

**HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
January 8, 2019
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Rockville City Hall**

Members Present:

Ciriaco Gonzales, At-large Member, Chair	Jen Lafferty, At-large Member
Akena Allen, At-large Member	Deborah Moore, Consumer Member
Stacey Erd, At-large Member	Nancy Sushinsky, Caregiver Member
Laurie Gira, Caregiver Member	Leon Suskin, At-large Member

Members Absent:

Lynn Arndt, Caregiver Member	Mark Pascu, At-large Member
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Staff Present:

Councilmember Beryl Feinberg
Carlos Aparicio, Community Service Manager
Sarah Dickinson, Community Services Program Analyst

Re: Call Meeting to Order

Ciriaco Gonzales, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Re: Community Forum

No discussion.

Re: New Member Introduction

Stacey Erd, At-large member and Executive Director of Stepping Stones Shelter, introduced herself as a new member of the commission.

**Re: Presentation: Nili Soni, Continuum of Care Coordinator,
Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services**
Nili Soni, Continuum of Care Coordinator and member of the Interagency Commission on Homelessness (ICH), and Ilana Branda, Deputy Chief of Services to End and Prevent Homelessness, of the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) were in attendance to provide the commission with information about the county's homeless services.

The county has adopted the federal ICH benchmarks of making homelessness rare, brief, and one-time. An annual point-in-time count of homeless individuals in Montgomery County is performed annually; this year it will take place on January 23, and volunteers are needed. The point-in-time counts have found a 14% reduction in the number of homeless individuals from 2016 to 2018; a 22% decrease in the average length of homelessness from 2016 (144 days) to 2018 (113 days); and a 23% rate of return to homelessness in 2016 versus 16% in 2018.

The county participated in the "Built for Zero" campaign to end veteran's homelessness, which it achieved in December 2015, housing 137 veterans to date. The "Inside Not Outside" initiative to

end chronic homelessness began in 2016, and outreach almost tripled in 2017 to unsheltered individuals along with increased hospital outreach and an increase of 200 units of permanent supportive housing (PSH). DHHS has also partnered with the Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) to move eligible clients from PSH to vouchers for independent housing with quarterly case management. Through Inside Not Outside, 398 individuals have been housed with 18 remaining on the list of those identified as chronically homelessness.

DHHS's efforts to prevent homelessness include the Energy Assistance Program, which provides ongoing utility subsidies; emergency financial assistance; and eligibility assessment for other services. Clients are rapidly connected to housing via emergency shelters, homeless street outreach, and hospital outreach; medical respite is also planned. Housing locators work to build relationships with landlords and find housing. Rapid Rehousing can pay as much as the full rent temporarily, and the ongoing Rental Assistance Program provides up to \$200 per month to assist with housing costs. PSH includes a housing subsidy plus case management, and clients with income pay 30% in service fees. Through Healthcare for the Homeless, a nurse on staff helps with coordination of and transportation to medical appointments. The total homelessness prevention budget is approximately \$23 million, of which about 76% comes from Montgomery County.

Future goals include ending chronic homelessness, ending family and youth homelessness, and preventing people from reentering homelessness. Nili offered to email her presentation to Carlos Aparicio, Community Services Manager, for distribution to commission members.

Re: Approve December 11, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Nancy Sushinsky, caregiver representative, moved that the minutes be approved as drafted, and Debbie Moore, consumer representative, seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Re: Community Services Division Report

Carlos Aparicio, Community Service Manager, informed the commission that Lynn Arndt, caregiver representative, will no longer be able to serve on the commission. Stacey Erd, at-large member, can be appointed to the position vacated by Lynn, at which point there will be two vacancies: one consumer and one at-large. Carlos provided the following updates regarding the Community Services Division:

- The *Holiday Drive* has concluded, and the City served 599 households in December. Over 1,800 toys and books were provided to young children. For next year, staff are discussing the possibility of expanding services for the December holidays, including possibly including food distribution to adult/senior-only households and increasing the books distributed to teens. Major donors will be acknowledged at the Mayor and Council meeting on January 28.
- The *caregiver grant review panel* will convene on Tuesday, January 29.
- *Counseling* includes linking clients to the available mental health services for which they are eligible.

Re: FY 2020 City of Rockville Budget Process

Carlos Aparicio, Community Services Manager, reported that the City Manager is engaged in meetings with the city's departments for an in-depth review of budgets.

Re: Caregiver Task Force Report

Carlos Aparicio, Community Services Manager, informed the commission that a third member of the task force needed to resign, and the chairperson is awaiting permission from his employer to take part in 2019, which is delayed due to the furlough. Task force members are working on a structure and outline of the report to be submitted to the Mayor and Council in May.

Re: Montgomery Cares Advocacy

Laurie Gira, caregiver representative and Grants Manager for Community Ministries of Rockville, sent members a revised draft version of the commission's letter advocating regarding Montgomery Cares clinic eligibility. Ciriaco Gonzales, at-large member, stated that he already signed the previous letter for submittal to the Mayor and Council. Debbie Moore, consumer member, moved that the commission authorize Ciriaco to send amended letter to the Mayor and Council. Nancy Sushinsky seconded the motion. Lynn Arndt, Joyce Lipman, and Mark Pascu will be removed from the letter. Debbie's full first name will be spelled out. Laurie will send the revised letter to Ciriaco, who will sign and email it to the Mayor and Council and Sara Taylor Ferrell, City Clerk/Director of Council Operations, and CC Carlos and Rob DiSpirito, City Manager, along with the two accompanying scanned letters from the Health Leadership Council.

Re: Montgomery County Grants

Carlos Aparicio, Community Services Manager, reminded the commission that staff had sent out the Montgomery County Office of Legislative Oversight report on the Montgomery County Council grants, as many of the identified issues are also applicable to Rockville's process. Topics include combining the County Council's and County Executive's grants and implementing different criteria for large and small grantees. Per the report, the mid-year report has been eliminated from the process and a multi-year process proposed as a consideration. Members discussed the limitations of nonprofits' capacity to track and analyze data to funders' specifications. Carlos recommended that deliberations be monitored and that a commission member provide updates to the HSAC.

Re: Old Business

- **Human Services Advocacy Strategy:** Carlos Aparicio, Community Services Manager, asked that commission members provide him with their personal areas of interest in human services.

Re: Other Items

Councilmember Beryl Feinberg informed the commission that as of Councilmember Julie Palakovich-Carr's resignation in January, there is a vacancy on Rockville's council. The local board of elections will publicize the process for appointment to fill the vacancy until this fall's election.

Councilmember Feinberg stated that the Mayor and Council passed a law banning polystyrene (Styrofoam) in December 2017, with a year for implementation. The law did not take into consideration those with physical or mental disabilities who require plastic straws, and Beryl introduced an amendment to consider that accommodation. The implementation has been extended to July 1, 2019 and referred to the Environment Commission and to the HSAC for comment. Beryl stated that this represents an advocacy opportunity for the commission.

Re: Plan Agenda for February 12, 2019 Meeting

- Polystyrene legislation
- FY 2020 City of Rockville budget
- Caregiver site visits
- Human services advocacy strategy
- Montgomery Cares advocacy update
- Caregiver task force update

Re: Adjourn

Leon Suskin, at-large member, moved that the meeting be adjourned, and Akena Allen, at-large member, seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 p.m.