

MINUTES

Housing and Human Services Advisory Board
Tuesday February 18, 2010 6:30-8:30pm
110 N Fourth Avenue
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
1st Floor Conference Room

Members Present: S. Mithani, N. Staebler, B. Eichmuller, A. Erickson, D. Blanchard, S. Pontoni, A. Ramirez, S. Smith, S. Rapundalo

Members Absent: K. Martin, R. Konkkel, R. Kerson

Staff Present: Andrea Plevak, Mary Jo Callan

Guests: None.

I. Convene Meeting:

N. Staebler convened the meeting at 6:45pm.

II. Public Comment:

Lily Au of “Camp Take Notice” addressed the Board regarding homeless camps in Washtenaw County. She stated that Michigan State Police are directing their campers to move away from all freeway right-of-ways and that the current camp location was “busted” again last night. She said that homeless people have to be somewhere even if the police move them away from the camps. She went on to say that homeless people often have mental illnesses and don’t understand. Also, camping in winter on public land is difficult—there are no bathrooms at the camp site and campers have to “hold it” over night in many cases. Ms. Au continued to say that the living situations in the camp can be very bad—some campers have cancer and other health issues. She described the local efforts to address homelessness in Washtenaw County were not in line with the “Housing First” model. She pointed out that homeless people must be clean and sober to get into emergency shelter, then go to transitional housing and then into permanent housing—she said this doesn’t work for people. Ms. Au encouraged people to research housing first models in Denver and Philadelphia. She stated that it is a waste of police force to move people away from homeless camps. Homeless people are not “bums;” these people are waiting for apartments; some are running away from abuse; some have had homelessness in their family; some are the working poor with not enough money to get housing; and mental illness is common. She pleaded that the community needs to help this population. Ms. Au joked that she wants to be arrested to raise public awareness and summed up her comments by saying that “People need housing.”

III. Approval of Agenda:

S. Mithani motioned to approve the agenda; S. Pontoni seconded. Motion approved (S. Mithani, N. Staebler, B. Eichmuller, A. Erickson, D. Blanchard, S. Pontoni, A. Ramirez; 7 Aye, 0 Nay).

IV. Approval of Minutes:

S. Pontoni motioned to approve minutes from 1-12-10; B. Eichmuller seconded. Motion approved (S. Mithani, N. Staebler, B. Eichmuller, A. Erickson, D. Blanchard, S. Pontoni, A. Ramirez; 7 Aye, 0 Nay).

V. Discussion Issues

A. City Budget and Human Services Recommendations—(Including CBDO update) **(ACTION)**

- i. M. Callan reviewed background of City Budget Process and previous actions and discussions by the Board. In January, City Council requested recommendations regarding the general fund allocation for housing and human services from staff for meetings that occurred between the January and February HHSAB meetings. The recommendations and research that went to Council was provided to the HHSAB via e-mail in early February. M. Callan also reviewed additional information that went to Council in response to members' questions from the February 8th Council Working Session; this was also included in the HHSAB packet for tonight's meeting.
- ii. Members discussed research provided to Council.
 1. Specific questions included:
 - a. What is the student contribution to the poverty rate?
 - b. What are the potential uses of AAHTF?
 - c. What is the number of people that would be affected by cutting non-basic needs funding?
- iii. M. Callan reviewed current AAHTF balance, FY2011 encumbrances, and potential expenditures that would deplete the remaining fund balance.
- iv. Members discussed recommendations provided to Council.
 1. Specific concerns included:
 - a. Reduction should not occur in real dollars when the need is already increasing in relation to existing funds.
 - b. At worst, any reduction in Housing/Human Services should not be a reduction greater than the overall reduction in City general fund.
 - c. If the City needs to cut funding to Housing & Human Services, it should focus cuts on non-basic needs agencies.
 - d. HHSAB council representatives indicated that specific options would be more useful to Council than general principals to consider.
 - e. Members discussed whether it is useful to continue to fund agencies that are funded at \$10K and below.
 - f. Members discussed including mandates of collaboration or consolidation in order to receive housing & human services funding.
 - g. Members discussed the importance of including information about economic development/leverage.
 2. Members described an "Option 7" that would incorporate some of the staff recommendations to Council. "Option 7" would include cutting the Human Services funding no more than the percentage that the overall City General Fund is cut. This cut would currently reflect a reduction of

\$130,000 in human services funding. Members also agreed that for FY2011, any cuts to the human services funding should be replaced with Ann Arbor Housing Trust Funds.

- v. **S. Mithani moved to support sending a memo and resolution to City Council recommending that the City General Funding currently committed to human services be cut no more than the percentage of reduction to the overall City General Fund and that, for FY 2011, any reductions to human services funding as a result be replenished by Ann Arbor Housing Trust Funds. B. Eichmuller seconded. Motion approved (S. Mithani, N. Staebler, B. Eichmuller, A. Erickson, D. Blanchard, S. Pontoni, A. Ramirez; 7 Aye, 0 Nay).**

B. AAHTF Funding Recommendations (**ACTION**)

- i. A. Plevek & M. Callan reviewed revenue & expenditure history of the Ann Arbor Housing Trust Fund (AAHTF). Funding for Foreclosure Prevention was reviewed in detail.
- ii. Members briefly discussed implications of funding changes and potential revenue in the next year.
- iii. Members asked staff to bring back information about needs and other funding opportunities.
- iv. Action tabled until next meeting.

C. Bylaws Review & Membership (Discussion)

- i. No new updates.
- ii. Staff reminded Board that many members' terms are ending in June 2010.
- iii. Members discussed:
 - 1. Does the board need to be this large?
 - 2. What type of expertise is missing?
- iv. Members agreed to discuss this item further at next meeting.

D. WAHC/Avalon Update

- i. M. Callan provided an update on the Avalon/WAHC merger. Avalon is currently operating WAHC properties and there is still a WAHC Board. Avalon will soon acquire 701 Miller with NSP funds. They are currently managing Parkhurst (on Pauline), but there are significant operating and structural problems there. Staff is looking into ways to get some re-investment into this property. The Gateway property in Ypsilanti Township (45 units) is also not structurally sound and staff is unsure if it can be salvaged. However, the County invested in this property with HOME dollars, so the County is at risk of paying the investment back to HUD if it can't be saved.
- ii. Members discussed:
 - 1. Specific questions included:
 - a. What is the vacancy rate of Parkhurst?
 - b. What would the cost be to re-locate residents at Gateway?
- iii. Staff will continue to update the Board on the progress of this consolidation.

E. Y-Replacement Units/100 Units

- i. Staff reported no update from last month.

- ii. S. Smith informed the Board that she has been having discussions with the Mayor about the former Y-units and some potential options, but said that it was too soon to discuss details publicly. She assured that Board, however, that the issue was still being discussed and worked on by the City.

VI. Public Comment
None

VII. Adjournment
B. Eichmuller moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:20pm; D. Blanchard seconded. Motion approved (S. Mithani, N. Staebler, B. Eichmuller, A. Erickson, D. Blanchard, S. Pontoni, A. Ramirez; 7 Aye, 0 Nay).