

**HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
March 13, 2018  
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.  
Rockville City Hall**

**Members Present:**

Shelagh Van Saanen, At-large Member, Chair	Laurie Gira, Caregiver Member
Ciriaco Gonzales, At-large Member	Jen Lafferty, At-large Member
Joyce Lipman, Consumer Member	Deborah Moore, Consumer Member
Julie Pelletier, At-large Member	Nancy Sushinsky, Caregiver Member
Eric Wang, At-large Member	

**Members Absent:**

Joel Nantais, At-large Member	Denise Thomas, Caregiver Member
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**Staff Present:**

Councilmember Beryl Feinberg, HSAC Council Liaison  
Carlos Aparicio, Community Services Manager, HSAC Staff Liaison  
Sarah Dickinson, Community Services Program Analyst

**Guests Present:**

Lena Ousvatova

**Re: Call Meeting to Order**

Shelagh Van Saanen, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

**Re: Community Forum**

Councilmember Feinberg introduced Lena Ousvatova, a graduate student in public administration from Rockville's sister city, Pinneberg, Germany. Lena is staying in Rockville for the month of March to learn about the city and county government.

**Re: Approve February 13, 2018 Meeting Minutes**

Julie Pelletier, At-large Member, moved that the February minutes be approved, and Ciriaco Gonzales, At-large Member, seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**Re: Community Services Division Report**

Carlos Aparicio, Community Services Manager, provided the following updates regarding the Community Services Division:

- Carlos has met with the other three agencies involved in the *Creating Healthy Bonds* program serving children of incarcerated parents regarding outcome measurement and setting objectives within the funding constraints of the program.
- Community Services Administration staff have attended county-wide collaborative meetings regarding *homeless services*, including regarding the Twinbrook bike trail.
- Manna's mobile kitchen attended the *mentoring* program and did a cooking demonstration.

**Re: Caregiver Site Visit Scheduling**

The following commission members signed up for caregiver site visits:

- Hope Housing: Joyce
- Chase Partnership House: Laurie
- Home Builders Care Assessment Center: Joyce, Ciriaco
- Stepping Stones Shelter: Ciriaco, Shelagh

**Re: Site Visit Report: Rockland House**

Ciriaco Gonzales, At-large Member, reported that this permanent supportive housing is well-organized. The back yard has an infestation of bamboo, which was present at the previous site visit and needs to be addressed by the agency and neighbors. Carlos Aparicio, Community Services Manager, added that when there is a vacancy in the home, potential clients are screened for fit within the existing house community. Clients in permanent supportive housing programs located in Rockville are considered City of Rockville residents after a stay of six months in the program. None of the current clients were Rockville residents prior to entering the program. Laurie Gira, Caregiver Member, reported that the Program Director position has been vacant, and the new hire will start work tomorrow.

**Re: Site Visit Report: Jefferson House**

Ciriaco Gonzales, At-large Member, reported that not much has changed in the home over the past few years except that the bathrooms had been updated since the last site visit. The renovation was completed using a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) provided by the City of Rockville, plus additional donations. Ciriaco reported that due to the Program Director vacancy, staff coverage for the program has been bare-boned. The next home improvement project will include insulation and window repair. A representative from Rockville United Methodist Church, which leases the house to Community Ministries of Rockville (CMR), attended the visit and provided additional information on the upkeep of the property and the church's partnership with CMR.

**Re: Site Visit Report: Interfaith Works Women's Center**

Laurie Gira, Caregiver Member, reported that she was impressed by the new facility, which includes a partnership with the on-site Cornerstone Montgomery office. Clients are provided case management, recreational activities, and job preparation. New features of the shelter include a designated medication management room and expanded day time hours that the clients may access the shelter. Clients are no longer charged a service fee based on a request from Montgomery County to pilot a no fee shelter initiative. This request did not include off-setting funding from the County. Debbie Moore, Consumer Member, added that this program is the only year-round emergency shelter for homeless women in Montgomery County. She appreciated that clients may now eat lunch in the shelter, especially during harsh weather. Debbie also commented that she understood Montgomery County's reasoning for removing the shelter's service fee, but noted that some clients expressed that they found pride in paying the fee and contributing to the program. Additionally, shelter staff organized a memorial service for a longtime resident who passed away.

Councilmember Feinberg informed the commission that the facility has no backup power generator, which has been quoted at \$400,000. Carlos Aparicio, Community Services Manager,

added that the City of Rockville installed a net to block errant golf balls from the adjoining golf course. The shelter was closed and clients were relocated for two months in summer 2017 for repairs to address a significant sewage backup. The shelter partnered with other programs, including Interfaith Clothing Center, to provide services to clients as needed during the program's displacement. Shelter staff reported that few young adults have been accessing the program's services, that any individual identifying as female may come to the shelter, and that pregnant women may stay at the shelter but are placed in a hotel or family shelter by the county once they give birth.

**Re: Human Services Advisory Commission Draft Testimony to Mayor and Council**

Laurie Gira, Caregiver Member, distributed the most recent draft of the HSAC's proposed testimony to the Mayor and Council. Carlos Aparicio, Community Services Manager, reminded the commission that the HSAC's testimony is limited to five minutes, but any individual may speak for three minutes, so the content may be divided among speakers. Historically, the caregiver agencies have done their own advocacy for grant funding, including inviting recipients of human services to speak.

Councilmember Feinberg stated that the proposal to raise caregiver grant funding to 1% of the City's budget is not applicable for FY 2019 because FY 2018 grant funding is being automatically renewed for the coming year. The Caregiver Funding Task Force will make recommendations for the future of the process beyond FY 2019. Ciriaco Gonzales, At-large Member, opined that the HSAC should advocate for caregiver grant funding to increase to at least 1% of the City's budget in FY 2020 to reflect the higher number of City residents living in poverty. He and Joyce Lipman, Consumer Member, stressed the importance of increased pay for human services nonprofit staff to adequately compensate their work and expertise. Included in this increase should be a consideration of how Montgomery County's law to increase minimum wage would impact the human services sector. Councilmember Feinberg recommended that the commission continue advocacy in the fall for the 1% issue. Julie Pelletier, At-large Member, asked if the City Manager could be invited to the commission's September meeting to discuss the issue and raise it as a priority.

Joyce Lipman, Consumer Member, expressed that the current testimony draft is too long and recommended that supplementary material be provided to the Mayor and Council in written form to accompany the oral testimony. Debbie Moore, Consumer Member, agreed to write up her experience as a recipient of human services for another member to read to the Mayor and Council. Nancy Sushinsky, Caregiver Member, offered to present Debbie's testimony at the April 9<sup>th</sup> meeting. Ciriaco offered to give a three-minute presentation on the 1% issue and caregiver funding advocacy. Laurie will make the changes to the testimony discussed by the commission and send out the revised draft. Joyce will present the commission's testimony. Carlos will schedule Joyce's testimony with the City Clerk, and Ciriaco and Nancy must contact the City Clerk's office individually to sign up to speak at the April 9<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Re: Old Business**

- **Advocacy for Human Services Requirements for Rockville Real Estate Developers:** Staff from the City’s Department of Community Planning and Development Services (CPDS) will attend the April HSAC meeting to provide information on housing and development and an update on Rockville 2040.
- **Caregiver Task Force:** The first meeting of the task force is scheduled for Thursday, March 22.
- **FY 2019 City of Rockville Budget Process & Caregiver Grants:** Discussed above.
- **Montgomery County Budget:** Several meetings are scheduled for the Department of Health and Human Services to review their proposed budget, including a briefing at 6 p.m. on March 19, and the presentation is available online. A series of meetings will be held at the end of March and in April to be attended by nonprofit leaders as well as county councilmembers. Nancy Sushinsky, Caregiver Member, will send the information out to the HSAC.

**Re: Other Items**

Eric Wang, At-large Member, asked whether the City can provide shower facilities and toiletries for homeless people. Carlos Aparicio, Community Services Manager, responded that individuals may access showers and hygiene supplies at emergency shelters and that the swim center offers highly discounted memberships to the homeless. Nancy Sushinsky, Caregiver Member, added that some shelters provide toiletries for clients’ use outside of the shelter’s opening hours. Progress Place in Silver Spring offers shower facilities, and there has been discussion in Montgomery County in the past about opening a similar facility farther up-county. If the county does proceed with such a project, Councilmember Feinberg indicated that situating it in Rockville might be a good option given its location. Councilmember Feinberg suggested that permanent collection boxes be placed in City facilities for toiletry donations, and Carlos will bring up the issue with Recreation and Parks Department leadership.

**Re: Plan Agenda for April 10, 2018 Meeting**

- Department of Community Planning and Development Services (CPDS) housing presentation
- Caregiver site visit reports
- FY 2020 1% caregiver grant advocacy
- Caregiver task force report

**Re: Adjourn**

Ciriaco Gonzales, At-large Member, moved that the meeting be adjourned, and Nancy Sushinsky, Caregiver Member, seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.