served 1,005 youth in both of our multigenerational centers.
 - viii. Events to come: The division would like to invite you all to our Talent Show on July 21st at North Domingo. This is a very nice show that all of our centers host. We are also going to host the first Teen Game Night for the youth connect we do cross collaboration with, Ms. Montoya added. It will also be a North Domingo on July 28th, which is the last day of our summer program. We are expecting 200-300 teens.
- d. Tim Martinez, Nutrition & Transportation Division Manager
- i. Mr. Martinez expressed to Ms. Towers that he wanted to reassure he will be looking into the concerns she just notified to the board. Mr. Martinez advised her he will reach out to her to discuss further; he also thanked her for bringing this to our attention.
 - ii. Vehicle wraps are ongoing and are very excited about that. The food trucks will also be getting wrapped, this will be a different wrap than the transportation vehicles. This will increase the Department's visibility to the public.
 - iii. The Nutrition program has begun a pilot program with the Department of Environmental Health; we are calling it "The Little Green Bucket," which is a composting pilot project that just CASA kitchen will participate in for now. This will start next month.
- e. Administration: Nikki Peone, Associate Director
- i. Provided an update regarding our volunteerism team. Ms. Peone stated they attended the AmeriCorps Senior National Committee in Washington DC in May for four Days. This trip was beneficial for the team as they were all able to see what other programs in the US are implementing with AmeriCorps Seniors. Learning that we are all in

the same boat due to the pandemic Covid-19 was good to know; many of organizations nationwide, including our program, have lost volunteers due to pandemic. However, the team learned a lot from this conference which will implement in our recruiting strategy to start working on rebuilding our volunteer programs, Ms. Peone added.

- ii. Staff also attended the “Points of Light” conference in Chicago. This conference was about civic engagement, looking at other cities to see what they are doing to engage individuals on various levels including volunteerisms. Ms. Peone advised, the team will be implementing what they learned into this fiscal year.
 - iii. The division has been very short-staffed. July is our month to get our Program Supervisor in place for our Foster Grandparent Program and also our Senior Companion Program. Those two supervisors are critical to us functioning.
 - iv. First Case Manager for Senior Companion Program has been hired, her name is Lisa Casman, and we are excited to have her on board.
 - v. We are also looking at onboarding a couple of volunteer coordinators, this will make it a total of five new staff which we are very excited about.
 - vi. Last week the division had our Senior Companion Pinning Event hosted at M’tucci’s Restaurant. Our strategy for this event, which we will continue doing this, was to allow each person to bring a friend to the event so they can learn about the program and talk to others within. Perhaps, they will become interested in learning more and join our program.
 - vii. The other event we have this week is another pinning event for our Foster Grandparent Program. We will have a total of 35 people and will be at the Albuquerque Museum. The longest served volunteer within DSA will be in his/her 22 years of service mark. This is something the department is taking the time to recognize the dedication and hard work of its volunteers.
- f. Chris Sanchez, Deputy Director
- i. Director Sanchez had to leave the meeting due to a meeting with Mayor, she asked Deputy Director Sanchez to apologize on her behalf.
 - ii. The first update will be regarding DSA’s quarterly report that was submitted a few weeks ago. Part of the reporting responsibility of assessing operations within the department is to provide a quarterly report which focuses on the strategic plan, on internal and external capacity looking at critical services and meeting involving demand for services.
 - iii. Dep. Dir. Sanchez stated part of this process connects to Ms. Vallejos’ program, which is to capture relevant data. This entails each division leader working very diligently on reviewing all the critical functions inside the department. Within those critical function reviews, we are looking at the efficiency of all these functions

analyzing whether they are operating well. If not, we are looking at how we can go back and systemize it. Data is going to help us assess the impact of the work we are doing not only to look at the numbers but more so looking at how we are impacting the folks we are serving. For example, if the transportation is not meeting our needs/demands, how can we fix it. Part of this information goes into that report and the report goes to the governing body. We were on the agenda to present it to City Council; however, it has been postponed.

- iv. Another item to communicate to the governing body is our staffing analysis. This analysis' purpose is to identify if we have enough staff in the centers for all the operations we are doing.
- v. Becoming a trusted voice for older adults in our community is one of the department's goal. Dep. Dir. Sanchez stated we submitted for a national award in different subjects about six months ago and DSA received the technology award of the Technology, Virtual and Hybrid Programming category from the National Council on Aging. We are very excited and we think it's important as we are recognized for the hard work the department as a whole brings together. We have not announced this to the public yet, Mr. Sanchez added.
- vi. DSA is also working on community engagement, establishing new partnerships and looking at our advisory committees. We are really looking at this board and figuring out what we can do more and how we can tell our stories that are happening related to Medicare events, housing initiatives, and approving services. For example, DSA had three senior centers that were not donation based and we converted those; now all of our centers are Free-donation based for 60 and older.
- vii. DSA conducted a facility assessment, which it was the first one since the last one that has been years. We're using this to prioritize our capital improvement programs. Four of our centers recently got reaccredited by the National Council on Ageism.
- viii. The administration is relocating soon to the new office from the westside to the eastside. We are also going to be doing some renovation on the eastside and will be letting you know when all these renovations are completed, Mr. Sanchez concluded.

VII. Advisory Council Business

- a. Skipped by Chair Evan Thompson

VIII. Council Member Reports (Optional)

IX. Announcements

- a. Ms. Peone announced DSA hosted the groundbreaking celebration of Santa Barbara/Martineztown Multigenerational Center. This new center will

be a fast and furious project, the estimated completion date is beginning of June 2024. We are all excited as it is going to be the first multigenerational center built since 2011. This center will have meals, youth programs and many other recreational activities. We will keep you informed along the way.

X. Adjournment

- a. Adjourned meeting at 1:04 pm by Chair Evan Thompson.