

ASHLAND DAILY TIDINGS

Opinion

Guest Opinion: A shaky old senior's comments

By Earl Haveman

Posted at 12:01 AM

I am 93 years old and have been an active senior at the Ashland Senior Center for almost 20 years. During that time, we took the center for granted, without realizing what a wonderful place it was. Note, I say "was."

One of the advantages was that if we as seniors, had a problem, we had a place to go. Well, now I for one do have an enormous problem. I get nervous and upset when I hear and read about the injustices that have taken place at our Senior Center. In the past, the center was the place to go for solutions, but now it's all gone.

Since "Black Wednesday," Aug. 6, 2017, there has been much said and written about how much the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission (APRC) and Michael Black care about the health and welfare of Ashland's senior citizens. This disturbs me because I see a well-operated and managed Senior Center being devastated and on its way to being dismantled. Their plan was to move part of the center to the Grove. This is very upsetting to our senior community.

I mentioned "Black Wednesday" because that was the day that the APRC got rid of our Senior Center manager, Chris Dodson, and her staff. They say that she was laid off. Actually, that was just a sneaky way of firing her. The staff recognized this subterfuge and they also anticipated that they were scheduled to be "canned" in a week. Therefore, they opted to leave.

Who said there is a problem at the Senior Center? For years, we seniors have felt that everything is great at the center. But no one ever came to ask us how things were going. If the APRC or Michael Black had taken the time to visit the center to ask us seniors for our opinions of the center's successes and its effectiveness, we would have been happy to share our stories. They could also

have done a survey of the seniors to learn of any problems. Wouldn't we seniors, as the primary users of the center, be able to provide the APRC and Black with some useful information? Maybe they should ask.

In the Daily Tidings Wednesday, Jan. 24, I read that the Senior Center will become its own division, but still under the APRC, and the manager's salary will have to be raised. So, we seniors, after dealing with this upheaval and uncertainty, get to join the rest of Ashland's citizens in paying more taxes.

As I said in an earlier letter: "If it ain't busted, don't fix it!" The Senior Center was running just fine before someone got the bright idea to make unneeded and damaging changes without even asking those people who would be most affected: Ashland's senior community! Please restore our Senior Center to the successful and effective service that it once was. This can be best done by getting Chris Dodson and her staff back on the job at our Senior Center!

Earl Haveman

Ashland



SIGN UP FOR DAILY E-MAIL

Wake up to the day's top news, delivered to your inbox
