

**HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES DRAFT**

July 13, 2021

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Virtual Meeting via Cisco Webex

Members Present:

Wanneh Dixon, At-Large Member and Chair
Stacey Gold, Caregiver Member
Deborah Moore, Consumer Member

Anne Wallerstedt, At-large Member
Leon Suskin, At-large Member
Nancy Sushinsky, Caregiver Member

Members Absent:

Amanda Schwartz, At-Large Member
Wesley Hicken, At-large Member
Kelly El'Amin, Consumer Member

Mayor and Council Liaison Present: Councilmember Mark Pierzchala

Staff Present: Frederika (Rika) Granger, Community Service Manager

Allison (Ali) Hoy, Grants and Program Analyst

Niambi Powell, Program Coordinator, Department of Housing and Community
Development

RE: Call Meeting to Order

Wanneh Dixon, Chair and At-Large Member, called the meeting to order at 6:45pm

RE: Community Forum

Lauren Lehman, nominated to be on HSAC, was a guest at this meeting and remained for whole meeting. Nothing else raised from community.

RE: Approval of Minutes

- The minutes from April 13th were approved unanimously with a motion from Deborah Moore, Consumer member, and seconded by Stacey Gold, Caregiver member, with one edit—Ms. Sushinsky reported in April 13th meeting that Rainbow Shelter had stayed open until the beginning of February (not when the expanded Women's Shelter at Coffield Community Center opened). This correction has been made.
- The minutes from the May 11th meeting were approved unanimously with a motion from Nancy Sushinsky, Caregiver member, and seconded by Ms. Moore.
- There were no minutes for the June 8th meeting. There is a note on file that there was no meeting because there was not a quorum.

RE: Community Services Division Report

Frederika Granger, Community Services Manager, provided the following updates regarding the Community Services Division:

- Community Services said goodbye to longtime administrative assistant, Lourdes, Diehl. We have a temp staff helping until we hire a replacement. Elisa Taylor, temp staff, is skilled in working with accounts payable and receivable. She has worked for the City for many years and is back from retirement!
- We ended FY21 with good outputs and outcomes considering the presence of the pandemic and the onboarding of several new staff. Starting in the fall, we will begin using Greenspace, software to collect outcomes for SCYS and LTL, so that the County and the City may use the data to support funding for the programs.
- We are doing a modified summer schedule for Linkages and SCYS because students are in summer school. And, we are reaching out to all Rockville schools in addition to our target schools.
- We have chosen an electronic record keeping system, VistaShare, which allows for client records and for Bank on Rockville programming. We hope to purchase it through the American Rescue Plan if not then in FY23.
- We have submitted wish lists for the ARP funds, which the City finance department is managing. If we receive funding, we will purchase VistaShare and will provide a wide range of mental health education workshops and groups for parents and students. This will help parents and students with the effects of the pandemic on them and with returning to school in person.
- We are preparing the RFP for an FY23 Community Services Needs Assessment.
- We are addressing again the Caregiver Funding Task Force recommendations with the possibility of implementing more in FY23.
- FY22 Caregiver Grantees have started FY22 services. We welcome two new grantees, So What Else and NAMI.
- We continue to promote the HRC/HSAC Survey through vaccine clinics, food distribution and the City's media outlets.
- Finally, Community Services is putting together a panel of experts and several resource tables as part of Rockville Goes Purple, an opioid addiction and recovery awareness initiative to be held in September, Recovery Awareness Month. The panel will be aired on Rockville 11 throughout the month, premiered on September 1st.
- There was no increase in applications for REAP funding.

Question was asked about why no applications for REAP funding. The Coordinator of this program, Niambi Powell, was present at this meeting, so she answered the question. The Rockville residents must apply to County first for emergency assistance and those applications are backlogged. It was clarified that the Emergency Order in Maryland to avert eviction, that ended July 1 and was extended to July 31st, has a 45-day grace period. As well the CDC emergency order is still in effect until July 31st. Tenants who use the CDC emergency order due to Covid-19 effects on financial status, have a unique timeline for eviction proceedings. Landlords cannot contact Sherriff to begin eviction until after emergency order is lifted. Landlords may help tenants apply for rent relief and may also apply on their behalf. The City and the County have done outreach to landlords to keep them informed of tenant rights with eviction and emergency orders.

RE: FY 22 City Budget

Ms. Granger shared that the City budget is the same as last year for Community Services. Councilmember Piezchala shared that there is Federal funding through American Rescue Plan that will be addressed in Mayor and Council meetings after the August recess.

RE: Bank on Rockville/IDA Program proposal follow-up

Ms. Niambi Powell, Program Coordinator, updated HSAC members about this program as many members are new. She then shared the status. The program progress was interrupted by the pandemic. Ms. Powell reported that she hopes to receive American Rescue Plan (ARP) and/or foundation grants to support the program. The goal of the program is to help low-moderated income families with financial capacity building—to avert crises and to sustain self-sufficiency, through banking and banking education. The banks have very low costs for banking. The program is for adults and their children to open savings accounts. The savings can be used for down payment on a house, income support, education, rent. The City of Gaithersburg and the City of Takoma Park have such programs and have seen great success. This type of program is in 42 states in the country. Such individual development accounts have gained momentum as a result of the pandemic. Research backs up this program: youth who save \$500 in an account are much more likely to go to college and graduate with no debt. There are 1-10 hours of education to go with opening and maintaining savings accounts. The education uses real life examples. Monies may be matched if there is grant funding for the program.

Ms. Powell shared that this program is aligned with ARP funds. As well, the City may partner with the Montgomery County Coalition for Advancement of Financial Education (MCCAFE) to apply for private foundation dollars. Awards for such are in October, which is the same time ARP funding could be available.

HSAC members expressed that they would like to help in anyway that they can. Ms. Powell shared that residents may donate to REAP for this program as it would be considered a special effort related to the mission of REAP. It was raised that minority owned banks should be approached as clients may be more comfortable banking with someone with whom they can relate best. HSAC member expressed interest in attending MCCAFE events.

ACTION ITEM: Ms. Granger will keep HSAC up to date on the progress of this program
Ms. Granger will share MCCAFE event information with HSAC.

RE: HRC Community Survey Partnership Update

Wanneh Dixon, Chair and At-Large member, shared that the Survey of the Wellbeing and Needs of the Rockville Community has been out since June 1st and will be out into the fall. She encouraged members to share the link, which Ms. Granger will send out again. Ms. Dixon and Ms. Granger shared that survey flier in six languages has been distributed electronically and in person to many places, including City Juneteenth events at which they were both present, and food distribution sites, community centers, etc. Ms. Dixon further shared that this survey will inform the Needs Assessment that will be done in FY23 for which this Commission has provided a scope.

ACTION ITEM: Ms. Granger will send the link to survey and the flier to members so that members may share with neighbors.

RE: Caregiver Grants Update (FY22)

Ms. Granger and Ms. Ali Hoy, Staff Program and Grants Analyst, shared that the grantees have started FY22 services, and that there are two new grantees, So What Else and NAMI, with whom they met to answer any questions. The members shared that they would like a list of grantees. As well the grantees might use the grants software application this year to do quarterly reporting. Ms. Granger shared that Community Services staff will begin to address the Caregiver Funding Task Force recommendations again and bring it to the HSAC again.

ACTION ITEM: Ms. Granger will send a list of grantees to HSAC members.
Ms. Granger will share about Caregiver Funding Taskforce Recommendations in the fall, as many HSAC members are new.

RE: Scope of Needs Assessment for FY23 RFP Timeline

Ms. Granger shared an outline of needs provided by Ms. Amanda Schwartz, At-Large member, as well as a memo proposing the scope and deliverables, as the beginnings of an RFP. Members expressed the need for additional deliverables: a variety/diversity of voices, i.e. focus groups that reflect the diversity of the City; what will the needs look like in ten years, i.e. linguistically, economically, etc. Councilmember Pierzchala recommended that the request for funding for needs assessment be in the City Manager's proposal and that it state clearly the what, why, cost and benefit. The survey can inform the request.

ACTION ITEM: Ms. Granger will share a draft of the RFP at next meeting in September.
May share it beforehand on a google drive so that members may comment.

RE: HSAC FY21 Accomplishments and FY22 Goals Presentation to Mayor and Council

Ms. Dixon shared that she and Ms. Granger received an email from City Clerk to choose a Mayor and Council Meeting date at which the HSAC will present about the above. Ms. Granger had taken from FY21 agendas, the year's work and shared with Ms. Dixon who shared with the members. Ms. Dixon will share it via email with members so that accomplishments and goals may be presented, possibly in October, at Mayor and Council meeting, and on website as an annual report. The accomplishments include

- Healthcare Position Paper generated by M&C as HSAC had written a letter to M&C about concern for healthcare for Rockville residents
- Discussions racial justice and police relations and later on equity and social justice to include review of City Community Services documentation, i.e. resolutions, grant application.
- Discussion on findings of Board and Commissions Taskforce
- Elected new Chair
- Welcomed new City Department of Housing and Community Development, a new Community Services Manager and four additional Community Services staff.
- Commission training needs
- Update on Rockville Climate Action Plan
- Testimony to M&C for Needs Assessment and for Eat Fresh Program

- AND, the Survey of the Wellbeing and Needs of Rockville Community, joint effort with HRC.

ACTION ITEM: Ms. Dixon will share this with members and members will make comments etc. on accomplishments and goals via email before next meeting in September.

RE: Updating Website and Publications to include what HSAC has accomplished

Ms. Granger shared that this is easily done and will be done once the members have solidified a list of accomplishments and goals. It was stated by Ms. Dixon that this will inform the City residents including those interested in serving on the Commission. Ms. Dixon and others shared that the lack of information on what the Commission has done is one thing that was raised by the review of the Commission last year

ACTION ITEMS: Ms. Granger will put on the website the Commissions accomplishments and goals in the format of the Commissions choice, i.e. annual report, bullet points, etc.

RE: Federal Legislative Advocacy

Ms. Anne Wallerstedt, new At-Large member, shared that she would bring State legislation to the attention of the Commission as she focuses on that in her work. She also shared that a judge ruled against the Governor’s request to end COVID-19 unemployment benefits add on early. Ms. Granger shared that a former member, Laura Kaplan-Weisman, had shared with her via email that the Medicare for All legislation at the County Council that the HSAC supported is likely to be endorsed by the County Council next week when they vote and that she would let the Commission know.

ACTION ITEM: Ms. Granger shared the County press release about this.

RE: Other Items

Councilmember Pierzchala shared that the City’s 2040 Master Plan is almost done.:

RE: Plan Agenda for September 14, 2021 Meeting, in person

The members would like a larger room. Ms. Granger will look at Senior Center. There is to be video capability. Ms. Moore will attend via phone.

- Community Forum
- Community Services Report
- City Budget Update
- Annual Report – Accomplishments and Goals
- Update on Bank on Rockville
- Community Survey Update
- RFP for Needs Assessment continued discussion

RE: Adjourn

Ms. Moore motioned to adjourn. Ms. Gold seconded. All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM.