Autism Commission

Housing Sub-Committee meeting Minutes

March 15, 2017, 1:00pm – 3:00pm

500 Harrison Avenue

Members present were: Dan Burke, Carolyn Kain, Chris Supple, Janet George, Nan Leonard, Kevin Barrett, Lea Hill, Victor Hernandez, Karen Mariscal, Leo Sarkissian, Joseph Valley, Cathy Boyle, Judith Ursitti and Dianne Lescinskas

Members accessing the meeting remotely: Ayana Gonzalez

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 January were reviewed and approved unanimously.

**Presentation by Susan Gilman on the Home Modification Loan Program**

Ms. Gilman gave an overview of the program and a handout for reference.

* State funded loan program offered to home owners and small business owners
* Partner with MRC and in collaboration with CEDAC
* Loans with 0-3% interest but 94% of applicants are 0% and deferred
* In 2005 they removed the word “physical” from their application to serve a wider group
* Accessory units and sensory friendly units
* They mainly see the loan being used for fences and sensory spaces
* Budgeted 6.5 million per year and 230 loans per year – they have funds to serve more
* Paperwork for the contractor can be a hurdle
* A challenge for accessory apartments with only up to $30k offered for loans
* Looking at the $30k and ways to increase up to $50k

There is work being done around changing the statute for grants to landlords. Currently they look at income and not equity and credit history.

Out of the 230 annual loan applicants it is not known the percent of which have a disability and this is something that could be addressed and answered.

Accessory Apartments were discussed and the cost of the addition – the average cost of a 700 square foot addition could be $150-$200 per square foot. These are becoming more desired for families. The handout (flyer) does not have language around accessory apartments and it was asked if it could be added so the consumer knows that it is an option for the loan. It was also asked if the flyer could be put on the Autism Commission website.

Discussion around Housing Bond Bill– it was asked if the commission could offer language around this bill. The language was already reviewed by Cathy Boyle and Carolyn Kain and their input is included in the Housing Bond Bill. Currently, there are no hearings scheduled on the Housing Bond Bill and we will be notified when they are to occur. It was mentioned that the advocates around the table would be welcome to speak at these hearings.

**Update on sub-committee meeting with Technical Assistive Collaborative (TAC)**

* The budget was approved for the survey (DDS)
* Statewide Housing survey – they are developing a draft
* Survey of existing housing for ASD
* Focus group on housing needs preference - will include families and self-advocates
* We currently have housing data from state agencies and will provide information to TAC
* TAC is working on the Olmstead Plan and understands the state agencies
* Carolyn will send the TAC proposal to the sub-committee once the language is further developed
* TAC is ready to begin this survey on 4/1 and have it completed by 6/30

Capturing data on individuals as they leave the school system to understand the level of need – this will help inform us of the housing stock that will be necessary.

* DESE numbers were discussed but they do not capture the level of need; just a diagnosis
* Boston Public Schools uses a point system based on the level of need – we could look at this data as well as a rural district
* Paul Shaddock – Leo Sarkissian will reach out regarding a study with a small sample size of individuals to help determine level of need for supported housing

**UMass Report - Housing**

* Carolyn met with the Homeless Alliance and discussed doing a staff training on ASD
* DMH goes into shelters through the PATH program and can work with Carolyn on this training
* AQ10 Questionnaire should be looked at as a training tool (can an “app” be created for this tool)
* What would be the trigger for a staff member to use AQ10
* Individuals with ASD may be more likely on the street than in a shelter due to the atmosphere in a shelter
* DMH has a rental assistance program – voucher program that has flexibility and can prioritize an individual with a voucher

DDS support system of 6-8 hours per week was discussed and could benefit many ASD individuals to keep them in their homes. The funding is under the residential line in the general supported area.

**Update on Autism Think Tank Summary**

Cathy Boyle updated the sub-committee on the outcome summary of the Think Tank (see attached).

* 5 housing models
* Funding streams
* Design Features
* Assistive Technology
* Homelessness

A full white paper will be issued in the coming month.

The next meeting of this sub-committee was scheduled for May 10th from 1:00pm-3:00pm.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00pm.