

**HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
February 11, 2020
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Rockville City Hall**

Members Present:

Stacey Erd, Caregiver Member
Jen Lafferty, At-large Member
Mark Pascu, At-large Member
Nancy Sushinsky, Caregiver Member

Laurie Gira, Caregiver Member
Deborah Moore, Consumer Member
Emily Pearce, At-large Member
Leon Suskin, At-large Member

Members Absent:

Laura Kaplan-Weisman, At-large Member

Mayor and Council Liaison Present: Councilmember Mark Pierzchala

Staff Present: Carlos Aparicio, Community Service Manager
Allison (Ali) Hoy, Community Services Program Analyst

RE: Call Meeting to Order

Mark Pascu, At-large Member and Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:40 pm.

RE: Community Forum

No discussion.

RE: Introduction of Councilmember Mark Pierzchala (Carlos Aparicio and Ali Hoy)

Councilmember Mark Pierzchala introduced himself to the group and discussed his new role as the Mayor and Council liaison to the Human Services Advisory Commission (HSAC). He shared an overview of other boards and commissions he has advised during his terms on the City Council and expressed his interest in learning more about the HSAC through his position as liaison. The HSAC members introduced themselves and Carlos Aparicio, Community Service Manager, gave a quick synopsis of the history behind the HSAC and its membership composition.

RE: Approval of Minutes from January 14, 2020

Emily Pearce, At-large Member, moved that the minutes be approved as drafted, and, Laurie Gira, Caregiver Member, seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

RE: Community Services Division Report (Carlos Aparicio)

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

- The Mayor and Council recognized major donors to the *Rockville Holiday Drive* at their meeting on January 27.
- The City Manager will release his budget recommendations to Mayor and Council this month, including the *Caregiver Grant Program* funding recommendations.
- Carlos shared some information about newly elected City of Rockville Councilmembers, Monique Ashton and David Myles. He mentioned that Councilmember Ashton has expressed interest in adding a *Linkages to Learning (LTL) program* to Twinbrook Elementary School. Stacey Erd, Caregiver Member, asked about other LTL sites in Rockville and Carlos responded that the City of Rockville runs an LTL program at Maryvale Elementary School.
- Carlos facilitated the Narcan training hosted at Twinbrook Community Recreation Center on January 13, 2020. Carlos will send the commission members information on the next Narcan training and other upcoming *Rockville Goes Purple* opioid prevention events.
- The Community Services Division programs are going well. Carlos attended a tour of George Washington University with Mariella Correal, the Community Services Outreach Worker, and students from the *Latino Youth Development Program*. The students toured the campus, attended a basketball game, and met with a current student athlete at the university, who is an immigrant from Mexico that plans to play professional volleyball after graduation.

RE: Mayor and Council Advocacy Discussion – Budget Hearings

Human Services Advisory Commission (HSAC) members asked Carlos Aparicio, Community Service Manager, to describe the City of Rockville budget process. He explained that the City Manager has made budget recommendations to Mayor and Council and there will be public hearings that are open to the public for testimony and will be followed by the budget adoption in May. Leon Suskin, At-large Member, asked how Mayor and Council develop budget priorities. Carlos responded that the Council goes on a retreat to gain a consensus on priorities and that this information is available on the Rockville website.

During the January HSAC meeting, Stacey Erd, Caregiver Member, volunteered to draft up testimony to be presented, on behalf of the HSAC, to Mayor and Council during the Rockville budget public hearing. For the basis of the draft, she used excerpts from testimony given by individual HSAC members during the January 27th Mayor and Council Community Forum. The commission members read through the draft and had a discussion on what changes need to be made to the draft prior to voting to approve the draft as testimony.

Mark Pascu, At-large Member and Chair, called for a vote to determine which member will testify on behalf of the HSAC at the budget public hearing in March. Mark nominated Leon Suskin, At-large Member to testify on behalf of the HSAC. Deborah Moore, Consumer Member, seconds the nomination. The motion passed unanimously.

Deborah Moore, Consumer Member, moved that testimony draft be approved as amended, and, Emily Pearce, At-large Member, seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

RE: Open Meetings Act

Carlos Aparicio, Community Service Manager, passed along a request from the Rockville City Clerk's office that the Commission complete the Open Meetings Act training and send a copy of the completion certificate to Jackie Mobley, from the City Clerk's office. There was a brief discussion about how often the training needs to be redone.

RE: Caregiver Site Visits

(All site visits are conducted for programs receiving City of Rockville funding through the Caregiver grants program)

- Discussion on Recusal Policies

Carlos Aparicio, Community Service Manager, began the discussion by saying that the guidelines for boards and commissions state that the Commission can make up their own policies regarding recusal policies. Although some boards and commissions have disclosure and recusal policies, the HSAC is not bound by many of those statutory requirements. The Human Services Advisory Commission members discussed the value of feedback for those involved with any of the programs receiving site visits. Some of the Caregiver members advocated for recusal based on the fact that all funded agencies are not represented on the HSAC. Carlos mentioned that the Caregiver programs receive feedback from the City of Rockville staff and the HSAC after site visits are completed.

Deborah Moore, Consumer Member, asked about definition of gifts under boards and commissions ethics guidelines and additionally suggested that recusal for consumer members could be problematic since they could be receiving multiple services from Caregiver programs that receive City of Rockville site visits. She was concerned that if services received from Caregivers' are classified as gifts, than many recusals may be possible for consumer members of the HSAC. The HSAC collectively decided that services received are not classified as a gift, and therefore no recusal is necessary for consumer representatives.

No motion was made to formalize a specific policy due to limitations on time, but the members decided that for this meeting, Caregiver representatives will recuse themselves during the site visit discussions.

- Stepping Stones Shelter (Laurie Gira)

Stacey Erd, Caregiver Member and Executive Director of Stepping Stones Shelter, recuses herself so that the Human Services Advisory Commission can discuss a recent site visit at that program.

Laurie Gira, Caregiver Member, attended a site visit at Stepping Stones Shelter, along with City of Rockville staff members, Carlos Aparicio, Community Service Manager, and Ali Hoy, Community Services Program Analyst. Laurie provided an overview of the program and that this shelter is an emergency shelter for families that is located in a historical building in Rockville. The shelter has a capacity of 6 families. The shelter provides case management services, shelter, food, and supplies to those who stay in the home. Additionally, they provide referrals to health services, budget counseling, art therapy, pediatric doctor visits, SSI application support, and other needed services. Laurie shared that the shelter staff have indicated affordable housing and childcare as major barriers for their clients' long-term success.

One issue that Laurie brought up for discussion to the HSAC members is that Rockville residency reporting requirements for emergency shelters can be difficult to meet because they are unable to control what location clients are from due to the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines. Carlos added that there has been a difficult balance for this service area. As a practice, City of Rockville dollars are intended for Rockville residents. For homeless services as a whole, residency is determined by the point of entry into the homeless system. Given the transient nature of many homeless individuals and families, this has been a challenge faced by many grantors and grantees. Carlos continued stating that at some point there will need to be further discussions regarding this matter, especially considering that it would be difficult to compare, evaluate, and score Rockville applications without this primary output.

- **Rainbow Place Shelter (Leon Suskin)**

Nancy Sushinsky, Caregiver Member and Clinic Director of Rainbow Place Shelter, recused herself so that the Human Services Advisory Commission can discuss a recent site visit at that program.

Leon Suskin, At-large Member, attended a site visit at Rainbow Place Shelter, along with City of Rockville staff members, Carlos and Ali. Leon provided an overview of the program and that this shelter is an emergency shelter for women that is open during limited hours. Carlos stated that hours are limited because of a childcare center that is located in the same building. Additionally, it is his understanding that restrictions had been set by the church, who rents out the space. The shelter often takes in clients when other shelters are full or if the client has been removed from other shelters. The shelter is also located at a historical site, so any major repairs done to make the building more ADA accessible would cause challenges for the whole building. Leon commented that many of the shelter residents are employed and that the shelter provides case management services, shelter, food, and referrals to needed services for those who stay in the shelter.

- **Nourish Now (Stacey Erd)**

Stacey Erd, Caregiver Member, spoke very briefly, due to limited time left in the meeting, about the site visit she attended at Nourish Now with City of Rockville staff members. Stacey shared that it was her first time visiting the site, although she has interacted with their program in the past through the Stepping Stones Shelter. She mentioned that the program staff spoke about focusing more on outreach efforts in future grants through the Nourish Neighborhoods program, which seeks to address the issue of food deserts in Montgomery County, where locations with limited transportation access can limit access to food. Carlos said that he had recommended that the staff highlight their volunteer network and leveraging of partnerships in future grants.

RE: Other Items

No discussion.

RE: Plan Agenda for March 10, 2020 Meeting

- Recusal materials from other City of Rockville Boards and Commissions
- City of Rockville FY21 Budget
- Caregiver Site Visit Reports

- Manna Food Center
- Comprehensive Community Empowerment Project – Korean Community Service Center
- Healthy Families Montgomery – Family Services, Inc.

RE: Adjourn

Emily Pearce, At-large Member, motions to adjourn, Nancy Sushinsky, Caregiver Member, seconds. The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.