Autism Commission

Housing Subcommittee meeting Minutes

September 23, 2019 1:00p.m. –3:00 p.m.

500 Harrison Avenue – Boston, MA

Members present: Dan Burke (co-chair), Bronia Clifton (co-chair), Carolyn Kain, Dianne Lescinskas, Victor Hernandez and Kevin Barrett

Members accessing the meeting remotely: Judith Ursitti, Leo Sarkissian and Michele Brait

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 on May 22, 2019 were reviewed, and approved unanimously.

**Review and Update of the 2018 Recommendations**

1. The Housing Subcommittee of the Autism Commission will develop design guidelines that will meet the needs of individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) to obtain and sustain tenancy in supportive affordable state funded housing units including those that; 1) currently exist; 2) are being rehabilitated; 3) and any newly developed units. The Housing Subcommittee will work with the appropriate state agencies and other stakeholders to review existing design guidelines and to develop additional guidelines that are necessary to meet the needs of individuals with ASD.

Update:

*This work is on-going. The Housing subcommittee reviewed, with the DHCD representative on the subcommittee, the design specifications on two projects underway on Cape Cod and discussed potential design additions to meet the needs of individuals with autism spectrum disorder.*

* Mr. Hernandez had visited Forward at the Rock in July and walked the site – he will continue to update this subcommittee on the progress
* Ms. Clifton has a call set up with the May Institute’s facility manager and clinical director to discuss design of living quarters at the residential school. She will get feedback on what works well and what may need improvements. The May Institute has a long history that started on Cape Cod about 50 years ago. The design is pretty classic.
* Cape Cod Villages built cubbies at the entry way – this is intended to keep order and to make sure things stay in one place.
* Rita Gardner had previously shared design guidelines for Melmark and Ms. Kain will send them out to the subcommittee.
* Dan Burke will talk with Amego and report back to this subcommittee
* Ms. Kain will connect Ms. Clifton to NECC - they have a different staffing model that rotate to cover all aspects of support for the individual
* One of the challenges with design features that was discussed was it is a challenge to design homes not knowing the profile of the individual that may be placed in the home – gaining a better understanding of programming and staffing models can be helpful for new design and development.
* Technology will play a larger role in future development and this could be helpful due to the workforce challenges.

1. Initiate a statewide outreach and data collection on homeless adults with ASD. The Subcommittee will collaborate with stakeholders to identify the number of adults with ASD who may be living in shelters or on the street. These efforts will include;

* Explore with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) the possibility of its PATH program case workers being trained on how to recognize the signs of ASD in adults, and during their scheduled visits to shelters collect data on the location and number of adults with ASD that are currently in the Commonwealth’s shelter system.
* Contact Healthcare for the Homeless to request their assistance in identifying the number of adults with ASD living on the streets, and amending the HUD questionnaire to include questions about disability and ASD diagnosis.
* Engage with the Inter-Agency Council on Homelessness to provide training on ASD and the states services that adults with ASD may be eligible to receive.
* Contact the Independent Living Centers to assess the number of adults with ASD utilizing this resource and their housing status.
* Conduct outreach to the Commonwealth’s Continuum of Care (COC) Programs to collect data on the number of homeless adults with ASD.

Update:

*This work is on-going: The Subcommittee continues to explore the issues of individuals with autism spectrum disorder who are homeless and are accessing the shelter system on living on the streets. It was not possible for the PATH program through DMH to assist with this issue so that aspect of the recommendation will be removed. The Executive Director of the Autism Commission and the Manager of Program development worked with the Pine Street in to provide training on autism for its outreach workers who may encounter individuals with ASD. Bridge over Trouble Waters has also been contacted about training for its workers interacting with homeless youth who may have ASD.*

* Ms. Kain will be in contact with Healthcare for the Homeless – the HUD questionnaire goes out January/February
* Ms. Kain reached out to the ILC’s - they do not track the numbers of individuals accessing that are ASD but are willing to do so
* COC – Ms. Clifton will reach out and try to get on their agenda
* Pine Street Inn has an intake and they are open to adding specific questions on ASD

1. The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) will collect data on the number of individuals who have;

a.) been admitted to Hogan from their group home,

b.) whether that individual returned to their current group home or transferred to another group home; and

c.) Length of stay. DDS will report this data quarterly to the Housing Subcommittee of the Autism Commission.

* Data is from 1/18 – 9/19 - DDS provided us with length of stay, location and discharge
* Individuals are not just coming from group homes

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| *Quarter* | *From* | *Discharge* | *To* | *Length of Stay* | *Other* |
| *1/1/18-3/30/18* | 1. *Family home* | *No* |  |  |  |
| *4/1/18-6/30/18* | *1 Residential School*  *------------------------------*  *1 Group Home* | *No*  *Yes* | *New Group Home* | *4 months* |  |
| *7/1/18-9/30/18* | *1 Group Home*  *1 Family Home* | *No*  *Yes* | *Group Home* | *7 months* |  |
| *10/1/18-12/30/18* | *1 Residential School*  *1 Group Home* | *No*  *Yes* | *Returned Same Home* | *9 months* |  |
| *1/1/19/3/30/19* | *1 Group Home* | *No* |  |  |  |
| *4/1/19-630/19* | *1 from Hospital*  *2 Group Homes* | *\**  *No* |  | *1 month* | *Deceased* |
| *7/1/19-9/9/19* | *2 Group Homes* | *No* |  |  |  |
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**Legislative Update on Accessory Housing Bill**

Leo Sarkissian updated the subcommittee on the Accessory Housing Bill. The bill is currently not moving . One issue is that there are a number of bills being filed at State House related to changes and modifications to building code and related to accessory housing. Maura Sullivan of The ARc is working on keeping a single bill encompassing all of this going. The state is working to make sure version 10 of the Building Code is finalized.

**Other business**

Nikki’s Law – Abuse Registry – it has been referred to Ways and Means and the bill numbers are S 2343 and H 4074. The bill is currently under review with Senate Ways and Means.

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

Next Meeting – November 20th, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.