Autism Commission

Housing Subcommittee meeting Minutes

May 22, 2019 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

500 Harrison Avenue – Boston, MA

Members present: Dan Burke (co-chair), Bronia Clifton (co-chair), Carolyn Kain, Chris Supple, Dianne Lescinskas, Victor Hernandez, Janet George, Cathy Boyle, Judith Ursitti, Nan Leonard and Kevin Barrett

Members accessing the meeting remotely: Joseph Vallely

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 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.

The minutes from the last meeting in January were reviewed, and with a few minor changes, approved unanimously.

**Legislative Update on Accessory Housing Bill**

* The committee received no opposition at the hearing or in writing
* Prior to the hearing, 10 powerful written testimonials were submitted
* Language needed in a larger housing omnibus bill – two bedrooms for AFC and owner occupied trust
* It was mentioned that Elder Affairs could provide good support on this bill

Cathy Boyle updated this subcommittee on her work with the Winchester Housing Authority. They voted this past April to change their local HUD administrative plans to a point system that would benefit individuals with disabilities for Section 8 housing vouchers. There was discussion on sending a letter to the Housing Authority to ask for this point system for vulnerable populations. It was said it might be better coming from an advocacy group. Cathy Boyle will send the language to the chairs of this subcommittee and they will share with the other members.

**DHCD Housing Updates**

Bronia Clifton gave the subcommittee members an update on the Cape Cod Village. She also discussed a second project on the Cape (Dennis) called FORWARD at the Rock – housing for ASD adults and related disabilities. Mr. Hernandez had visited this site and updated the members on the project.

* It is on a historical site – the “rock” is still on the site but they removed the walking paths
* Residential area
* It is a large plot of land, 5 acres, and tucked away from the street
* The residents will need transportation to get to the downtown area
* Many rental units are around the space and the builder has been in touch with the neighbors to discuss the construction
* Ground breaking is scheduled for June
* Cape Abilities will be the service provider
* The house will have 2 duplex units with four individuals in each unit (8 adults – ASD)
* The cost is 2.5 million
* 24/7 staff – no caregiver unit – they will not sleep onsite – there is an office for the caregivers

Ms. Clifton discussed doing a “compare and contrast” on the design of both homes on Cape Cod.

Ms. Boyle asked how this work can inform our recommendations in developing design guideline. Ms. Kain discussed that we are not developing design guidelines but recommending best practices for housing guidelines. We would want to look at universally designed construction and what we, as a subcommittee could propose to have more UDL designs but being careful not to target one disability.

There was additional discussion on creating design guidelines for ASD for individuals to have similar rights of individuals with physical disabilities. There needs to be discussion on how to finance specific modifications to not scare away the developers. There were a few developers at the Think Tank and this question was addressed. This subcommittee could develop a list of modifications, the cost and how to sell it to developers.

The subcommittee will revisit this discussion at the next meeting and Mr. Burke will invite a developer to one of our meetings to join the discussion.

Ms. Ursitti asked about the CMS Guidelines and if this topic could go on the agenda for the next meeting. She discussed that most states have an approved state transition plan but Massachusetts does not and she is hearing that nationally, developers are hesitant to develop without the approved state transition plan. Mr. Hernandez will follow up on this issue and ask someone from DDS to provide information on the CMS Guidelines.

Cathy Boyle asked for an update on the data collection at Hogan. Ms. Kain will follow up with DDS and report back to this subcommittee.

**DDS Update on Housing**

Mr. Hernandez updated this subcommittee on DDS Housing.

* 100 new homes since January 1 (include ID and Turning 22 with ASD)
* Mr. Hernandez will visit Cape Cod Village in June and do a walk through to look at the progress
* He will send out a link to Cape Cod Village and Forward at the Rock

**Presentation on the Supportive Housing Association Report (New Jersey)**

Ms. Ursitti provided the subcommittee members with the report, *Building the Foundation for Housing, Services, and Supports: Best Practices Opportunities for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*. As the Director of Government Affairs for Autism Speaks, Ms. Ursitti works with 20 states and she covers New Jersey. The document reviews best practices for supportive housing.

*Some of the highlights:*

* Micro-boards – a small board of committed family and friends to assist the person with a plan and achieve one’s goals
* Looking at no “wrong door”
* Options Counselors in the area office
* Support Coordination and Support Brokerage to assist with Person Centered Planning
* Coordinated healthcare
* Mobile Crisis Units
* Self-Direction
* Key Ring Model – emerging best practice in London that addresses the workforce shortage and volunteers offering natural support
* Technology in homes

It was suggested that the subcommittee members review this document and come to the next meeting with questions and feedback.

Chapter 257 rates were brought up – 257 was created by state law that created a rate setting process and is under regulations – the rates are not determined by DDS.

Ms. Leonard and Ms. Boyle questioned Mr. Hernandez regarding a statement he made at a different meeting on supportive residential supports that was inconsistent with DDS practices. Mr. Hernandez stated that he was unaware of making any such statement.

**Next Meeting**

1. Look at the two housing models on Cape Cod and do a compare and contrast
2. CMS Guidelines
3. Update on Hogan data collection

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting of this subcommittee will be held on July 10th, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.