

ASHLAND DAILY TIDINGS

January 3, 2018

Management vs. facilitation

Since August, the Parks and Recreation Department's management of Ashland's Senior Program has impeded and will continue to impede that program's ability to fulfill its purpose: to provide needed social services to Ashland's eldest citizens. And since then, the mayor and council have proved to be diligently protective of a flawed bureaucratic process that is in direct violation of a principle of conduct set by professional program management: to never make any management decision that could impede the achievement of the program's goal. A program's goal is sacrosanct — except in Ashland's Parks and Recreation Department's minds.

On top of this, the mayor and council persist in holding the belief that a 2007, still-extant resolution (2007-14) gives Parks and Recreation "managerial control" of what is termed Ashland's Senior Program. In fact, the resolution gives the Parks and Recreation Department "responsibility for facilitation of all senior programs and activities for the City of Ashland" and the limited "authority to create an advisory committee for the program" if one is needed. No managerial control is granted, just the responsibility to help the Senior Program reach its goal.

The current ad hoc committee appears to be engaged in a deceitfully planned dog and pony show to distract from the demise of a successful, needed city program with a lot of administrative flim-

flam, and it was distressing to see, in a recent council update session, the mayor and some councilors graciously thank Director Black and Chairman Gardener for their work to convert a successful social assistance program located at the Senior Center — an easily accessible location offering specific activities and dedicated assistance from professionally knowledgeable social aid staff — into a problematic, multi-age, multi-sited adult recreation program.

So far this reorganization plan has misinterpreted Resolution 2007-14; done away with the social aid goal set in the 1973 resolution; spent taxpayer money on a mediator who can't mediate a prime area of conflict; inspired Parks and Recreation commissioner recall efforts; resulted in a pending lawsuit for wrongful termination; and done harm to an unknown number of aged citizens now deprived of life-enhancing assistance. And our mayor and council are OK with that?

Alice Finley
Ashland