



PRINCETON HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes

July 20, 2022

Zoom Meeting * Princeton, NJ 08540

Board Members – Present

Ericka Deglau, Vice
Chair
John Heilner
Larry Spruill
Leticia Fraga, Council Liaison
Lina Genovesi, Alt.
Rebecca Balaguer
Veronica Olivares–Weber, Chair

Board Members Absent

Khristina Gonzalez
Loydes Nieves, Alt.
Ming Kuang

Guest Speaker

Maria Juega

Staff – Present

Soorya Baliga, Chair of Youth
Advisory Committee

Call to Order:

The Regular Meeting of the Princeton Human Services Commission was called to order by Chair Olivares–Weber at 6:06 pm. Mr. Larry Spruill recited the announcement: *“We gather today on the land of the Lenni Lenape. As members of the Princeton Human Services Commission, we aspire to show appreciation, respect, and concern for all people and our environment. We honor the Lenape and other Indigenous caretakers of these lands and waters, the elders who lived here before, the Indigenous today, and the generations to come.”* Roll Call was completed.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: June 15, 2022

Chair Olivares–Weber addressed the minutes from the June 15, 2022 Princeton Human Services Commission (PHSC) Regular Meeting. After review, no proposed changes were made. Vice-Chair Ericka Deglau motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. John Heilner. All were in favor. Chair Olivares–Weber approved the minutes without opposition.

Public Comments:

Maria Juega updated the PHSC that at a recent meeting she attended regarding the 2022-2023 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, it was shared that the entire funding will be going to the Broadband Project, which was first approved in 2020. It had thousands of dollars allocated to it then, but more funding was needed, so the entire \$230k is earmarked for this project. It is still unclear whether this amount will be sufficient and will address what best practices call for. Internet connection and access to devices and training will be needed to achieve digital integration in the community. Ms. Juega shared that other places, such as the university or library, could provide some of the components that this project will need.

She asked the PHSC if they will have a second look into this, because if this funding is insufficient for the project, and there are other sources of funding for it, and it will be a longer-term project than what was initially estimated, some of these funds perhaps should be reallocated. She reminded the commission of the need to provide emergency funding for Human Services, specifically towards the homeless population.

Chair Olivares–Weber asked who attended the CDBG funding meeting, and whether she presented them with these questions. Ms. Juega shared who attended, and that she did propose the questions, and that they generally agreed with the idea. Vice-Chair Deglau commented on the importance of training and devices for this project, and different providers who could provide the training.

Chair Olivares–Weber added that this is something that PHSC should look into to see if they can help. She will seek more information and will bring it up in discussion during one of the subcommittee meetings. Ms. Juega encouraged a proposal from the board members, to use some of the leftover CDBG funding from 2020-2021.

Director’s Report:

No discussion was held other than Councilwoman Leticia Fraga sharing that the Summer Youth Employment Program is going well, and she will provide Chair Olivares–Weber with the written report on this via email.



Council Updates:

Councilwoman Fraga reported that the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for the vision and dental program, for individuals who do not have insurance and who qualify to participate in this program, to date has received 4 applicants for vision coverage, 3 for dental coverage, and 8 for both vision and dental. The application is available in both English and Spanish, and is available on the Human Services' website, as well as on the Board of Health's website. It is also included in the weekly newsletter, and the outreach coordinators have been working on spreading the word of the availability of this program. The goal is to notify applicants by the end of August of their application status of acceptance. Vice-Chair Deglau mentioned issues with the program for older community members and from Princeton Community Housing, and asked for the flyers to be distributed there. She inquired about the applicant limit for this program.

Councilwoman Fraga shared that COVID-19 vaccination clinics are being held in July. One was held yesterday, July 19, at Monument Hall, and the next is on July 28 at the Princeton Shopping Center, from 6-8pm, for initial and booster doses.

Tomorrow counsel will see about resuming in-person meetings in September. For now, they will test out the equipment for a hybrid option. Boards, Commissions and Committees (BCC's) may likely stay virtual for now.

Subcommittee Reports and Updates:

Immigration

Mr. Heilner updated the board on the issue of bike safety in town and obtaining access to safer parking spaces in the Spring Street garage. He added that the 2 current parking spaces of bike racks have the wrong markings/signage on them, and better use of those spaces can be made, in addition to adding 2 more parking spaces. He added that over 80 bikes have been stolen in town. Councilwoman Fraga discussed the need to encourage people to register their bikes, since the police recover many stolen bikes but are unable to get them back to their owners since they are unregistered. She also added looking into what can be legally requested of the landlords regarding the issue of getting the additional parking spaces. Bicyclists were surveyed recently on whether they would use the Spring Street garage, and whether they would pay monthly to use it, among other questions. The results of the survey are not available yet.

Mr. Heilner then shared that the subcommittee met and discussed creating condensed information for immigrants. Several items on the municipal website need to be updated. He will review the website to see what is relevant or no longer usable and distribute what needs to be updated. The end goal is to produce a 2-sided document to present to immigrants and post to the municipal website, regarding the agencies that were at the recent immigration fair, and what they do and how to contact them, in addition to information on wage theft and a condensed list of Human Services' services. This would be in English and Spanish and could also be distributed and posted throughout town. Vice-Chair Deglau inquired whether Director Rhodalynn Jones will be getting social work students in the Fall, as this is something that could be beneficial for them to work on. Chair Olivares-Weber thanked Mr. Heilner for bringing this to the commission's attention and highlighted the need to have this information updated as soon as possible.

Outreach and Needs Assessment

Vice-Chair Deglau shared her screen and started a Power Point presentation on the subcommittee's follow-up survey done in April and May 2022, with community partners. The survey focused on how things changed since the community needs assessment was done over a year ago. Overall, half of the people who took this survey felt that in the past year, there has been improved outreach and interorganizational coordination and collaboration. In response to how demand and access to services has changed since the survey was done, some shared they felt there is no change, for others access has become less difficult, others had some increase in demand, and others stated there is more difficulty with access for some clients of organization. Heightened levels of demand for services combined with decreased access was reported by organizations which provided housing stability, mental health services, refugee resettlement, and social justice.



Mr. Heilner asked if the increase in need and decrease in access was before the pandemic or in the last year. Vice-Chair Deglau shared that it was in the last year, and that this is the perception of a number of organizations (about 30), and 50 participated in the survey and some of the listening sessions. She highlighted that this is something we must pay attention to.

Chair Olivares–Weber shared that this subcommittee is considering taking one year of planning to have the big social summit. This will be beneficial in general, but this subcommittee needs to work on more details so far and wants to meet with Director Jones to further discuss this event.

Housing Stability & Food Insecurity

No discussion was held as, Mr. Spruill had to leave the meeting early.

Welcoming America

Chair Olivares–Weber shared that she was in discussion with the library, and she will figure out with the staff what we can do. She will also email board members to participate in the planning for this event. Councilwoman Fraga also will be available to discuss, and Chair Olivares–Weber will be in contact with her as well.

Discussion

Chair Olivares–Weber asked the board members if they want to have a meeting in August. Councilwoman Fraga added she may want to consider getting a written report from Ms. Jones for whatever she may need to be updated on, in lieu of having a meeting in August. Vice-Chair Deglau agreed that a report may be beneficial. It was decided that no meeting in August will be held. All were in agreement.

Adjournment

The motion to adjourn at 7:20 p.m. was moved by Vice-Chair Deglau, seconded by Ms. Rebeca Balaguer, and affirmatively carried by all those present.

Respectfully submitted by:

Paula Alexeev
Recording Secretary
Princeton Human Services Commission