

**HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
April 10, 2018
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Rockville City Hall**

Members Present:

Shelagh Van Saanen, At-large Member, Chair	Laurie Gira, Caregiver Member
Joyce Lipman, Consumer Member	Deborah Moore, Consumer Member
Julie Pelletier, At-large Member	Eric Wang, At-large Member

Members Absent:

Ciriaco Gonzales, At-large Member	Jen Lafferty, At-large Member
Joel Nantais, At-large Member	Nancy Sushinsky, Caregiver Member

Staff Present:

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

Guests Present:

David Levy, Chief of Long Range Planning, Department of Community
Planning and Development Services

Re: Call Meeting to Order

Shelagh Van Saanen, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Re: Community Forum

No discussion.

Re: Approve March 13, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Deferred until after the housing presentation.

**Re: Department of Community Planning and Development Services
(CPDS) Housing Presentation**

David Levy, Chief of Long Range Planning from the Department of Community Development Services, was in attendance to provide the commission with information about the status of housing in Rockville. In response to a prior question from HSAC members, David stated that to make supplementary funding requirements of real estate developers, federal law requires a “rational nexus”: that is, a logical connection between the development project and the supplementary project being funded. For example, the development of an apartment complex can be tied to affordable housing because of the nature of the project. Furthermore, funded projects must be proportional to the scope of the development project. David stated that the city has never tried to tie social service funding requirements to development, and he doubts that such a proposal would meet the rational nexus and proportionality prerequisites. In Rockville, the vast majority of development consists of a private owner planning a private development with no subsidy. CPDS staff are not aware of any precedent for requiring local hiring preference as part

of a development project, and he believes any such requirement would likely necessitate the municipality or government provide significant subsidies.

In December 2016, a consultant produced a report regarding current and future housing needs in the City of Rockville. The existing Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) program is insufficient to meet the needs of moderate and low-income households. The current income requirements limit eligibility to those at 60% of the area median income (AMI). MPDU designation currently expires 30 years from construction, and a proposal has been made to extend that time frame to 99 years. The housing report recommends that more money be invested to buy down units to make them affordable for low-income residents. A solution is to implement stratified unit costs for those at a variety of percentages of AMI.

Eric Wang, At-large Member, pointed out that there are people who abuse the MPDU program by remaining in the program after their income increases over the limit or by renting rooms in their unit to others. David responded that MPDU residents are required to recertify their income regularly and those whose income exceeds the limit must leave the unit after a grace period. Carlos Aparicio, Community Services Manager, added that there is a benefit in allowing families to remain in MPDUs for a period of time after increased income levels to permit them to build up their savings and strengthen financial health for the future. He pointed out that the current voucher program's payment structure could discourage families from pursuing higher income, since rent requirements rise proportionally. He believes the program subsidy should follow a tapered approach that makes increasing income less "punitive" for housing initiatives and other social support services. Improved education on lease responsibilities should also be a focus for housing programs when individuals and families move into any subsidized housing initiatives.

David continued by saying that CPDS is piloting a program in East Rockville on design guideline criteria for home building in response to the issue of disproportionately large and costly homes driving up taxes for the neighborhood. He indicated that this issue can be divisive for residents. He stated that focuses of advocacy for the HSAC in the area of affordable housing could include:

- expanding income qualification levels for MPDUs
- designating funding to buy down units for affordable housing

David distributed the draft housing policies document for the Rockville 2040 Master Plan. Commission members may review the document and consider both short- and long-term issues.

Re: Approve March 13, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Carlos Aparicio, Community Services Manager, informed members that Denise Thomas has resigned from the commission, leaving a Caregiver Representative position vacant.

Debbie Moore, Consumer Member, moved that the March minutes be approved, and Julie Pelletier, At-large Member, seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Re: Elect Chairperson

Carlos Aparicio, Community Services Manager, informed the commission that Shelagh Van Saanen's term as chairperson expired in June 2017. Any other members interested in serving as chair may volunteer.

Re: Community Services Division Report

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

- Carlos participated in the Montgomery County council grant review process and attended a training on the Women, Infants, and Children’s (WIC) program.

Re: Caregiver Task Force Report

Julie Pelletier, At-large Member, reported that the first meeting of the task force was held in late March. The task force decided to ask the Mayor and Council for an extension, to arrive at findings in time for the FY 2021 grants process rather than FY 2020. The recommendation includes extending the current grants for a third year. Task force members are seeking a systematic process for application review and funding. Carlos Aparicio, Community Services Manager, informed the commission that the executive director of Nonprofit Montgomery has resigned from the task force, and another individual will be appointed to fill the role.

Re: Site Visit Report: Hope Housing, Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless

Joyce Lipman, Consumer Member, reported that the Housing First initiative has resulted in clients entering the program with more acute issues, which has caused clashes with existing residents. Program staff are planning a pilot to move residents from one of the program’s houses to individual apartment units in an initiative to decrease conflict among residents and negative effects of communal living with housemates with active addiction or mental health issues. Staff have responded to the needs of aging residents by arranging for accessibility upgrades to homes.

Re: Site Visit Report: Chase Partnership House, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington

Laurie Gira, Caregiver Member, reported that the program’s most significant challenge is finding affordable housing for clients. As of the site visit, 13 clients had moved to permanent housing since January 1. Beds are provided for medically vulnerable clients. The program received a grant to help clients with employment certifications, and clients are referred to other services as needed. Following an addition of a case manager position, the program has three full-time and one part-time case managers. Staff employ a harm-reduction approach rather than zero-tolerance for clients who use drugs.

Re: Caregiver Funding Advocacy Plans/Report on Testimony to Mayor and Council

This item was deferred until the May meeting. Carlos Aparicio, Community Services Manager, informed the commission that public comments may still be submitted. Laurie Gira, Caregiver Member, stated that Councilmember Mark Pierzchala asked for figures regarding what dedicating 1% of the city’s budget to caregiver grants would entail.

Re: Old Business

- **FY 2019 City of Rockville Budget:** No further discussion.
- **Montgomery County Budget:** The staff of the Department of Health and Human Services mitigated effects of budget decreases on services and programs.

Re: Other Items

No discussion.

Re: Plan Agenda for May 8, 2018 Meeting

- Elect Chairperson
- Caregiver Site Visit Reports
- Caregiver Funding Advocacy Plans/Report on Testimony to Mayor and Council
- Caregiver Task Force Report

Re: Adjourn

In the absence of a quorum, the meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.