Autism Commission

Housing Sub-Committee meeting Minutes

May 10, 2017, 1:00pm – 3:00pm

500 Harrison Avenue

Members present: Dan Burke, Carolyn Kain, Janet George, Nan Leonard, Kevin Barrett, Lea Hill, Victor Hernandez, Karen Mariscal, Joseph Valley, Cathy Boyle, Michelle Brait, Dafna-Krouk Gordon, Linn Torto, and Dianne Lescinskas

Members accessing the meeting remotely: Ayana Gonzalez, Michelle Harris and Lisa Sloane (TAC)

Dan Burke, the Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:05pm and welcomed the members to the meeting of this Sub-Committee. Mr. Burke stated that the meeting was subject to the Open Meeting Law and that the Sub-Committee members present would need to vote to approve the remote participation of some members because of their geographic location, whenever any members were utilizing video and/or tele-conferencing. Remote access was approved unanimously. Minutes from last meeting in March were reviewed and approved unanimously.

**Review of draft survey information from TAC**

Lisa Sloane from TAC sent out draft documents for this sub-committee to review and discuss. TAC will conduct a survey to identify supportive housing units for ASD by using two different surveys and will also conduct family and consumer focus groups.

1. Provider Survey (will be done over the phone) and there is a list of 19 potential providers.
2. Service Coordinator Survey (survey monkey – 4 questions)
3. Letter from Carolyn to the agencies
4. List of 19 potential agencies to be contacted

Lisa said she would send the service coordinator survey (once approved by this sub-committee) to Victor Hernandez from DDS to distribute to the appropriate groups.

Ms. Gonzalez commented to the sub-committee that this group, as well as the commission, is underrepresented by people of color and asked if we could collectively work towards being more inclusive.

**Provider Survey comment/questions**

* Question 1(i) – concerns over the language on DDS funded group homes – clarify the wording
* Question 7 – units and beds could mean different things – the question should be broken into 2 parts separating units and beds. (this will be changed and will do the same for Question 8 and 9)
* What is the definition of a DDS funded home
* Question 5 – some may not know how to answer the rent question since the number changes frequently (that language will be changed and will ask if it is below market and if so, how is it subsidized)
* Question 12 – it was asked if this should be changed to Question 1 because if it is answered with a NO response they may not have to continue with the survey (this will be changed)
* Should there be a list of in-home supports to go along with Question 12 – this could be a good discussion and could be put in as a recommendation as part of the report
* The provider questions will be done by phone and they can be flexible with descriptions and guiding through the questions
* TAC will start by making 2-3 calls for the survey and then reassess and revamp the questions if needed

**Comments/Additions to Provider List**

* The provider list was created by TAC and they found the providers through looking at reports, the Commission website and other websites, sub-committee members, google and their own research
* Additional providers were added to the list and include:

1. Shared Living Collaborative
2. CapeAbilities
3. Amego
4. L’Arche
5. Nupath
6. Road to Responsibility
7. NEEDS

* Questions were raised on adding large property developers to this list like Avalon and Beacon – Lisa responded that once we identify the need and supply we could go back and ask if there is an interest in providing supportive housing

**Family and Consumer Focus Groups**

* Outreach to target the appropriate group – Autism Support Centers and area offices

Will send out email blasts

* A flyer will be created and will be sent to members of this sub-committee for distribution at least 3 weeks prior to the focus group
* 3 sites were discussed for the focus groups: Natick Public Library, Orchard Garden Library in Dorchester and Nashoba Learning Group
* Two dates were discussed for the focus groups: June 6th and 7th
* TAC will put together a draft PowerPoint for this committee to review and the content will contain the background on the Commission, legislation and the survey and background on disabilities and housing needs
* TAC will draft 5 questions for conversation starters for the focus group – once the questions are created Ms. Sloane from TAC will send to Dan Burke and Carolyn Kain to get feedback from this sub-committee.
* Questions were raised around registration due to space - Ms. Sloane will speak with Carolyn Kain but may be able to do a registration
* There were comments regarding the focus group and the attendees that may be non-verbal - could TAC provide visuals, an array of picture cards (for those more impacted by their disability)
* Ms. Sloane did not include registration, interpretation and visuals in the original contract – she will follow up with Ms. Kain on these issues
* TAC does work with a range of people with disabilities
* DDS does provide interpretation services for its’ clients
* Cathy Boyle sent Ms. Kain draft questions for review for the focus group – Ms. Kain will send the questions to Ms. Sloane

There was conversation around information that was sent to this sub-committee by Chris Supple regarding set-asides and how we as a group or a full commission, could advocate effectively. It was said that Linn Torto could be helpful on this issue and we should ask if she could present more information regarding set-asides at a future meeting. Also, the Governor filed a 1.3 billion, five- year housing bill that includes supportive housing and housing serving vulnerable populations. Again – how can we advocate for the ASD population as a commission.

Tax credits were also discussed and it was mentioned that it is fertile ground for our group to look - we could ask Ayanna if she could do a presentation on tax credits for a future meeting.

**Possible Agenda Items for Next Meeting**

* Presentation by Ayanna Gonsalves on Tax Credits and CDAC
* Presentation by Linn Torto on set-asides
* Review the Think Tank Recommendations

The next meeting for this sub-committee was scheduled for July 19th at 1:00-3:00pm. The meeting was adjourned at 2:55pm.