



PRINCETON HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

Monthly Meeting Minutes

April 21, 2021 by Zoom

Monument Hall, East Meeting Room, Princeton, NJ 08540

Board Members – Present

Moriah Akrong
Ericka Deglau
Khristina Gonzalez
John Heilner
Bryan Hill
Monique Jones
Loydes Nieves, Alt.

Veronica Olivares–Weber, Chair
Leticia Fraga, Council Liaison

Board Members Absent

Jorge Narvaez, Alt.
Larry Spruill, Vice Chair
Melissa Urias, Dir., Ex-officio

Staff Present

TK Oluwafemi, Outreach
Coordinator

Minutes Submitted by:

Julie Moy, Board Secretary

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Princeton Human Services Commission was called to order by Chair Veronica Olivares–Weber at 6:04 pm. She recited the announcement: *In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act: “In compliance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975, adequate notice of this meeting has been provided as required by the Open Public Meetings Act. Notice was provided of the date, time and location of this regular meeting by posting a copy with the Clerk’s Office and by emailing copies to the Princeton Packet and the Town Topics.”* Chair Olivares–Weber recited the Land of Acknowledgement for Indigenous People.

Public Comments: none

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The motion to approve the regular meeting minutes dated *March 17, 2021* was first moved by Ms. Nieves, seconded by Mr. Heilner, all in favor by voice vote.

Guest Presentation

Jeff Vegas, President and CEO, Princeton Area Community Foundation

Mr. Vegas presented what services and activities of the Princeton Area Community Foundation (PACF) are provided to the community, their goals and mission and how they are impacting the community. He described how they fundraise for their programs. Chair Olivares–Weber asked for advice to raise funds for Human Services since we are not 501 3(c). Councilwoman Fraga clarified how Human Services can raise funds and are looking for other methods to increase funding sources. Mr. Vegas provided a few ideas that may help. Councilwoman Fraga explained community partnerships are already in place. Mr. Vegas is willing to work with this Commission to look at various methods to fund raise. Ad hoc committee has already been formed; Dr. Deglau, Ms. Jones and Ms. Gonzalez. Ms. Juega praised the great work PACF has done during this crisis and its quickness to assist the community. Ms. Jones is interested in how the school re–opening will impact students; Mr. Vegas explained the study performed prior to their round three of COVID funding, *Community Impact Grant*.

Director’s Report – Melissa Urias

TK Oluwafemi, Community Outreach Coordinator, provided the Director’s Report in Ms. Urias’ place.

Summer Youth Program

Ms. Oluwafemi reported that the Summer Youth Coordinator application period closed April 11, 2021. Applications for SYEP applicants will close April 30. Funding is available for 37 student participants.

Ms. Oluwafemi reported that the food calendar has been added to the Human Services website.

Ms. Oluwafemi reported that the Police Dept. announced that the Wheels Rodeo will not be held due to the pandemic.

Ms. Oluwafemi reported that Daniela Molina, MSW Intern's internship ends April 23.

Ms. Oluwafemi reported that we have 6 cases in the local general assistance program; one closed due to approval for permanent disability. COVID waivers are still in place.

Ms. Oluwafemi reported on her activities as Outreach Coordinator; working with homeless. Mercer County Dept. of Human Services, HUD Exchange has invited us to become a member of the Continuum Care Board. Partnership will be finalized when Ms. Urias returns. Ms. Oluwafemi explained how they have assisted her in accessing information and assistance.

Local Assistance Board (LAB)

Mr. Heilner opened the floor to LAB. He did not have anything new to report.

Mr. Heilner closed the floor to LAB.

Council Updates, Leticia Fraga

Councilwoman Fraga reported that a new administrator, Bernard Hvozdovic, Esq. will begin in May.

Councilwoman Fraga reported on the development and the process of the proposal to build a community center in Princeton; this is part of the Master Plan. They are currently working on the draft resolution to develop a task force to be presented to the Council. There were discussions on the potential locations of the center.

Councilwoman Fraga reported that the Capital Health facility held a soft opening. She reported on the services offered: Healthy Child Well Baby Clinic and family care. Dr. Deglau asked if behavioral health services will be provided; Councilwoman Fraga will inquire.

Subcommittee Reports

Food Subcommittee, Larry Spruill

Chair Olivares-Weber did not receive a report from Mr. Spruill. She reported the Food Insecurity Task Force met this month. Food flyer needs to be updated. Ms. Oluwafemi volunteered with Blair Miller at the Mr. Rogers' Neighbors Kindness Project; she will continue working with them weekly in her role as the Community Outreach Coordinator.

Housing, Veronica Olivares-Weber

Chair Olivares-Weber reported they met with Connie Mercer, CEO of Home Front. There was discussion on the increase of homeless in Princeton.

Immigration, John Heilner

Mr. Heilner reported that the Mercer County Community ID card flyer has been updated and delivered to the Library. The ID will be issued once a week at the Library with LALDEF. To date, approximately 13,000 Community ID card has been issued.

Mr. Heilner reported that he and Ms. Urias are working on the report of how Princeton has welcomed our immigrants. This was requested by Nicholas Montalto, Co-Founder & Coordinator of the NJ

Business Immigration Coalition; he is working on a grant from the New American Economy. The report will be presented at the Mercer Area Chamber of Commerce in July.

Mr. Heilner reported that Mr. Narvaez has volunteered to continue working with the St. Paul community.

Mr. Heilner reported that a *Know Your Rights* flyer will be created.

Maria Juega asked about the initiative to adopt the resolution in favor of the Resolution Endorsing the Enactment of Immigration Reform through the “U.S. Citizenship Act”. Councilwoman Fraga drafted a resolution and sent to the Commission to review and comment. She has a place holder on the next Council meeting’s agenda; if this Commission votes to support, it will be heard at the Council meeting.

Welcome America, Moriah Akrong

Ms. Akrong was not available to report. However she has asked Chair Olivares–Weber if there is a budget for activities; Councilwoman Fraga responded that Human Services Department has funds.

Outreach Needs Assessment, Erika Deglau

Dr. Deglau reported on the subcommittee’s activities; Daniela Molina, MSW Intern was a great help working with the subcommittee. The committee has been meeting; they are developing a report based on their listening sessions. Dr. Deglau reported that the Princeton University Survey Research Center assisted them in fine tuning and developing a survey. She explained the details of this survey. Councilwoman Fraga would like to piggyback on their work to figure out the needs for the community center; she is interested in joining their meetings and asked what the survey questions are. Ms. Gonzalez commented on services offered by the service providers; focus for the subcommittee was how they can get information out for the existing services into the community.

Discussions

Chair Olivares–Weber commented that we are seeing the changes the community is experiencing and how our subcommittees are meeting those needs. Ms. Gonzalez commented that *Youth Matters Subcommittee* is duplicating the efforts of the Youth Advisory Committee. Councilwoman Fraga provided suggestions on how we can partner with YAC and their activities.

The motion to add a student liaison from the Youth Advisory Committee to the Human Services Commission was first moved by Dr. Deglau seconded by Mr. Heilner, all in favor by voice vote.

Emergency Fund Ad Hoc Committee

Chair Olivares–Weber nothing to report. They will work with Jeff Vegas and the Princeton Area Community Foundation to look for ways to fund raise.

Homeless Ad Hoc Committee

This committee would focus on continuing to meet with partners regarding the homeless situation. Ms. Urias, Councilwoman Fraga and Chair Olivares–Weber met with Katherine Cassidy from the county. Prior to starting this committee, Ms. Cassidy recommended reaching out to the county and invite them to speak before this Commission to see what the county has to offer. There were discussions on the need/feasibility of forming a homeless ad hoc committee. Ms. Oluwafemi expressed her passion with working and advocating for the homeless. Chair Olivares–Weber will contact Commission members to see if they would be interested in continuing with their current subcommittee or work in other areas. Councilwoman Fraga reminded everyone, the subcommittees can have more than 4 members



participating; the meeting would have to be public noticed. Ms. Nieves is willing to be a part of the Housing subcommittee.

Resolution

Immigration Reform Act to Administration's US Citizen's Act

The motion to approve the resolution to endorse Resolution Endorsing the Enactment of Immigration Reform through the "U.S. Citizenship Act". It was first made by Mr. Heilner seconded by Dr. Deglau, all in favor by voice vote.

As previously mentioned, Councilwoman Fraga has a place holder at the next Council meeting for the resolution adoption.

Adjournment

The motion to adjourn at 7:50 pm was first made by Dr. Deglau seconded by Ms. Akrong, all in favor by voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Julie Moy

Recording Secretary