

HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
February 14, 2023
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Virtual Meeting via Cisco Webex

Members Present:

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| Tal Shahar, At Large Member | Leah White, At Large Member |
| Nancy Sushinsky, Caregiver Member | Ricky Mui, At-large Member |
| Deborah Moore, Consumer Member | Amanda Schwartz, At Large Member and Chair |
| Wesley Hicken, At Large Member | Stacey Gold, Caregiver Member |
| Leon Suskin, Caregiver Member | |

Members Absent: none

Mayor and Council Liaison: Councilmember Mark Pierzchala

Staff Present: Frederika Granger, Community Services Manager

RE: Call Meeting to Order

Meeting was called to order at 6:40pm by Amanda Schwartz, Chair

RE: Community Forum

No guests

RE: Approval of Minutes from January 10, 2023

Minutes approved unanimously

RE: Community Services Report

Ms. Granger shared that all programs are doing well. Counseling continues to see students who have suffered with trauma. The Mentoring Program continues to run at three elementary school sites. The Latino Youth Development Program is running its high school program and is doing a VisArts therapeutic art three session program. The boys are enjoying it and seem to be getting something out of it. Linkages to Learning is doing parent enrichment programming on self-sufficiency topics such as learning to use MCPS parent view, energy savings, camp registration, safety. There is a 5th grade lunch bunch that will move onto a two-week 6th grade readiness program in the last two weeks in June. The Rockville Emergency Assistance Program, Energy Assistance Program and Bridge Program have all gotten much busier now that Covid support is ending.

- It was asked if there is a mandatory or only voluntary rent guideline to which Ms. Granger and Councilmember Pierzchala said there is only a voluntary one and that the city is waiting for the county to establish its new voluntary guideline before the city does.

There is a history of discussions on rent caps but never has it been pursued. Takoma Park has a rent stabilization program and there has been no housing development since the program started. It is not definite that the lack of development is due to the stabilization program. CM Pierzchala also shared that affordable housing has been an issue for a long time and has been a major topic in elections. The concern against affordable housing is density, traffic, and overcrowded schools.

ACTION ITEM: Ms. Granger found out that nobody in state of Maryland has rent control.

- Another question was what to do about empty houses that are owned by people who spend half their time elsewhere and with AirBnB type use of property. CM Pierzchala shared that the short term rental issue is on the Mayor and Council agenda at a meeting in near future. Can a different tax rate be imposed on those who are not in town half the year? CM Pierzchala said there has never been differential property tax rates as in Maryland it is not allowed.
- Ms. Schwartz pointed out that HSAC members can testify to raise awareness about shortage of affordable housing.
- Ms. Schwartz asked if HSAC could hear about the success of the VisArts therapeutic part programming, the LTL 6th grade readiness program, and the parent enrichment on engaging in your child's school.

ACTION ITEM: Ms. Granger will share about each as they finish.

- Ms. Schwartz shared that she has a colleague in Israel who is teaching teachers worldwide on how to assess students for neglect, abuse and violence in their home and community.

ACTION ITEM: Ms. Schwartz will ask her if she can speak to HSAC.

RE: City of Rockville FY23 and FY24 Budgets and ARPA Updates

- Bank On Rockville outreach is going well.
- The Human Services Needs Assessment is with procurement. The goal is to have it completed by the selected vendor by November 2023.
- Housing and Community Development's request for additional staff did not make it into proposed budget. City budget is overwhelmed with inflation costs. Community Services will do the best it can with what it has.

RE: Caregiver Grants FY23 Update

Getting ready for site visits. HSAC members may attend site visits.

RE: Caregiver Grants Program Process for FY24

The panel completed its review process. The recommendations went to the City Manager who will then review and put in his Proposed FY 2024 Budget, which is published on website this Friday, Feb 17th. Ms. Granger encouraged members to find it then. She will send information about it to the Caregivers who applied. She will share the same with HSAC. Eighteen programs are recommended for funding.

- CM Pierzchala commented that the idea of having a panel of Commission Members review grants and make recommendations depoliticizes the process. He encouraged HSAC members to advise caregivers to testify on the Grant Program as whole rather than about their own program. Mr. Hicken shared that caregivers could also testify to say thank you for the attention to caregivers and community human services.

ACTION ITEM: Ms. Schwartz encouraged HSAC members to reach out to caregivers to testify on behalf of the Caregiver Grant Program, even to raise again the idea of its budget being 1% of general fund.

RE: Testimony to M&C

HSAC could encourage Caregivers and their clients to testify. HSAC could facilitate signing up 2-3 Caregivers/clients per meeting to testify. Could testify to support Restoration Center. Ms. Moore will testify as a community member rather than HSAC member as it is more impactful that way.

- February 27 work session
- March 6 Budget Hearing
- March 13 work session
- March 20 work session
- March 27
- April 17 Budget Hearing

RE: Volunteering and Volunteer Calendar

Now that Rockville has a volunteer website, HSAC won't reach out to get people to volunteer.

ACTION ITEM: Ms. Granger will suggest to Community Engagement person for the city to reach out to school counselors for city volunteers. Also, to encourage all to put in their add for a need for volunteers that they call the agency to schedule a time to volunteer rather than just show up.

RE: Future HSAC meetings and Recruitment

Per the poll that Ms. Granger administered and per CM Pierzchala's commitments, the meeting day and time will be changed to the third Wednesday of the month, 6:30-8:30pm. This will start on March 15th. Will revisit virtual vs hybrid after May 11th, which is when President Biden will announce the end of the Covid emergency.

ACTION ITEM: Ms. Granger will notify City Clerk and change calendar on website and invite in Webex.

RE: Roundtable Discussions

Ms. Granger found out that the City does not have a refugee policy. The city follows the county.

ACTION ITEM: March meeting: Ms. Sushinsky will give Ms. Granger contact information on presenters from SAMU who can address refugee policies and help that may be given to recent migrants. This would be for March meeting.

ACTION ITEM: April meeting: Ms. Schwartz will talk to friend from Israel who teaches teachers about how to assess for trauma, violence, abuse, neglect.

RE: Federal Legislation Advocacy (All Members)

Wes Moore wants to put forth legislation to promote a service year after high school. The state would fund/subsidize service opportunities at nonprofits. Rather than its being part of something like Americorp, Governor Moore, who led Robinhood, a large nonprofit, wants to do his own thing. Could be a gap year for those going to college of a year of job training for those not going

to college. (<https://thedailyrecord.com/2023/02/03/house-introduces-service-year-bill-one-of-moores-priorities/>)

RE: Other Items

- Homeless Services for Pregnant First Time Mothers (with or without partner) – Ms. Gold and Ms. Sushinsky shared about their project of acquiring a home for women who are pregnant for first time, who now stay in women’s shelter, go to hospital to have baby and then are not sure where they will go home to after baby is born. This initiative will be run by Stepping Stones. The house, owned by the County and managed by HOC, is in Silver Spring. This will be a three-phase program. Will come to shelter at beginning of 2nd trimester, for specialized programming and prenatal care, parenting education. Will stay until it is mother has appropriate housing and it is in her best interested to leave. Next step is staffing and fundraising, both of which are in process. Another goal is maternity partnerships, possibly through Primary Care Coalition.
 - Ms. Schwartz shared that Early Headstart prioritizes pregnant homeless women.
 - A comment was made that housing is healthcare – low birth weight, pre-term birth, higher risk of mortality and health of baby and mother are linked to housing.
 - ACTION ITEM: Ms. Granger will share with Ms. Gold, the contact at Sheppard Pratt for this program.
- Salute to NonProfits: Members want a Human Services “Fair/Salute” at Farmers’ Market. ACTION ITEM: Ms. Granger will draft a list of providers for next meeting.

RE: Agenda items for next meeting, February 14, 2023, Virtual

- Usual report items: Community Services, Caregivers, HSAC goals, testimony update
- Budget updates
- Testimony
- Future meetings
- Federal Legislation
- Roundtable presentations
- Volunteer website
- Gabriel Network

RE: Adjourn

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn; unanimous vote to adjourn at 8:30pm