Autism Commission

Housing Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

June 16, 2021 1:00p.m. –3:00 p.m.

*Via Webex*

Members present: Dan Burke (co-chair), Bronia Clifton (co-chair), Carolyn Kain, Dianne Lescinskas, Victor Hernandez, Lea Hill, Catherine Boyle, Michelle, Nan Leonard and Kathy Stern

Dan Burke called the meeting to order and welcomed the members to the meeting of this Subcommittee. Mr. Burke stated that the meeting was subject to the Open Meeting Law and that the subcommittee members would need to vote to approve the remote participation. Remote access was approved unanimously.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Ms. Kain made a motion to approve the Housing Subcommittee meeting minutes from December 2, 2020. Ms. Boyle asked for one minor change in the minutes and with that change noted, the minutes were approved unanimously.

**Discussion of Status of Autism Design Guidelines**

Discussion of a proposal to recommend the retention of a consultant to develop design guidelines.

* A licensed architect is needed to take the design guidelines project to the next level - a formal proposal is needed to move forward
* There is a financial aspect to hiring a professional to develop design guidelines
* Ms. Kain discussed the contract with TAC to develop the Housing Survey a few years ago – DDS funded that contract – this new request will be discussed with EOHHS and DDS
* DDS doesn’t work with any specific architects
* This subcommittee has reviewed the FCF (Facilities Consolidation Funds) guidelines and they are in the process of being revised – the committee also reviewed the two projects on the Cape and the design that was used to accommodate ASD individuals
* Ms. Boyle discussed her engagement in the renovations for her son’s group home – some designs in her son’s home were also used in the Cape projects
* We would be looking for a broad set of design guidelines
* Does the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) need to be involved? MAAB is a regulatory entity for anything that is being developed – need to look at the requirements of the MAAB
* A few questions to consider – Who would handle the contract? It seems like it would be EOHHS and the Autism Commission (Housing) could provide technical support?

Ms. Kain will take this request to EOHHS and discuss on how to move this forward. She will be in touch with the co-chairs once she has information.

**Housing Legislation**

Status of Accessory Housing Bill – prior to COVID the bill made it to second reading and hopefully this is a good sign. There should be a hearing date coming up; possibly in the next 6 weeks.

**Further updates**

The Open Meeting Law, allowing remote access will be extended to April 2022

Ms. Clifton discussed The Alternative Voucher Program and Main Stream vouchers as well as different types of project-based vouchers that are available by income based and by disability status. She has invited a DHCD co-worker to the next subcommittee meeting to discuss the vouchers’ utility for low-income ASD individuals looking for affordable housing options.

**Update on Hogan**

The data below was provided by DDS

**Current List of the ESU individuals with Autism from January 1 2021 to June 30, 2021**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Quarter | Individuals | From | Discharge | Length of Stay | To | Other |
| 1/1/21  to  3/31/21 | (3/24/21) | Group home | No |  |  |  |
| 4/1/21  to 6/30/21 | (4/13/21)      (4/19/21)      (5/4/21)      (5/24/21) | Residential school | Yes      Yes      Yes      No | 1 year, 8 months    1 year, 3 months    2 years,  9 months | Group home    Group home |  |

The data shows 2 admissions and 3 discharges in the above stated time frame – it does not say where “discharged to” – maybe home?

There is data regarding Hogan in the Autism Commission Annual Report. This current data may not be helpful/useful since it occurred during the pandemic and under unique circumstances. Some individuals may have stayed at Hogan due to the pandemic. Also, looking at the data chart, it does not say if the individuals are ASD. Ms. George was not at this meeting and Ms. Boyle will follow up with her directly with specific questions on the data.

**ASD Data Question on Homeless Population**

Due to COVID, the Point in Time Count Census was not done but it will continue in 2022. This subcommittee is looking to add a question regarding ASD.

* Ms. Clifton will connect with someone from the City of Boston and ask how to add a question/what is the process to add a question
* Does this have to be approved through HUD?

Ms. Clifton will report back to the subcommittee members.

**Other business**

DDS is looking at ways to reach out to individuals and families who are vaccine hesitant. They are doing webinars and outreach – subcommittee members were asked to reach out to Mr. Hernandez with any ideas on reaching more diverse communities.

Ms. Boyle would like to discuss family-owned homes for shared living at the next Housing Subcommittee meeting. Accessory apartments lets you set the rent – rent can still be too high with a Section 8 Voucher. If you have a home (duplex), could one side be used for shared living? In a duplex - could a family (mom/dad) live on one side and shared living provider live on other side as the aide? You would need proof that there are legally 2 units and would have to apply for a change in occupancy with a vote from zoning.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.